



7-31-1995

# Poetic Diction and Parallel Word Pairs in the Book of Mormon

Kevin L. Barney

*Katten Muchin and Zavis in Chicago*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/jbms>

---

### BYU ScholarsArchive Citation

Barney, Kevin L. (1995) "Poetic Diction and Parallel Word Pairs in the Book of Mormon," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*: Vol. 4 : No. 2 , Article 2.

Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/jbms/vol4/iss2/2>

This Feature Article is brought to you for free and open access by the All Journals at BYU ScholarsArchive. It has been accepted for inclusion in Journal of Book of Mormon Studies by an authorized editor of BYU ScholarsArchive. For more information, please contact [scholarsarchive@byu.edu](mailto:scholarsarchive@byu.edu), [ellen\\_amatangelo@byu.edu](mailto:ellen_amatangelo@byu.edu).



---

NEAL A. MAXWELL INSTITUTE  
FOR RELIGIOUS SCHOLARSHIP

---

BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY • PROVO, UTAH

**Title** Poetic Diction and Parallel Word Pairs in the Book of Mormon

**Author(s)** Kevin L. Barney

**Reference** *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 4/2 (1995): 15-81.

**ISSN** 1065-9366 (print), 2168-3158 (online)

**Abstract** Hebrew poetry is based on various patterns of parallelism. Parallel lines are in turn created by the use of parallel words, that is, pairs of words bearing generally synonymous or antithetic meanings. Since the 1930s, scholars have come to realize that many of these “word pairs” were used repeatedly in a formulaic fashion as the basic building blocks of different parallel lines. The Book of Mormon reflects numerous parallel structures, including synonymous parallelism, antithetic parallelism, and chiasmus. As word pairs are a function of parallelism, the presence of such parallel structures in the Book of Mormon suggests the possible presence of word pairs within those structures. This article catalogs the use of forty word pairs that occur in parallel collocations both in the Book of Mormon and in Hebrew poetry.

# Poetic Diction and Parallel Word Pairs in the Book of Mormon

Kevin L. Barney

Abstract: Hebrew poetry is based on various patterns of parallelism. Parallel lines are in turn created by the use of parallel words, that is, pairs of words bearing generally synonymous or antithetic meanings. Since the 1930s, scholars have come to realize that many of these “word pairs” were used repeatedly in a formulaic fashion as the basic building blocks of different parallel lines. The Book of Mormon reflects numerous parallel structures, including synonymous parallelism, antithetic parallelism, and chiasmus. As word pairs are a function of parallelism, the presence of such parallel structures in the Book of Mormon suggests the possible presence of word pairs within those structures. This article catalogs the use of forty word pairs that occur in parallel collocations both in the Book of Mormon and in Hebrew poetry.

## Background

Since the mid-eighteenth century, the operative principle of Hebraic poetry has been understood to be the phenomenon known as “parallelism” (*parallelismus membrorum*).<sup>1</sup> The most famous definition of parallelism is that of Robert Lowth:

---

<sup>1</sup> This is the contribution for which Bishop Robert Lowth is best remembered; see his *De Sacra Poesi Hebraeorum Praelectiones Academicae* (Oxford, 1753). An English translation first appeared in 1787 by George Gregory as *Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews* (London, 1787). Although Lowth was the first to articulate the phenomenon of parallelism for the

The correspondence of one verse or line with another, I call parallelism, when a proposition is delivered, and a second is subjoined to it, or drawn under it, equivalent, or contrasted with it in sense, or similar to it in the form of grammatical construction, these I call parallel lines; and the words or phrases answering one to another in the corresponding lines, parallel terms.<sup>2</sup>

So, in Psalm 2:1, for example, which reads "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?" the words *and the people imagine a vain thing* echo the words *why do the heathen rage*. This parallelism can be seen more clearly by dividing the verse into lines, as follows:

Why do the heathen rage,  
and the people imagine a vain thing?

In this couplet, *heathen* and *people* are "parallel terms" as described by Lowth, as are the verb *rage* and the phrase *imagine a vain thing*. Lowth's discovery of parallelism was a profound insight into the nature of Hebraic poetry, which was but little improved upon over the next century and a half as scholars concentrated their efforts on identifying various subtypes of parallel lines and trying to identify metrical patterns in the poetry.<sup>3</sup>

In the 1930s, two discoveries were to lead to a significant refinement of our understanding of parallelism and return the

benefit of the western scholarly world, others, such as Azariah de Rossi, Ibn Ezra, and Menahem ben Saruch had commented on parallel forms before Lowth. See Hans Kosmala, "Form and Structure in Ancient Hebrew Poetry (A New Approach)," *Vetus Testamentum* 14/3 (1964): 425; Robert Gordis, *Poets, Prophets and Sages: Essays in Biblical Interpretation* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1971), 63; and James Barr, *Comparative Philology and the Text of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1968), 62.

<sup>2</sup> Robert Lowth, *Isaiah, A New Translation with a Preliminary Dissertation and Notes, Critical, Philological and Explanatory* (London: Nichols, 1778), ix. Note that this classic formulation does not adequately describe the modern understanding of parallelism, on which see James L. Kugel, *The Idea of Biblical Poetry: Parallelism and Its History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), 1-58.

<sup>3</sup> For an excellent review of the literature of the period, see David Noel Freedman's Prolegomenon to the 1972 edition of George B. Gray, *The Forms of Hebrew Poetry* (1915; reprint New York: Ktav, 1972).

attention of scholars to the importance of parallel terms. The first of these was the discovery of the Ras Shamra tablets in 1929. These tablets contain myths and legends dating to the second millennium B.C., written in Ugaritic, a Canaanite dialect with close affinities to biblical Hebrew. As scholars began to study these texts carefully, they observed that the parallelism of the Ugaritic poetry was often based on parallel terms that also existed in Hebrew poetry. For instance, compare Psalm 50:20:

Thou sittest and speakest against thy *brother*;  
thou slanderest thine own *mother's son*.

with this couplet from a Ugaritic poem:

And lo, (as) a *brother* of Sea Baal is given  
As a retribution for the destroyed *sons of my*  
*mother*.<sup>4</sup>

Scholars began to compile lists of pairs of words that repeat in parallel constructions in both Hebrew and Ugaritic literature.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> See Umberto Cassuto, "The Seven Wives of King Keret," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 119 (1950): 18. The text is from Cyrus H. Gordon, *Ugaritic Textbook, Analecta Orientalia* 38 (1965): 49 VI:10–11 (hereafter *UT*). The enumeration of Andree Herdner, *Corpus des Tablettes en Cunéiformes Alphabétiques* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1963) is 6 VI:10–11 (hereafter *CTA*). The translation is from Cyrus H. Gordon, *Ugaritic Literature* (Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1949), 48. The Hebrew *'ach/ben 'em* also occurs in Genesis 27:29, 43:29; Deuteronomy 13:6; Judges 8:19; and Psalm 69:8; the Ugaritic *ach/bn um* may also be found in *UT*, 49 VI:14–15 and *Krt*:8–9 (*CTA*, 6 VI:14–15 and 14 I:8–9).

<sup>5</sup> H. L. Ginsberg and Benjamin Maisler, "Semitized Hurrians in Syria and Palestine," *Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society* 14 (1934): 248 n. 15; H. L. Ginsberg, "The Victory of the Land-God over the Sea God," *Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society* 15 (1935): 327, and "Rebellion and Death of Ba'lu," *Orientalia* 5 (1936): 171–72; Umberto Cassuto, "Parallel Words in Hebrew and Ugaritic" (in Hebrew), *Leshonenu* 15 (1947): 97–102, translated by Israel Abrahams in *Biblical and Oriental Studies II: Bible and Ancient Oriental Texts* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1975), 60–68; and Umberto Cassuto, *The Goddess Anath* (in Hebrew) (Jerusalem: The Bialik Institute, 1951), translated by Israel Abrahams (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1971), 19–41; Moshe Held, "More Parallel Word Pairs in the Bible and in the Ugaritic Documents" (in Hebrew), *Leshonenu* 18 (1953): 144–60; Robert G. Boling, "Synonymous Parallelism in the Psalms," *Journal of Semitic Studies* 5 (1960): 221–25; Stanley Gevirtz, "The

Mitchell Dahood devoted considerable effort to identifying such word pairs and published an extensive catalog setting forth the results of his research.<sup>6</sup> Scholars have also begun to focus on (1) word pairs that are common to Hebrew and other cognate languages, such as Akkadian, Aramaic, and Phoenician,<sup>7</sup> and (2)

---

Ugaritic Parallel to Jeremiah 8:23," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 20 (1961): 41–46, and Stanley Gevirtz, *Patterns in the Early Poetry of Israel* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963); Wilfred G. E. Watson, "Fixed Pairs in Ugaritic and Isaiah," *Vetus Testamentum* 22 (1972): 460–68, "Reversed Word-Pairs in Ugaritic Poetry," *Ugarit-Forschungen* 13 (1981): 189–92, and "Ugarit and the Old Testament: Further Parallels," *Orientalia* 45 (1976): 434–42; and Yitshak Avishur, *Stylistic Studies of Word-Pairs in Biblical and Ancient Semitic Languages* (Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker, 1984).

<sup>6</sup> Mitchell Dahood, "Ugaritic-Hebrew Parallel Pairs," in *Ras Shamra Parallels* (hereafter *RSP I*), ed. Loren R. Fisher, *Analecta Orientalia* 49 (Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1972), continued in *Ras Shamra Parallels II* (hereafter *RSP II*), ed. Loren R. Fisher, *Analecta Orientalia* 50 (Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1975), and in *Ras Shamra Parallels III* (hereafter *RSP III*), ed. S. Rummel, *Analecta Orientalia* 51 (Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1981). See also Mitchell Dahood, *Psalms I* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966); *Psalms II* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1968); *Psalms III* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1970), 445–56; and "Additional Pairs of Parallel Words in the Psalter," in *Wort, Lied und Gottespruch: Festschrift für Joseph Ziegler*, ed. Josef Schreiner (Würzburg: Echter Verlag, Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1972), 35–40. For reviews of Dahood's work, see Peter C. Craigie, "A Note on 'Fixed Pairs' in Ugaritic and Early Hebrew Poetry," *Journal of Theological Studies* 22 (1971): 140–43, and "The Problem of Parallel Word-Pairs in Ugaritic and Hebrew Poetry," *Semitics* 5 (1977): 48–58; Samuel E. Loewenstamm, "Ugarit and the Bible, I," *Biblica* 56 (1975): 103–19, and "Ugarit and the Bible, II," *Biblica* 59 (1978): 100–22; and Johannes C. de Moor and P. van der Lugt, "The Spectre of Pan-Ugaritism," *Bibliotheca Orientalis* 31 (1974): 3–26. It was intended that all of Dahood's work in this area was to be collated in one comprehensive volume, taking into account the suggestions of other scholars (see Rummel's introduction to *RSP III*, xiii); with Dahood's untimely passing in 1982, it is now uncertain whether such a volume will be produced.

<sup>7</sup> A project has been undertaken in Jerusalem to provide complete lists of all word pairs in Hebrew, Ugaritic, Akkadian, and Aramaic. Although our knowledge of word pairs that are common to both Hebrew and Ugaritic is fairly well developed, the study of word pairs in Hebrew itself and in other Northwest Semitic languages remains in its infancy. The project is briefly described in W. R. Watters, *Formula Criticism and the Poetry of the Old Testament*, *Beiheft zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 138 (1976): 27, and Wilfred G. E. Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry: A Guide to Its Techniques*,

word pairs that exist in Hebrew without known parallels in cognate languages.<sup>8</sup>

Why do some word pairs repeat in Semitic poetry? A possible answer was suggested by the second discovery of interest from the 1930s, for it was then that Milman Parry and his student Albert Lord were able to demonstrate that the repeating epithets, phrases, and lines in the Homeric epics were formulas that aided in the rapid composition of the poetry.<sup>9</sup> To illustrate, consider the *Iliad* III, 67–75:

Now though, if you wish me to fight it out *and do*  
*battle*  
 make the rest of the Trojans sit down, and all the  
 Achaians,  
 and set me in the middle with Menelaos *the warlike*  
 to fight together for the sake of Helen and all her  
 possessions.  
 That one of us who wins *and is proved stronger*, let him

---

*Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*, Supplement Series 26 (1984): 129–30. For Phoenician word pairs, see Yitshak Avishur, “Word-Pairs Common to Phoenician and Biblical Hebrew,” *Ugarit-Forschungen* 7 (1975): 13–47.

<sup>8</sup> Waters, *Formula Criticism* (which is limited to an analysis of Isaiah, Job, Lamentations, and Ruth); Perry B. Yoder, “A-B Pairs and Oral Composition in Hebrew Poetry,” *Vetus Testamentum* 21 (1971): 470–89; Yitshak Avishur, “Pairs of Synonymous Words in the Construct State (and in Appositional Hendiadys) in Biblical Hebrew,” *Semitics* 2 (1971–72): 17–81; Peter C. Craigie, “Parallel Word-Pairs in the Song of Deborah (Judges 5),” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 20 (March 1977): 15–22; Walter Brueggemann, “A Neglected Sapiential Word-Pair,” *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 89 (1977): 234–58, and “Of the Same Flesh and Bone (Gn 2,25a),” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 32 (1970): 532–42; Michael L. Barre, “The Formulaic Pair *Twb (W)hsd* in the Psalter,” *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 98/1 (1986): 100–105; N. Tidwell, “A Road and a Way: A Contribution to the Study of Word-Pairs,” *Semitics* 7 (1980): 50–80; and Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry*, 128–44, and *Traditional Techniques in Classical Hebrew Verse*, *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*, Supplement Series 170 (1994): 262–312.

<sup>9</sup> Milman Parry’s work has been brought together and edited by his son, Adam Parry, as *The Making of Homeric Verse: The Collected Papers of Milman Parry* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1971). The best single source on oral poetic composition is Albert B. Lord, *The Singer of Tales* (1954; reprint, New York: Atheneum, 1978).

take the possessions fairly and the woman, and lead her  
 homeward.  
 But the rest of you, having cut your oaths *of faith* and  
 friendship  
 dwell, you in Troy *where the soil is rich*, while those  
 others return home  
 to *horse-pasturing* Argos, and Achaia *the land of fair*  
*women*.<sup>10</sup>

Although the italicized words are not strictly necessary to the minimum meaning of the passage, they are *metrically* necessary to fill out the requirements of the meter in which the poetry was composed (dactylic hexameter). These words are found in other passages in Homer in the same position in the poetic line and serving the same function. The poet had at his disposal a large stock of such words or phrases, which made possible the rapid oral composition of the poetry.

Comparativists have applied Parry's and Lord's work both to medieval epic<sup>11</sup> and Semitic poetry.<sup>12</sup> Hebrew poetry is not based on meter in the same sense as Homeric epic, but rather on patterns

---

<sup>10</sup> The translation is from Richmond Lattimore, trans., *The Iliad of Homer* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1951), 37, as is the essence of the accompanying explanation.

<sup>11</sup> Lord, *Singer of Tales*, 198–221; Frances P. Magoun, Jr., "Oral Formulaic Character of Anglo-Saxon Narrative Poetry," *Speculum* 28 (1953): 446–67; and Robert P. Creed, "The Making of an Anglo-Saxon Poem," *English Literature and History* 26 (1959): 445–54, and "The Singer Looks at His Sources," *Comparative Literature* 14 (1962): 44–52.

<sup>12</sup> For the idea of repeating word pairs as formulas, see, for example, Gevirtz, *Patterns*, 3; William Whallon, *Formula, Character and Context: Studies in Homeric, Old English and Old Testament Poetry* (Washington, DC: Center for Hellenic Studies, 1969), 151; and Yoder, "A-B Pairs and Oral Composition," 480–89. Robert C. Culley, *Oral Formulaic Language in the Biblical Psalms* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1967), who relied heavily on Parry and Lord, argued that formulaic phrases transcended word pairs in importance. Repeating phrases do exist in Semitic poetry (see also Antoon Schoors, "Literary Phrases," *RSP I*, 3–70, and R. E. Whitaker, "Ugaritic Formulae," in *RSP III*, 207–19) and, because they are *phrases*, on the surface they might appear to be the phenomenon more closely related to Homeric formulas. A proper understanding of the *function* of both Homeric formulas and word pairs, however, has led most scholars to conclude that word pairs are actually the more direct analog to Homeric formulas.



of parallelism. Nevertheless, the essential idea of formulaic repetition remains instructive.<sup>13</sup> As Lowth perceived, parallel lines are created by the use of subunits (words and phrases) that are themselves parallel. In the ancient Near East a traditional stock of parallel word pairs appears to have existed, which the poet could use as the foundation for different parallel lines. Rather than composing every couplet completely from scratch, by beginning with an appropriate word pair the poet would already have at hand the skeletal structure for a parallel expression; it would then be much easier to flesh out the basic idea into full parallel lines. For instance, note how the same word pair, *earth/world* (*ʔerets/tebel*), forms the foundation for different parallel lines in the following examples:

The *earth* is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof;  
the *world*, and they that dwell therein. (Psalm 24:1)

for the pillars of the *earth* are the Lord's,  
and he hath set the *world* upon them. (1 Samuel 2:8)

Who hath given him a charge over the *earth*?  
or who hath disposed the whole *world*? (Job 34:13)

Their line is gone out through all the *earth*,  
and their words to the end of the *world*. (Psalm 19:4)

Let all the *earth* fear the Lord:  
let all the inhabitants of the *world* stand in awe of  
him. (Psalm 33:8)

---

<sup>13</sup> Field studies among peoples who compose poetry based on parallel cola tend to support the formulaic nature of word pairs in composition. See R. Austerlitz, "Ob-Ugric Metrics," in *Folklore Fellows Communications* (Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedakatemia, 1958), 174; M. B. Emeneau, "The Songs of the Todas," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 77 (1937): 543-60, "Oral Poets of South India—the Todas," *American Journal of Folklore* 71 (1958): 312-24, and "Style and Meaning in an Oral Literature," *Language* 42 (1966): 323-45; P. Aalto, "Word-Pairs in Tokharian and Other Languages," *Linguistics* 5 (1964): 61-78; Yoder, "A-B Pairs and Oral Composition," 481-84; Yakov Malkiel, "Studies in Irreversible Binomials," *Lingua* 8 (1959): 113-60; and R. A. Sayce, "The Style of Montaigne: Word-Pairs and Word-Groups," Seymour B. Chatman, ed., *Literary Style: A Symposium* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), 383-405.

A the lightnings lightened  
 B the *world*;  
 B the *earth*  
 A trembled and shook. (Psalm 77:18)<sup>14</sup>

Although each of these passages is unique and conveys its own message, we can easily see how the poet began his composition<sup>15</sup> in each case with the synonymous pair of words *earth* and *world*, which had a traditional association together in ancient Hebrew poetry.

Scholars have used this new understanding of the formulaic nature of repeating word pairs in textual criticism, exegesis, lexicography, and other aspects of critical analysis.<sup>16</sup> For instance, Gevirtz<sup>17</sup> observed that in 2 Samuel 1:22,

From the blood of the *slain* (*chalalim*),  
 from the fat of the *mighty* (*gibborim*),

*slain* does not really fit the context, and the pair is found nowhere else in the Old Testament. On the other hand, the word pair *valiant*//*mighty* (*chayil*//*gibbor*) does occur frequently,<sup>18</sup> *valiant* fits the context better, and *chayil* (*valiant*) is orthographically close to *chalal* (*slain*). Therefore, Gevirtz suggests that the passage originally read:

From the blood of the *valiant* (*chayilim*),  
 from the fat of the *mighty* (*gibborim*).

---

<sup>14</sup> See also 1 Chronicles 16:30; Psalms 89:11, 96:13, 97:4, 98:9; Proverbs 8:26; Isaiah 18:3, 24:4, 26:9, 26:18; Jeremiah 10:12, 25:26, 51:15; Lamentations 4:12; and Nahum 1:5.

<sup>15</sup> It does not necessarily follow from the analogy to Homeric formulas that poetry reflecting repeating word pairs was orally composed. Word pairs could as readily have served as aids to literate composition. On this topic, see Watters, *Formula Criticism*, 48–59, and Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry*, 66–86.

<sup>16</sup> For an illustration of relevance to Book of Mormon studies, see Bruce M. Pritchett, Jr., "Lehi's Theology of the Fall in Its Preexilic/Exilic Context," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 3/2 (Fall 1994): 59–60.

<sup>17</sup> Gevirtz, *Patterns*, 88–90.

<sup>18</sup> For example, Isaiah 5:22, Jeremiah 48:14, and Nahum 2:3.

This verse may have been corrupted by scribal assimilation to verse 19, where *slain* (*chahal*) occurs in the same verse with the word *mighty* (*gibborim*), but in parallel with the word *fallen* (*naphlu*).<sup>19</sup>

### Book of Mormon Application

If the Book of Mormon had as a part of its origin the writings of a Hebrew-speaking people from preexilic Jerusalem, we might expect to find examples of word pairs within its pages.<sup>20</sup> For although the Book of Mormon is predominantly a prose work,<sup>21</sup>

---

<sup>19</sup> For illustrations of situations where an appreciation of the parallelism has foreclosed conjectural emendation, see Dahood, *RSP I*, 78–79.

<sup>20</sup> For some time I have felt that an analysis as to whether word pairs exist in the Book of Mormon would provide an interesting test of the Book of Mormon's authenticity. See *Insights, FARMS Newsletter* (November 1981): 4. In 1990, I articulated the scholarly discovery of word pairs and suggested their importance for the Book of Mormon in "Understanding Old Testament Poetry," *Ensign* (June 1990): 50–54. The word pairs I had privately noted at that time came principally from the song of Nephi in the second half of 2 Nephi 4, which has a high concentration of parallel structures. More recently, in searching for word pairs in the Book of Mormon, I have used two complementary methods. First, I have reviewed portions of a few of the available scholarly lists of word pairs (occasionally converting the scholars' modern translations of words back into KJV usage by means of *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* [Nashville: Regal, n.d.]) and then checked the Book of Mormon text for parallel collocations of those word pairs. Second, I have reversed that process; that is, I have identified pairs of words that are collocated in parallel constructions in the Book of Mormon text and checked both word pair lists and the Old Testament text for possible matches. Both methods are exceptionally tedious and require the exercise of considerable judgment (particularly concerning line division and what constitutes a parallel collocation). Therefore, the catalog of Book of Mormon word pairs accompanying this article should not be understood as exhaustive, but rather as introductory and illustrative. I assume that other scholars will be able to add to this list. The development of computer data bases containing the text of the Book of Mormon and the Old Testament has made the identification of word pairs somewhat easier than it used to be. Watters, *Formula Criticism*, 148–49, gives an interesting description of his (precomputer) methodology for identifying word pairs in the Old Testament; suffice it to say that his method involved ample use of both index cards and research assistants.

<sup>21</sup> The generic distinction between poetry and prose is not always clear in Hebrew literature; it is a commonplace that Hebrew poetry tends to the prosaic, just as Hebrew prose tends to the poetic. So it is with the Book of Mormon. For a lucid discussion of this issue, see Kugel, *The Idea of Biblical Poetry*, 59–95, who

it does contain passages that may be classified as poetry,<sup>22</sup> as well as numerous isolated instances of parallelism of various types.<sup>23</sup> The Book of Mormon also contains many instances of chiasmus (a form of inverted parallelism),<sup>24</sup> and although chiasmus often is formed by the repetition of the *same* word or phrase in a parallel collocation,<sup>25</sup> chiasitic structures also make use of word pairs for this purpose (as the quotation of Psalm 77:18 above demonstrates). The presence of parallel structures in the Book of Mormon thus offers us an opportunity to examine whether the diction embedded in those structures is consistent with what we have learned about traditional word pairs in ancient Near Eastern literature.

---

argues that the very categories of poetry and prose are illusory when applied to Hebrew literature. For a more traditional treatment, see Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry*, 44–62.

<sup>22</sup> Richard Dilworth Rust and Donald W. Parry, "Book of Mormon Literature," in Daniel H. Ludlow, ed., *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* (New York: Macmillan, 1992), 1:181–85; Richard Dilworth Rust, "Book of Mormon Poetry," *New Era* (March 1983): 46–50; Paul Cracroft, "A Clear Poetic Voice," *Ensign* (January 1994): 28–31; Angela Crowell, "Hebrew Poetry in the Book of Mormon," *Zarahemla Record* 32–33 (1986): 2–9; 34 (1986): 7–12; Donald W. Parry, "Hebrew Literary Patterns in the Book of Mormon," *Ensign* (October 1989): 58–61; and Steven P. Sondrup, "The Psalm of Nephi: A Lyric Reading," *BYU Studies* 21/3 (1981): 357–72.

<sup>23</sup> Most notably, see Donald W. Parry, *The Book of Mormon Text Reformatted according to Parallelistic Patterns* (Provo: FARMS, 1992).

<sup>24</sup> John Welch's discovery of chiasmus in the Book of Mormon is available in various formats; for example, see his "Chiasmus in the Book of Mormon," *BYU Studies* 10/1 (1969): 69–84; "A Study Relating Chiasmus in the Book of Mormon to Chiasmus in the Old Testament, Ugaritic Epics, Homer, and Selected Greek and Latin Authors," M.A. thesis, Brigham Young University, 1970; "Chiasmus in the Book of Mormon," in John W. Welch, ed., *Chiasmus in Antiquity: Structures, Analyses, Exegesis* (Hildesheim: Gerstenberg, 1981), 198–210; and his "Criteria for Identifying and Evaluating the Presence of Chiasmus," in this issue, pages 1–14. See also his "Chiasmus Bibliography" (Provo, UT: FARMS, 1987).

<sup>25</sup> On the significance of same word repetition, see Moshe Held, "The YQTL-QTL (QTL-YQTL) Sequence of Identical Verbs in Biblical Hebrew and in Ugaritic," in Meir Ben-Horin, Bernard D. Weinryb, and Solomon Zeitlin, *Studies and Essays in Honor of Abraham A. Neuman* (Leiden: Brill, 1962), 281–90; James Muilenburg, "A Study in Hebrew Rhetoric: Repetition and Style," *Supplements to Vetus Testamentum* 1 (1953): 99–111; and Dahood, *RSP I*, 79–80.

At the conclusion of this article there follows a catalog of some forty word pairs that exist in parallel collocations in the Book of Mormon. The catalog is arranged alphabetically by the first word in the pair, and each pair is numbered for convenience of reference. In each case, Book of Mormon occurrences<sup>26</sup> are given first, then Hebrew<sup>27</sup> occurrences of the same word pair are given, following the KJV translation. In both the Book of Mormon and the Hebrew examples the line division is my own,<sup>28</sup> but I have occasionally followed Parry, *Book of Mormon Text Reformatted*, in the case of Book of Mormon passages, and *The Oxford Annotated Bible—Revised Standard Version*<sup>29</sup> in the case of Old Testament passages. Where applicable, Ugaritic or other examples follow; except where otherwise noted, the translation is derived from Gordon, *Ugaritic Literature*. In some instances, a brief comment follows. General bibliographical information is included in the footnotes.

Three possible explanations for the existence of word pairs in the Book of Mormon are offered, none of which in any single instance is necessarily exclusive of the other two in other instances. The first possible explanation is mere coincidence. Word pairs by their nature tend to be rough<sup>30</sup> synonyms or antonyms; therefore, word pairs are the type of words that might naturally be found together and may occasionally recur in parallel

---

<sup>26</sup> I have excluded Book of Mormon occurrences that are quotations from the KJV Bible.

<sup>27</sup> Hebrew transliterations have generally been simplified for ease of comparison. Although number and verb stems are reflected, most prefixes and suffixes are not.

<sup>28</sup> In dividing text into lines, I do not mean to suggest that the text under consideration is necessarily poetic, or that my line division is the only possible or even the best line division. I have used line division simply to assist the reader in visualizing parallel structures.

<sup>29</sup> *The Oxford Annotated Bible—Revised Standard Version* (New York: Oxford, 1962).

<sup>30</sup> I use the word *rough* because word pairs are often not, strictly speaking, synonyms or antonyms. While the words *Jacob* and *Israel* are synonyms, for example, the words *gold* and *silver* are not; yet *gold* and *silver*, though not precisely the same thing, are sufficiently representative of the same *class* of things (precious metals) that a couplet based on the word pair *gold/silver* is easily recognized as being synonymous. Such terms are sometimes referred to as "near-synonyms."

lines simply by chance.<sup>31</sup> The more frequent the number of recurrences of a specific word pair, however, the less likely that the

---

<sup>31</sup> Some scholars, notably Peter C. Craigie, "A Note on 'Fixed Pairs,'" "The Problem of Parallel Word-Pairs," and "Parallel Word Pairs in Ugaritic Poetry: A Critical Evaluation of Their Relevance for Psalm 29," *Ugarit-Forschungen* 11 (1979): 135-40, and Adele Berlin, "Parallel Word Pairs: A Linguistic Explanation," *Ugarit-Forschungen* 15 (1983): 7-16, reject the traditional scholarship on word pairs and take the revisionist position that word pairs never served a compositional function at all in creating parallel lines. In this view, repeating word pairs never formed, but rather in every case resulted from, parallel lines, and they exist simply because of restricted paralleling possibilities in a language with a limited root vocabulary. The fact that some word pairs exist in several different Semitic languages does not indicate a common compositional tradition, according to this view, but rather is merely a reflection of the universals of human thinking. Berlin believes that repeating word pairs can be accounted for by general psycholinguistic principles such as those invoked in relation to the psychotherapeutic exercise of free word association. In this, Berlin is following M. O'Connor, *Hebrew Verse Structure* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1980), 96-109. O'Connor identifies seven general linguistic principles that tend to determine word sequence in dyads (O'Connor's term for pairs of words that can be associated in some way). The most important of these principles he defines as Panini's Law, to the effect that when other things are equal, the shorter of the two words will come first (a rule which admittedly is of limited applicability to Hebrew, a language with comparatively little variation in word length). The other six principles similarly reflect issues of euphonious sound. Berlin goes beyond O'Connor, describing linguistic principles which she believes account for the pairing of words, not just their sequence. As most word pairs are not formulaic, and even those that became traditional must have had an origin somewhere (and possibly multiple origins in different literatures), the linguistic principles articulated by O'Connor and Berlin provide a valuable addition to our understanding of word pairs in any event. But while O'Connor cautiously acknowledges Hebrew formulaicity ("As it is, we can see that the dyads of Hebrew verse are of the same class of phenomena as formulas in other poetries. They differ in involving much less syntactic complexity and fixity," in *Hebrew Verse Structure*, 105), Berlin denies it out of hand ("*It is not word pairs that create parallelism. It is parallelism that activates word pairs,*" in "Parallel Word Pairs," 16, italics in original). David T. Tsumura, in "A 'Hyponymous' Word Pair: *ʿarts* and *thm(t)* in Hebrew and Ugaritic," *Biblica* 69/2 (1988): 258, restates Berlin's conclusion as follows: "Thus word pairs can be the result of parallelism but not vice versa." Tsumura's restatement seems to me to represent accurately Berlin's intended meaning.

I believe that Berlin's rejection of all word-pair formulaicity is an error deriving fundamentally from an overreaction to three occasional problems present in some of the earlier traditional scholarly literature. The first problem, and by far the most significant, is the rigidity implicit in the early use of the expression

association of the two words in the pair is mere coincidence; and the more extensive the phenomenon generally in a literature, the less likely that chance is the cause. In my view, coincidence is an inadequate explanation for all of the examples set forth in the appended catalog.

---

*fixed pairs* and the widely repeated metaphor of a *poetic dictionary* (actually a useful metaphor, if properly understood). Contrary to the assumptions of some early scholars, word pairs may occur in a reversed sequence (particularly in Hebrew), and any one "A" word is not limited to a single correlative "B" word. Nevertheless, as O'Connor correctly perceived, such flexibility is *not* inconsistent with formulaicity. The second problem is the occasional overpressing of the Parry/Lord analogy in making claims concerning the orality of individual poems, and the third involves the demonstrable excesses of Dahood's catalogs in the *Ras Shamra Parallels* series. Although these issues are properly subject to clarification and correction, they do not, in my opinion, provide a sufficient basis for the wholesale abandonment of traditional scholarship on word pairs. Admittedly, to some extent this is a chicken-and-egg type of question (that is, do word pairs sometimes form the foundation of parallel lines, or do word pairs always merely result from parallel lines?). But that formulaicity was present in Hebrew poetry is strongly suggested by the observation of Menahem Haran in "The Graded Numerical Sequence and the Phenomenon of 'Automatism' in Biblical Poetry," *Supplements to Vetus Testamentum* 22 (1972): 238-67, that in numerous instances only one of the words in the pair (it could be either the first or the second word) actually fits the context, the other being carried along as an automatic adornment for purposes of versification. I also believe that the Craigie/Berlin line of revisionism has been influenced by the predominance to date of studies comparing word pairs in different literatures as compared to the relative paucity of studies focusing on the Hebrew canon. As Wilfred G. E. Watson properly observes in "The Hebrew Word-Pair *ʾsp//qbt*," *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 96 (1984): 434; "lastly, and in general, the evidence presented here illustrates the importance of studying word-pairs which are in the mainstream of ancient Hebrew poetic tradition. It is not enough to examine only those common to Ugaritic, Phoenician and so forth. Both approaches are valuable—the one complementing the other—but the comparative field has been worked without enough awareness that as as yet unspecified proportion of word-pairs is unique within classical Hebrew." There are many word pairs that exist only in Hebrew, yet recur so frequently and in such a fashion that a denial of their formulaicity would be absurd (the pair *Jacob//Israel* comes to mind, which recurs dozens of times in Hebrew, but of course does not recur in any other literature).

A complete discussion of these issues is beyond the scope of this article, but I have nevertheless undertaken this fairly lengthy excursus here because, if Berlin were correct and there were no formulaicity to Hebrew word pairs, then, in a sense, at least, all repeating word pairs would be coincidental.

The second possible explanation is that the word pairs in the Book of Mormon are indeed authentic Semitic word pairs, but that they were derived indirectly by being coopted from the English of the KJV. This could have happened either *intentionally* or *subconsciously*. An intentional re-creation of authentic word pairs would require Joseph to have recognized word-pair patterns in the Old Testament and to have reused them intentionally in composing the Book of Mormon. Although a perusal of the appended catalog might lead one to think that the existence of repeating word pairs in the Old Testament is obvious, like so many great discoveries the existence of such word pairs is obvious only in hindsight. As scholars did not recognize the phenomenon of repeating word pairs until more than 100 years following the publication of the Book of Mormon, it seems unlikely that Joseph consciously perceived word pairs in the KJV Old Testament and then used them in his composition of the Book of Mormon.

A more likely possibility is that Joseph subconsciously re-created the word-pair phenomenon in the Book of Mormon based on his familiarity with the English of the KJV. To the extent that this explanation may be correct, it would be truly remarkable. It must be remembered that the word pairs in the appended catalog are in *parallel collocations*; that is, they are in different lines in a parallel structure, bearing relationships to their surrounding words sufficient to show that they are meant to stand in a parallel relation to each other. Therefore, in most cases, it would not be possible simply to *copy* the word pairs from the KJV text; rather Joseph would have had to *re-create* the word-pair phenomenon by extracting the pair from its original context and setting it in new surroundings. This, of course, is essentially what the Hebrew prophets themselves did in composing their poetry in the first place, but the Hebrew prophets were a part of the ancient Near Eastern poetic tradition that knew of these lexical pairs and used them in composition, whereas Joseph was not. If this were the correct explanation, and Semitic word pairs could be re-created by a person in a time, language, and place far removed from the original tradition, then it would surely be a matter worthy of discussion in the secular literature on ancient Near Eastern word pairs.

The third explanation is that the Book of Mormon is what it claims to be—an ancient text with roots in seventh-century B.C.



Jerusalem. Word pairs exist in the Book of Mormon because Lehi and his family were direct participants in the oral and literary traditions of that time and place, traditions which, to some extent at least, they passed on to their descendants. As the Book of Mormon text is extant only in translation and at least one other viable explanation is available for the existence of word pairs in the Book of Mormon, the presence of word pairs in the Book of Mormon cannot be said to be an absolute authentication of that book's antiquity. Although the presence of repeating word pairs by itself does not prove antiquity in an absolute sense, their presence within parallel structures is consistent with the view that the Book of Mormon text is ancient and further augments the persuasive power of such structures as evidence for the antiquity of the Book of Mormon.

If we accept the authenticity of the Book of Mormon and the presence of Semitic word pairs in the text, then various critical applications of word pairs may enhance our understanding of the Book of Mormon text. As the Book of Mormon text exists only in translation, the usefulness of word pairs as a control for purposes of textual criticism of the Book of Mormon text itself will perhaps be limited. *Because* the Book of Mormon text exists only in translation, however, word pairs may serve as a valuable lexical control on the range of meaning associated with the words in the pair. For instance, the expression *fierce anger* in Alma 9:12 (see #1 in the appended catalog) could be a translation of any number of different words, but when understood as a part of the attested word pair *anger//fierce anger* it likely corresponds to the range of meaning present in the Hebrew *charon ʿaph*.<sup>32</sup> A few examples of the possible lexical and exegetical utility of word pairs in understanding the text of the Book of Mormon are noted in the various comments included in the catalog at the conclusion of this article.

---

<sup>32</sup> Although I personally favor the theory that "reformed Egyptian" (Mormon 9:32) originated as Hebrew language transliterated into Egyptian script, that theory is not essential to the lexical usefulness of word pairs. If the original language of the Book of Mormon were simply Egyptian, I would suggest that the Egyptian word used in the original text would have been selected in an effort to correspond to the range of meaning present in the Hebrew language and tradition. Egyptian would have been a second language to Lehi and his family, whose first language was undoubtedly Hebrew.

The presence of word pairs in the Book of Mormon also suggests numerous avenues for further research; I will suggest three such possibilities here. The first is the presence of word pairs in "juxtaposition" (a general term referring to words that are adjacent to each other, usually either by virtue of syndetic parataxis or a construct relationship, either in the same line of a poetic distich or in prose) in the Book of Mormon. Many scholars believe that the traditional association of word pairs in parallel collocations was also reflected by the common use of such pairs of words in juxtaposition as well. For instance, the verbs *bear* (*yalad*) and *conceive* (*harah*) are said to be in a parallel "collocation" (designated symbolically by separating the words with a double virgule, as *yalad//harah*) when they appear in separate lines in a parallel relation to one another, as in Job 3:3:

Let the day perish wherein I was *born*,  
and the night in which it was said, There is a man  
child *conceived*.

Those verbs, however, are said to be in juxtaposition when they are adjacent to one another, as in the following examples:

And she *conceived* again, and *bare* a son. (Genesis  
29:34)

thou shalt *conceive*, and *bear* a son. (Judges 13:3, 5)

An understanding of the formulaic relationship between words in juxtaposition may be significant for our understanding of the Book of Mormon text. Consider, for example, 1 Nephi 12:16, which reads as follows:

Behold, the fountain of filthy water which thy father  
saw;  
yea, even the river of which he spake;  
and the *depths* thereof are the *depths of hell*.

The English expression *depths of hell* occurs only once in the KJV Bible, in an obscure passage in Proverbs 9:18:

But he knoweth not that the dead are there;  
and that her guests are in the *depths of hell* (ʿimqey  
*sheʿol*).

It may be, based on this parallel, that *hell* in 1 Nephi 12:16 is a direct reference to Sheol. Another possibility, however, is based on the Ugaritic parallel pair *netherworld//depths* (*arts//thmt*), as in the following example from *UT*, ʿnt III:21–22 [CTA, 3 III:21–22]:

A The murmur of the heavens  
B to the netherworld (*arts*)  
B Of the deeps (*thmt*)  
A to the stars.<sup>33</sup>

The Ugaritic *arts* is cognate with the Hebrew *ʿerets*, which is normally translated “earth” or “land” in the KJV. The Hebrew *ʿerets* is clearly used to refer to Sheol in some Old Testament passages (such as Job 10:21–22, translated there as “land” in the KJV); in other passages that word is used together with *tehomoth* (depths), the Hebrew cognate to the Ugaritic *thmt*, and the parallel to Ugaritic usage may justify us in understanding *ʿerets* as a reference to Sheol, as in the following examples:

Thou, which hast shewed me great and sore troubles,  
shalt quicken me again,  
and from the *depths of the earth* (*tehomoth haʿerets*)  
[render “depths of the netherworld”]  
shalt bring me up again.<sup>34</sup> (Psalm 71:20)

Praise the Lord from the *earth* (*ʿerets*) [render “the  
netherworld”],  
ye dragons, and all *deepes* (*tehomoth*). (Psalm 148:7)

The two terms are in a parallel collocation in Psalm 148:7, but in juxtaposition (more precisely, a construct relationship) in Psalm 71:20; in fact, this is the same construct relationship found in 1 Nephi 12:16. Although speculative, it is possible that the expres-

<sup>33</sup> The translation is Dahood’s; for additional references, see Dahood, *RSP I*, 127, and *Psalms I*, 106.

<sup>34</sup> I have altered the word order of the KJV slightly to follow more closely the Hebrew text.

sion *depths of hell* in the Book of Mormon corresponds to the Hebrew *tehomoth ha'arets*, as in Psalm 71:20, following the Ugaritic usage.<sup>35</sup>

A second possible area for inquiry is the phenomenon of distant parallelism; that is, the placing of word pairs in collocations more distant than adjacent cola.<sup>36</sup> For instance, compare 2 Nephi 4:30:

O Lord, I will praise thee forever;  
yea, my soul will rejoice in thee,  
my God, and the rock of my salvation

with 2 Nephi 4:35:

therefore I will lift up my voice unto thee;  
yea, I will cry unto thee,  
my God, the rock of my righteousness.

The last line of each verse reads "my God[, and] the rock of my X," where in each case *rock* is in the construct state and X, which equals either *salvation* or righteousness, is in the absolute state. The words *God* and *rock* are an attested word pair, as are the words *salvation* and *righteousness*.<sup>37</sup> Therefore, this would seem to be a significant collocation of the *salvation//righteousness* word pair, even though the lines are five verses apart.

Finally, the presence of word pairs in Mesoamerican languages is a topic that should be further investigated. Allen J.

<sup>35</sup> Note that *'erets* does not mean "netherworld" in every instance in which it appears with *tehomoth* in Hebrew, because *tehomoth* is "hyponymous" (as opposed to synonymous) to *'erets*, meaning that *'erets* is *inclusive* of *tehomoth*. See Tsumura, "A 'Hyponymous' Word Pair," 258–69. Whether the semantic field of *'erets* should be narrowed from "earth" to "netherworld" in connection with *tehomoth* must be determined from context. This matter is of further relevance to the Book of Mormon, because "depths of the earth" occurs in 2 Nephi 26:5; 3 Nephi 9:6, 8; and 28:20, and in at least some of these passages (particularly 2 Nephi 26:5) the context would seem to support an understanding of "earth" as "netherworld."

<sup>36</sup> See Boling, "Synonymous Parallelism," 122; Dahood, *RSP I*, 80–81, and *RSP III*, 6; and Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry*, 134–35. This phenomenon is sometimes referred to as *inclusio*.

<sup>37</sup> For *God//rock*, see Watters, *Formula Criticism*, 166; for *salvation//righteousness*, see Watters, *Formula Criticism*, 178.

Christenson has shown that chiasmus exists in Mayan texts,<sup>38</sup> and where parallel structures are present, the possibility of word pairs also exists. W. M. Norman has shown that repeating word pairs do exist in the parallel structure of Quiché ceremonial speech,<sup>39</sup> as in the case of the pair *tree//vine*:

It echoes in the forbidden TREE  
It echoes in the forbidden VINE

Further examples include *path//road*, *bring//raise*, *wall//fortress*, etc. These ceremonial speeches were delivered by "guides" (*k'amal b'eh*, literally "bringer of the road"), who learned their craft by apprenticing with other guides. Part of a guide's preparation was the memorization of the "stock lexical pairs" used in the couplet structure of the ceremonial rhetoric. Because the Book of Mormon purports to be New World literature, this would seem to be a worthwhile lead for qualified Book of Mormon scholars to pursue.

## A Preliminary Catalog of Book of Mormon Word Pairs<sup>40</sup>

### 1. anger//fierce anger

#### Book of Mormon

A I will visit them  
B in my *anger*,  
B yea, in my *fierce anger*  
A will I visit them. (Mosiah 12:1)

---

<sup>38</sup> Allen J. Christenson, "Chiasmus in Mayan Texts," *Ensign* 18 (October 1988): 28–31, and "The Use of Chiasmus by the Ancient Quiche-Maya," *Latin American Literatures Journal* 4 (Fall 1988): 125–50.

<sup>39</sup> W. M. Norman, "Grammatical Parallelism in Quiche Ritual Language," *Berkeley Linguistics Society* 6 (1980): 378–99. This article is discussed in Wilfred G. E. Watson, "Problems and Solutions in Hebrew Verse: A Survey of Recent Work," *Vetus Testamentum* 43/3 (1993): 382.

<sup>40</sup> Because of space limitations, I have quoted no more than three examples for any one category. Additional illustrations are cited in the footnotes.

except ye repent I will visit this people in mine *anger*;  
yea, and I will not turn my *fierce anger* away. (Alma  
8:29)

A yea, he will visit you  
B in his *anger*,  
B and in his *fierce anger*  
A he will not turn away. (Alma 9:12)

### Hebrew (*ʾaph*//*charon* [*ʾaph*])

Notwithstanding the Lord turned not from the  
*fierceness* of his great *wrath* (*charon ʾaph*),  
wherewith his *anger* (*ʾaph*) was kindled against Judah  
(2 Kings 23:26)

Then shall he speak unto them in his *wrath* (*ʾaph*),  
and vex them in his *sore displeasure* (*charon*).  
(Psalm 2:5)

before the *fierce anger* (*charon ʾaph*) of the Lord  
come upon you,  
before the day of the Lord's *anger* (*ʾaph*) come  
upon you. (Zephaniah 2:2)

### Comment

This is an illustration of an “augmented” word pair (symbolically, A//AB), which differs from same-word repetition by the addition of a modifier to the repeated element.<sup>41</sup> Other illustrations would be *desert*//*holy desert* [KJV: *wilderness*//*wilderness of Kadesh*](Psalm 29:8), *sea*//*reed sea* [KJV: *sea*//*Red sea*](Exodus 15:4), and *cedars*//*cedars of Lebanon* (Psalm 29:5). The Hebrew *ʾaph* literally refers to the nose, but usually is used to denote anger (which shows itself in the flaring of nostrils and hard

<sup>41</sup> Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry*, 132.

breathing).<sup>42</sup> The noun *charon* most literally means “burning,” but by extension “anger” or “wrath.” The construct expression *charon ʿaph* translated “fierce anger” in Zephaniah 2:2 literally means something like “fury of nostrils” or “fierceness of anger,” and is always used of God’s anger, as is the case in the Book of Mormon passages.<sup>43</sup>

## 2. blessed//cursed

### Book of Mormon

for if iniquity shall abound *cursed* shall be the land for  
their sakes,  
but unto the righteous it shall be *blessed* forever.  
(2 Nephi 1:7)

And how *blessed* are they who have labored diligently  
in his vineyard;  
and how *cursed* are they who shall be cast out into  
their own place! (Jacob 6:3)

### Hebrew (*baruk/ʿarur*)

*cursed* (*ʿarur*) be every one that curseth thee,  
and *blessed* (*baruk*) be he that blesseth thee. (Genesis  
27:29)

*Blessed* (*baruk*) is he that blesseth thee,  
and *cursed* (*ʿarur*) is he that curseth thee. (Numbers  
24:9)

---

<sup>42</sup> All lexical comments, unless otherwise noted, are derived from either Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles Briggs, *Hebrew and English Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1906; reprint, Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1979), or William Gesenius, *Lexicon Manuale Hebraicum et Chaldaicum in Veteris Testamenti Libros*, trans. Samuel P. Tregelles as *Gesenius' Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1949).

<sup>43</sup> Avishur, “Pairs of Synonymous Words,” 43, and Avishur, *Stylistic Studies*, 167, 204, 321, 347, 714.

A Cursed ( $\text{ʔarur}$ ) be  
 B the day wherein I was born:  
 B let not the day wherein my mother bare me  
 A be *blessed* (*baruk*). (Jeremiah 20:14)

### Comment

Although I have focused here on the Hebrew passive participles *baruk*//*ʔarur*, this parallelism occurs with other verb forms as well, both in the Book of Mormon:

yea, he did *curse* it against them unto their destruction,  
 and he did *bless* it unto our fathers unto their  
 obtaining power over it. (1 Nephi 17:35)

and in the Old Testament, substituting *qalal* for *ʔarur*:

There is a generation that *curseth* (*yiqallel*) their father,  
 and doth not *bless* (*yibarek*) their mother. (Proverbs  
 30:11 [imperfect *piel* forms])

This pair is also commonly found with nominal cognates, most notably in connection with the blessing (*berakah*) set on Mount Gerizim and the cursing (*qelalah*) set on Mount Ebal (see Deuteronomy 11:29).<sup>44</sup>

### 3. blood//burnt offerings

#### Book of Mormon

A And ye shall offer up unto me no more  
 B the shedding of *blood*;  
 B yea, your sacrifices and your *burnt offerings*  
 A shall be done away (3 Nephi 9:19)

#### Hebrew (*dam*//*ʕoloth*)

I am full of the *burnt offerings* (*ʕoloth*) of rams,  
 and the fat of fed beasts;

---

<sup>44</sup> Avishur, *Stylistic Studies*, 258, 260.



and I delight not in the *blood (dam)* of bullocks,  
or of lambs, or of he goats. (Isaiah 1:11)

to offer *burnt offerings (ʕoloth)* thereon,  
and to sprinkle *blood (dam)* thereon. (Ezekiel 43:18)

#### 4. city//land

##### Book of Mormon

And there were many highways cast up,  
and many roads made,  
which led from *city to city*,  
and from *land to land*,  
and from place to place. (3 Nephi 6:8)

Limhi and his people returned to the *city* of Nephi,  
and began to dwell in the *land* again in peace.  
(Mosiah 21:1)

the Lamanites did come down against the *city*  
Desolation;  
and there was an exceedingly sore battle fought in  
the *land* Desolation. (Mormon 4:19)<sup>45</sup>

##### Hebrew (ʕir//ʕerets)

I will destroy all the wicked of the *land (ʕerets)*;  
that I may cut off all wicked doers from the *city (ʕir)*  
of the Lord. (Psalm 101:8)

Behold, waters rise up out of the north,  
and shall be an overflowing flood,  
and shall overflow the *land (ʕerets)*, and all that is  
therein;

---

<sup>45</sup> See also Mosiah 23:25; Alma 56:14 and 62:7.

the *city* (*ʕr*), and them that dwell therein (Jeremiah 47:2)

and carried it into a *land* (*ʕrets*) of traffick;  
he set it in a *city* (*ʕr*) of merchants. (Ezekiel 17:4)<sup>46</sup>

## Comment

Many of the occurrences of this word pair are in fairly prosaic settings, both in the Book of Mormon and in Hebrew. Yet the relationship between the words *city* and *land* in the Book of Mormon can be seen particularly in the equation “A//B of [toponym],” in which the words *city* and *land* are used alternatively in the construct state with the same place name in the absolute state, as in “city//land of Helam” (Mosiah 23:25), “land//city of Manti” (Alma 56:14) and “city//land [of] Desolation” (Mormon 4:19).<sup>47</sup>

## 5. day//night

### Book of Mormon

A And notwithstanding they being led,  
B the Lord their God,  
B their Redeemer,  
A going before them,  
leading them by *day*  
and giving light unto them by *night*<sup>48</sup> (1 Nephi 17:30)

Pray unto him continually by *day*,  
and give thanks unto his holy name by *night*.  
(2 Nephi 9:52)

<sup>46</sup> See also 2 Kings 11:20, 25:3; Ezekiel 7:23 and 9:9.

<sup>47</sup> Avishur, *Stylistic Studies*, 278; see also John A. Tvedtnes, “Cities and Lands in the Book of Mormon,” in this issue, pages 147–50.

<sup>48</sup> On the formation of a tricolon by the juxtaposition of a chiasm with synonymous parallelism, see John T. Willis, “The Juxtaposition of Synonymous and Chiasmic Parallelism in Tricola in Old Testament Hebrew Psalm Poetry,” *Vetus Testamentum* 29 (1979): 465–80.

A and he did thank and praise the Lord  
 B all the *day* long;  
 B and when the *night* came,  
 A they did not cease to praise the Lord. (Ether 6:9)<sup>49</sup>

### Hebrew (*yom//laylah*)

Let the *day* (*yom*) perish wherein I was born,  
 and the *night* (*laylah*) in which it was said, There is a  
 man child conceived. (Job 3:3)

*Day* (*yom*) unto *day* (*yom*) uttereth speech,  
 and *night* (*laylah*) unto *night* (*laylah*) sheweth  
 knowledge. (Psalm 19:2)

a cloud and smoke by *day* (*yom*),  
 and the shining of a flaming fire by *night* (*laylah*)  
 (Isaiah 4:5)<sup>50</sup>

### Other

A By *night*, the moonlight will shine for you,  
 B By *day*, the bright (?) sunlight will shine for you,  
 B The house will be built for you by *day*,  
 A It will be raised high for you by *night*.<sup>51</sup>

### Comment

Numerous scholars have commented on the exodus theme in the Book of Mormon.<sup>52</sup> Both 1 Nephi 17:30 and Isaiah 4:5 appear to be allusions to Exodus 13:21:

<sup>49</sup> See also 2 Nephi 4:23, 33:3; and Enos 1:4.

<sup>50</sup> Additional examples include Genesis 1:5, 16; 31:40; Psalms 91:5, 121:6; and Jeremiah 36:30.

<sup>51</sup> From the building-inscription of Gudea, prince of Lagash (ca. 2100 B.C.), quoted in K. A. Kitchen, *The Bible in Its World: The Bible and Archaeology Today* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1979), 97.

And the Lord went before them by *day* in a pillar of  
 a cloud,  
 to lead them the way;  
 and by *night* in a pillar of fire,  
 to give them light;  
 to go by *day* and *night*.<sup>53</sup>

## 6. dead//dust

### Book of Mormon

like as one crying from the *dead*, yea,  
 even as one speaking out of the *dust*? (Moroni  
 10:27)

### Hebrew (*rephaʾim*//*ʿaphar*)

Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body  
 shall they arise.  
 Awake and sing, ye that dwell in *dust* (*ʿaphar*):  
 for thy dew is as the dew of herbs,  
 and the earth shall cast out the *dead* (*rephaʾim*).  
 (Isaiah 26:19)

---

<sup>52</sup> George S. Tate, "The Typology of the Exodus Pattern in the Book of Mormon," in Neal E. Lambert, ed., *Literature of Belief: Sacred Scripture and Religious Experiences* (Provo: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1981), 245-62; Terrence L. Szink, "To a Land of Promise (1 Nephi 16-18)," in Kent P. Jackson, ed., *Studies in Scripture: Volume Seven, 1 Nephi to Alma 29* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1987), 60-72; S. Kent Brown, "The Exodus Pattern in the Book of Mormon," *BYU Studies* 30 (Summer 1990): 112-26; Bruce J. Boehm, "Wanderers in the Promised Land: A Study of the Exodus Motif in the Book of Mormon and the Holy Bible," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 3 (Spring 1994): 187-203; and Mark J. Johnson, "The Exodus of Lehi Revisited," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 3 (Fall 1994): 123-26.

<sup>53</sup> Avishur, *Stylistic Studies*, 1, 81, 94, 221, 261, 269, 331, 464-65, 493; Watters, *Formula Criticism*, 168 and 197.

## Comment

The Hebrew *repha'im*, though always translated “dead” or “deceased” in the King James Version, properly refers to the shades or ghosts (*manes*) living in Sheol who, though devoid of blood and therefore weak, continue to possess powers of mind (such as memory). The parallelism of Isaiah 26:19 suggests that the word *dead* in Moroni 10:27 may answer to the Hebrew *repha'im*; this is interesting in light of the representation of the “dead” of Moroni 10:27 as crying out and speaking from the dust, which is consistent with a proper understanding of *repha'im*.

### 7. deliver//destroy

#### Book of Mormon

the Lord is able to *deliver* us,  
 even as our fathers,  
 and to *destroy* Laban,  
 even as the Egyptians. (1 Nephi 4:3)

If ye have the power of God *deliver* yourselves from  
 these bands,  
 and then we will believe that the Lord will *destroy* this  
 people (Alma 14:24)

and enter into a covenant to *destroy* them,  
 and to *deliver* those who were guilty of murder  
 (3 Nephi 6:29)

#### Hebrew (*nathan//charam*)

And when the Lord thy God shall *deliver* (*nathan*)  
 them before thee;  
 thou shalt smite them, and utterly *destroy* (*charam*)  
 them (Deuteronomy 7:2)<sup>54</sup>

---

<sup>54</sup> See also Numbers 21:2.

(*nathan/hamam*)

But the Lord thy God shall *deliver* (*nathan*) them unto thee,  
and shall *destroy* (*hamam*) them with a mighty destruction (Deuteronomy 7:23)

(*nathan/ʿibbad*)

And he shall *deliver* (*nathan*) their kings into thine hand,  
and thou shalt *destroy* (*ʿibbad*) their name from under heaven (Deuteronomy 7:24)

### Comment

The three occurrences of this word pair in Deuteronomy 7 are an illustration of a “fixed + variant” word pair (symbolically, A/B<sub>1</sub>, B<sub>2</sub>, B<sub>3</sub>).<sup>55</sup> The first or “A” word in the pair is the more common verb, while the second or “B” word in the pair involves a series of less common verbs. Thus, the word *deliver* in the Book of Mormon examples can safely be said to correspond in meaning to the verb *nathan*, but the corresponding verb translated “destroy” is uncertain.

## 8. earth//darkness

### Book of Mormon

there is no work of *darkness*  
save it shall be made manifest in the light;  
and there is nothing which is sealed upon the *earth*  
save it shall be loosed. (2 Nephi 30:17)

yea, it shall be brought out of the *earth*,  
and it shall shine forth out of *darkness* (Mormon 8:16)<sup>56</sup>

<sup>55</sup> Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry*, 134.

<sup>56</sup> See also 1 Nephi 12:5; Alma 37:25; and Helaman 5:42.

**Hebrew** (*ʿerets*//*choshek*)

And the *earth* (*ʿerets*) was without form, and void;  
and *darkness* (*choshek*) was upon the face of the  
deep. (Genesis 1:2)

and they shall look unto the *earth* (*ʿerets*);  
and behold trouble and *darkness* (*choshek*) (Isaiah  
8:22)

that maketh the morning *darkness* (*choshek*),  
and treadeth upon the high places of the *earth*  
(*ʿerets*) (Amos 4:13)<sup>57</sup>

**Comment**

The parallelism of Genesis 1:2 suggests that the connection between the words *earth* and *darkness* may derive from an understanding of the primordial earth as a place of darkness and chaos.

**9. earth//mountains****Book of Mormon**

and I saw the *earth* and the rocks, that they rent;  
and I saw *mountains* tumbling into pieces (1 Nephi  
12:4)

A And the *earth* was carried up  
B upon the city of Moronihah,  
B that in the place of the city  
A there became a great *mountain*. (3 Nephi 8:10)

for in his name could they remove *mountains*;  
and in his name could they cause the *earth* to shake  
(Mormon 8:24)<sup>58</sup>

---

<sup>57</sup> See also Psalm 82:5.

**Hebrew (*ʿerets//harim*)**

Therefore will not we fear, though the *earth* (*ʿerets*) be removed,  
and though the *mountains* (*harim*) be carried into the midst of the sea (Psalm 46:2)

who prepareth rain for the *earth* (*ʿerets*),  
who maketh grass to grow upon the *mountains* (*harim*) (Psalm 147:8)

and comprehended the dust of the *earth* (*ʿerets*) in a measure,  
and weighed the *mountains* (*harim*) in scales (Isaiah 40:12)<sup>59</sup>

**10. eyes//heart****Book of Mormon**

in the presence of the pure in *heart*, and the broken *heart*,  
and under the glance of the piercing *eye* of the Almighty God. (Jacob 2:10)

A Now the *eyes* of the people  
B were blinded;  
B therefore they hardened  
A their *hearts* against the words of Abinadi (Mosiah 11:29)

A But behold, if a man shall come among you and shall say:

<sup>58</sup> See also 1 Nephi 19:11 and 2 Nephi 26:5.

<sup>59</sup> See also Deuteronomy 32:22; Psalm 59:2; Isaiah 18:6; and Jonah 2:6. See Dahood, *Psalms II*, 184, 323; Dahood, *Psalms III*, 39, 346, 348, 446; Dahood, *RSP I*, 173; Watson, "Fixed Pairs," 468; Watters, *Formula Criticism*, 161.



B Do this, and there is no iniquity; do that and ye  
 shall not suffer;  
 C yea, he will say: Walk after the pride of your own  
*hearts*;  
 C yea, walk after the pride of your *eyes*,  
 B and do whatsoever your *heart* desireth—  
 A and if a man shall come among you and say this  
 (Helaman 13:27)<sup>60</sup>

### Hebrew (*ʿeynayim/lebab*)

Because thou hast done well in executing that which is  
 right in mine *eyes* (*ʿeynayim*),  
 and hast done unto the house of Ahab according to  
 all that was in mine *heart* (*lebab*) (2 Kings 10:30)

Why doth thine *heart* (*lebab*) carry thee away?  
 and what do thy *eyes* (*ʿeynayim*) wink at (Job 15:12)

The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the *heart*  
 (*lebab*):  
 the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening  
 the *eyes* (*ʿeynayim*). (Psalm 19:8)<sup>61</sup>

### Other<sup>62</sup>

Let the *eye* of the gakkul vat be our *eye*,  
 let the *heart* of the gakkul vat be our *heart*.

<sup>60</sup> Note that this verse involves a double collocation; there is both the chiasmic parallel between lines C and C', and there is also the synonymous parallel between lines C' and B'.

<sup>61</sup> See also Psalms 36:1, 38:10, 73:7, 131:1; Proverbs 4:21, 23:26, 23:33; Ecclesiastes 2:10, 11:9; Isaiah 6:10; and Lamentations 5:17.

<sup>62</sup> These are two of a number of examples culled from ancient Near Eastern texts, quoted with citations in Wilfred G. E. Watson, "The Unnoticed Word-Pair 'eye(s)//heart,'" *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 101 (1989): 398-408, and "The Word-Pair 'eye(s)//heart' Once More," *Studi epigrafici e linguistici sul Vicino Oriente antico* 9 (1992): 27-31.

To any of this (treasure) do not “lift your *eyes* (*inka*),”  
do not “raise your *heart* (*libbaka*)” to perpetrate  
fraud.<sup>63</sup>

## 11. favor//blessing

### Book of Mormon

did have great *favours* shown unto them  
and great *blessings* poured out upon their heads  
(3 Nephi 10:18)

### Hebrew (*ratson//berakah*)

O Naphtali, satisfied with *favour* (*ratson*),  
and full with the *blessing* (*berakah*) of the Lord  
(Deuteronomy 33:23)

## 12. God//man

### Book of Mormon

for the judgments of *God* are always just,  
but the judgments of *man* are not always just.  
(Mosiah 29:12)

### Hebrew (*ʔelohim//ʔadam*)

In *God* (*ʔelohim*) have I put my trust:  
I will not be afraid what *man* (*ʔadam*) can do unto  
me. (Psalm 56:11)

---

<sup>63</sup> Watters, *Formula Criticism*, 185 and 196.

## 13. good//evil

**Book of Mormon**

for there is nothing which is *good* save it comes from  
the Lord:  
and that which is *evil* cometh from the devil. (Omni  
1:25)

The one raised to happiness according to his desires of  
happiness,  
or *good* according to his desires of *good*;  
and the other to *evil* according to his desires of *evil*  
(Alma 41:5)

They that have done *good* shall have everlasting life;  
and they that have done *evil* shall have everlasting  
damnation. (Helaman 12:26)<sup>64</sup>

**Hebrew** (*tob//ra<sup>c</sup>*)[adjectives or substantives]

Do they not err that devise *evil* (*ra<sup>c</sup>*)?  
but mercy and truth shall be to them that devise *good*  
(*tob*). (Proverbs 14:22)

Like as I have brought all this great *evil* (*ra<sup>c</sup>ah*) upon  
this people,  
so will I bring upon them all the *good* (*tobah*) that I  
have promised them. (Jeremiah 32:42)<sup>65</sup>

*(heytib//ra<sup>c</sup>a<sup>c</sup>)*[verbs]

A they are wise  
B to do *evil* (*lehara<sup>c</sup>*),

<sup>64</sup> See also Jacob 6:7; Mosiah 5:2; Alma 5:40–41; Helaman 14:31; Moroni 7:12 and 10:30.

<sup>65</sup> See also 1 Samuel 24:17; Job 2:10; Psalms 34:14, 37:27; Proverbs 13:21; and Ezekiel 36:31.

B but *to do good* (*leheytib*)  
 A they have no knowledge. (Jeremiah 4:22)<sup>66</sup>

### Comment

Note that the Book of Mormon seems to preserve verbal occurrences of this word pair (Mosiah 5:2; Helaman 12:26 and 14:31) in addition to adjectival/substantive occurrences.<sup>67</sup>

## 14. hearken//give ear

### Book of Mormon

A Wherefore, *hearken*,  
 B O my people,  
 B which are of the house of Israel,  
 A and *give ear* unto my words (2 Nephi 25:4)

and blessed are those who *hearken* unto my precepts,  
 and *lend an ear* unto my counsel (2 Nephi 28:30)

### Hebrew (*shema*/*haʿazan*)

If thou wilt diligently *hearken* (*shema*<sup>c</sup>) to the voice of  
 the Lord thy God,  
 and wilt do that which is right in his sight,  
 and wilt *give ear* (*haʿazan*) to his commandments,  
 and keep all his statutes (Exodus 15:26)

but the Lord would not *hearken* (*shema*<sup>c</sup>) to your  
 voice,  
 nor *give ear* (*haʿazan*) unto you. (Deuteronomy  
 1:45)

<sup>66</sup> See also Jeremiah 10:5, 13:23; and Zephaniah 1:12.

<sup>67</sup> Avishur, *Stylistic Studies*, 93, 122, 281; Watters, *Formula Criticism*, 189.

Who among you will *give ear* (*haʿazan*) to this?  
 who will *hearken* (*shema<sup>c</sup>*) and hear for the time to  
 come? (Isaiah 42:23)<sup>68</sup>

### Ugaritic

*Hear* (*shm<sup>c</sup>*), O Krt of T<sup>c</sup>!  
 Listen and be alert of *ear* (*udn*)! (*UT*, 127:42 [CTA,  
 16 VI:42])

### Comment

In Ugaritic, this word pair occurs with the noun *ear* that is cognate with the verb *to give ear*. This word pair also occurs in the Old Testament with the Hebrew nominal cognate *ʿozen* (ear), as in the following examples:

A *Hear* (*shema<sup>c</sup>*) diligently  
 B my speech,  
 B and my declaration  
 A with your *ears* (*ʿazenim*). (Job 13:17)

incline thine *ear* (*ʿozen*) unto me,  
 and *hear* (*shema<sup>c</sup>*) my speech. (Psalm 17:6)<sup>69</sup>

## 15. hearken//hear

### Book of Mormon

*Hearken* unto us,  
 and *hear* ye our precept (2 Nephi 28:5)

---

<sup>68</sup> See also Isaiah 28:23 and Hosea 5:1. In numerous passages the KJV has translated *haʿazan* less literally with the word *hear*; therefore, *hearken//hear* is sometimes a translation of this same word pair. See, for example, Genesis 4:23; Numbers 23:18; Job 33:1 and 34:16.

<sup>69</sup> Avishur, *Stylistic Studies*, 101, 285, 288, 665-66; Dahood, *RSP I*, 360-61; Gevirtz, *Patterns*, 27; Watters, *Formula Criticism*, 155.

Wherefore, my brethren, *hear* me,  
and *hearken* to the word of the Lord (Jacob 2:27)

*Hearken*, O ye house of Israel,  
and *hear* the words of me,<sup>70</sup> a prophet of the Lord.  
(Jacob 5:2)<sup>71</sup>

### Hebrew (*hiqshib//shema<sup>c</sup>*)

*Hear* (*shema<sup>c</sup>*) now my reasoning,  
and *hearken* (*hiqshib*) to the pleadings of my lips.  
(Job 13:6)

To whom shall I speak, and give warning, that they may  
*hear* (*shema<sup>c</sup>*)?  
behold, their ear is uncircumcised, and they cannot  
*hearken* (*hiqshib*) (Jeremiah 6:10)

*Hear* (*shema<sup>c</sup>*), all ye people;  
*hearken* (*hiqshib*), O earth, and all that therein is  
(Micah 1:2)<sup>72</sup>

### Comment

As the verb *shema<sup>c</sup>* may be translated "hearken" and the verb *ha<sup>2</sup>azan* is sometimes rendered "hear" in the KJV, translational uncertainty exists between this word pair and *hearken//give ear*. Since, however, the separate word pair *shema<sup>c</sup>//hiqshib* also commonly occurs, I have listed *hearken//hear* as a separate word pair here.<sup>73</sup>

---

<sup>70</sup> In Hebrew, possession is shown by the addition of a pronominal suffix onto a noun in the construct state. Thus, an expression such as *debaray*, which we would ordinarily translate "my words," quite literally means "words of me." See John A. Tvedtnes, "Hebraisms in the Book of Mormon: A Preliminary Survey," *BYU Studies* 11/1 (1970): 50-60.

<sup>71</sup> See also 3 Nephi 30:1.

<sup>72</sup> See also Hosea 5:1.

<sup>73</sup> Avishur, *Stylistic Studies*, 285-86, 648; Watters, *Formula Criticism*, 172.

## 16. heart//soul

## Book of Mormon

for his *soul* did rejoice,  
and his whole *heart* was filled (1 Nephi 1:15)

Yea, my *heart* sorroweth because of my flesh;  
my *soul* grieveth because of mine iniquities. (2 Nephi  
4:17)

Behold, my *soul* abhorreth sin,  
and my *heart* delighteth in righteousness (2 Nephi  
9:49)<sup>74</sup>

Hebrew (*lebab//nephesh*)

How long shall I take counsel in my *soul* (*nephesh*),  
having sorrow in my *heart* (*lebab*) daily? (Psalm  
13:2)<sup>75</sup>

*(lebab//me'im)*

my *bowels* (*me'im*) are troubled;  
mine *heart* (*lebab*) is turned within me (Lamentations  
1:20)<sup>76</sup>

*(lebab//kabed)*

Therefore my *heart* (*lebab*) is glad,  
and my *glory* (*kabodi*) [repoint as *kebedi* and read  
“my *liver*”] rejoiceth (Psalm 16:9)

<sup>74</sup> See also 1 Nephi 17:47; 2 Nephi 1:21; 4:15–16, 26–28, 30; 25:13; Alma 31:31; and Helaman 7:6.

<sup>75</sup> See also Psalms 24:4 and 84:2, and Proverbs 2:10 and 24:12.

<sup>76</sup> See also Psalm 22:14 and Jeremiah 4:19.

My *heart (lebab)* is fixed, O God,  
 my *heart (lebab)* is fixed;  
 I will sing and give praise.  
 Awake up, my *glory (kabodi)* [repoint as *kebedi* and  
 read "my *liver*"];  
 awake psaltery and harp:  
 I myself will awake early. (Psalm 57:7–8)

O God, my *heart (lebab)* is fixed;  
 I will sing and give praise,  
 even with my *glory (kabodi)* [repoint as *kebedi* and  
 read "my *liver*"]. (Psalm 108:1)

### Ugaritic

Pgt weeps in her *heart (lb)*  
 She sheds tears in the *liver (kbd)* (*UT*, 1 *Aqht*:34–35  
 [*CTA*, 19 I:34–35])

ʿIl laughs in the *heart (lb)*  
 Yea chuckles in the *liver (kbd)*. (*UT*, 75 I:13 [*CTA*, 12  
 I:13])

Her *liver (kbd)* swells with laughter,  
 Her *heart (lb)* fills up with joy,  
 Anath's *liver (kbd)* exults.<sup>77</sup> (*UT*, ʿnt II:25–26 [*CTA*,  
 3 II:25–26])

### Akkadian<sup>78</sup>

May your *heart (libbaka)* be blest  
 Your *mind* [or "soul"] (*kabattaka*) be happy

<sup>77</sup> The translation is H. L. Ginsberg's; see J. B. Pritchard, ed., *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, 3rd ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 136.

<sup>78</sup> These and other Akkadian illustrations are quoted with citations in Avishur, *Stylistic Studies*, 563.



my angry *mind* (*kabatti*) did not relent toward him  
 my furious *heart* (*libbi*) did not quiet down

Disturbed was my *mind* (*heart*) ([*li*]bbi)  
 filled was my *soul* (*napishtim*)

### Aramaic<sup>79</sup>

if you say in your *soul* (*nbsh*)  
 and think in your *mind* [or “heart”](*lbb*)

### Comment

The Book of Mormon occurrences of this word pair may all relate to the Hebrew *lebab//nephesh*. It is possible, however, that at least some of the Book of Mormon occurrences relate either to the *lebab//meʿim* (*heart//bowels*) word pair or the *lebab//kabad* (*heart//liver*) word pair. Like the heart, the bowels and the liver are internal organs used metaphorically for the seat of feeling; accordingly, these words may be translated with the English word “soul.”<sup>80</sup> The emendation of *kabad* “liver” for *kabod* “glory” was suggested long ago<sup>81</sup> and makes sense because (1) a Ugaritic parallel pair, *shmch//gl* (*rejoice//exult* [KJV: *glad//rejoiceth*]), is present in Psalm 16:9, which reinforces the possibility of Ugaritic usage here;<sup>82</sup> (2) in Genesis 49:6, the word *kabodi* (translated in that passage in the KJV as “mine honour”) was translated as “my liver” (*ta hepata mou*) in the Septuagint,<sup>83</sup> and (3) the Revised Standard Version in fact reads “my soul” in the three passages

<sup>79</sup> Quoted with citation in Avishur, *Stylistic Studies*, 569.

<sup>80</sup> For example, Watters, *Formula Criticism*, 210, describes *lb//mʿym* as “heart//soul.”

<sup>81</sup> Tregelles, *Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon*, 382.

<sup>82</sup> Dahood, *RSP I*, 245-46.

<sup>83</sup> Dahood, in “A New Translation of Ge. 49,6a,” *Biblica* 36 (1955): 229, would render this verse as follows:

Into their counsel let not my *soul* enter,  
 let not my *liver* be seen in their assembly.

for which this emendation is suggested above, and that translation fits the context of those passages far better than "glory."<sup>84</sup>

A perusal of both the Book of Mormon and other occurrences of this word pair will reveal that it is associated with deep feeling, but the pair itself is neutral; that is, it may be used with equal facility to express either great joy or great despair.<sup>85</sup>

## 17. hear//understand

### Book of Mormon

you should hearken unto me,  
and open your ears that ye may *hear*,  
and your hearts that ye may *understand* (Mosiah 2:9)

And the multitude did *hear* and do bear record;  
and their hearts were open  
and they did *understand* in their hearts the words  
which he prayed. (3 Nephi 19:33)

---

<sup>84</sup> I made this argument (following Dahood) in "Understanding Old Testament Poetry," 54 n. 10. I later was pleasantly surprised to learn that Paul Y. Hoskisson, "Textual Evidences for the Book of Mormon," in *The Book of Mormon: First Nephi, the Doctrinal Foundation*, ed. Monte S. Nyman and Charles D. Tate, Jr. (Provo: Brigham Young University Religious Studies Center, 1988), 283-96, had previously made a persuasive argument in connection with the expression "their souls did expand" in Alma 5:9 that "soul" would be a proper translation of *kabed* "liver" in the Book of Mormon.

<sup>85</sup> Avishur, *Stylistic Studies*, 12, 16, 218, 222, 279, 290, 540, 562-63, 568-69, 577-78, 670; Barney, "Understanding Old Testament Poetry," 54; Cassuto, *The Goddess Anath*, 120; Dahood, "A New Translation"; Dahood, *Psalms I*, 90; Dahood, *Psalms II*, 54; Dahood, *Psalms III*, 451; Dahood, *RSP I*, 245-46; John Gray, *The Legacy of Canaan: The Ras Shamra Texts and Their Relevance to the Old Testament*, 2nd ed. (Leiden: Brill, 1965), 282; Held, "More Parallel Word Pairs," 160 n. 174; Hoskisson, "Textual Evidences," 286; Charles F. Pfeiffer, *Ras Shamra and the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1962), 59-60; Joaquin Sanmartin, review of *Stammesspruch und Geschichte: Die Angaben der Stammessprache von Gen 49, Dtn 33 und Jdc 5 über die politischen und kultischen Zustände im damaligen "Israel"*, by Hans-Jürgen Zobel, *Biblica* 50 (1969): 572; Ernest Vogt, "Vetus Testamentum antiquissimis textibus 'Ras Shamra' illustratum," *Verbum Domini* 17 (1937): 156; Watters, *Formal Criticism*, 210.

**Hebrew** (*shema*//*bin*)

Lo, these are parts of his ways: but how little a portion  
 is *heard* (*nishma*<sup>c</sup>) of him?  
 but the thunder of his power who can *understand*  
 (*yithbonan*)? (Job 26:14)

lest they see with their eyes,  
 and *hear* (*shema*<sup>c</sup>) with their ears,  
 and *understand* (*bin*) with their heart (Isaiah 6:10)

Have ye not known? have ye not *heard* (*shema*<sup>c</sup>)?  
 hath it not been told you from the beginning?  
 have ye not *understood* (*haben*) from the foundations  
 of the earth? (Isaiah 40:21)<sup>86</sup>

**Ugaritic**

*Hear* (*sm*<sup>c</sup>), O Aliyn Baal!  
*Perceive* (*bn*), O Rider of Clouds! (*UT*, 51 V:121–22  
 [*CTA*, 4 V:121–22])<sup>87</sup>

**18. heavens//earth****Book of Mormon**

He ruleth high in the *heavens*, for it is his throne,  
 and this *earth* is his footstool. (1 Nephi 17:39)

<sup>86</sup> For this same pair with nominal cognates, see Job 34:16; Proverbs 1:5, 4:1; and Isaiah 33:19.

<sup>87</sup> Avishur, *Stylistic Studies*, 8, 12, 42, 670; Boling, "Synonymous Parallelism," 224; Dahood, *RSP I*, 361; Dahood, "The Phoenician Contribution to Biblical Wisdom Literature," in *The Role of the Phoenicians in the Interaction of Mediterranean Civilization*, ed. W. A. Ward (Beirut: American University of Beirut, 1968), 123-52; Ginsberg, "Rebellion and Death," 172; Svi Rin, *Acts of the Gods: The Ugaritic Epic Poetry* (Jerusalem: Israel Society for Biblical Research, 1968), 165; Cullen I. K. Story, "The Book of Proverbs and Northwest Semitic Literature," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 64 (1945): 328; Watson, "Fixed Pairs," 463; Watters, *Formula Criticism*, 160.

Behold the glory of the King of all the *earth*;  
and also the King of *heaven* shall very soon shine  
forth (Alma 5:50)

And at my command the *heavens* are opened and are  
shut;  
and at my word the *earth* shall shake (Ether 4:9)<sup>88</sup>

### Hebrew (*shamayim*//*'erets*)

The *heaven* (*shamayim*) shall reveal his iniquity;  
and the *earth* (*'erets*) shall rise up against him. (Job  
20:27)

Who teacheth us more than the beasts of the *earth*  
(*'erets*),  
and maketh us wiser than the fowls of *heaven*  
(*shamayim*)? (Job 35:11)

Knowest thou the ordinances of *heaven* (*shamayim*)?  
canst thou set the dominion thereof in the *earth*  
(*'erets*)? (Job 38:33)<sup>89</sup>

### Ugaritic

She gathers water and washes  
With dew of *heaven* (*shmm*)  
Fat of *earth* (*arts*)  
Rain of the Rider of Clouds.<sup>90</sup> (*UT*, *ʾnt* II:39 and  
IV:87[*CTA*, 3 II:39 and IV:87])

<sup>88</sup> See also 1 Nephi 1:14; 2 Nephi 29:7; Alma 7:9; and Helaman 8:24.

<sup>89</sup> This word pair is ubiquitous in Hebrew.

<sup>90</sup> Intriguingly, Judges 5:4 preserves the three-word extension *earth//heavens//clouds*:

the *earth* trembled,  
and the *heavens* dropped,  
the *clouds* also dropped water.

A lip to *earth* (*arts*)

A lip to *heaven* (*shmm*) (*UT*, 52:61–62 and 67  
II:2[*CTA*, 23:61–62 and 5 II:2])<sup>91</sup>

## 19. highway//road

### Book of Mormon

And there were many *highways* cast up,  
and many *roads* made (3 Nephi 6:8)

And the *highways* were broken up,  
and the level *roads* were spoiled,  
and many smooth places became rough. (3 Nephi  
8:13)

### Hebrew (*mesillah*//*derek*)

The *highway* (*mesillah*) of the upright is to depart from  
evil:  
he that keepeth his *way* (*derek*) preserveth his soul.  
(Proverbs 16:17)

Prepare ye the *way* (*derek*) of the Lord,  
make straight in the desert a *highway* (*mesillah*) for  
our God. (Isaiah 40:3)

Go through, go through the gates;  
prepare ye the *way* (*derek*) of the people;  
cast up, cast up the *highway* (*mesillah*) (Isaiah  
62:10)<sup>92</sup>

---

<sup>91</sup> Boling, "Synonymous Parallelism," 239-40; Dahood, *Psalms II*, 190, 358; Dahood, *Psalms III*, 19, 22, 346, 446; Dahood, *RSP I*, 126-27 and 356; Gray, *The Legacy of Canaan*, 289; Gevirtz, *Patterns*, 36; H. Ringgren, "Einige Bemerkungen zum LXXIII Psalm," *Vetus Testamentum* 3 (1953): 267; Watters, "Formula Criticism," 155 and 199.

<sup>92</sup> Other examples include Isaiah 35:8 and Jeremiah 31:21.

## Comment

The Hebrew word *derek* is never translated with the English word *road* in the KJV, even though that is its most basic meaning. The English words *highway* and *road* do not occur in the same verse anywhere in the KJV, yet *highway//road* is an accurate translation of *mesillah//derek*, which occurs in the English of the KJV as *highway//way*. This circumstance tends to suggest that the source of this word pair in the Book of Mormon was not the English of the KJV.<sup>93</sup>

## 20. Jacob//Israel

### Book of Mormon

And they shall assist my people, the remnant of *Jacob*,  
and also as many of the house of *Israel* as shall come  
(3 Nephi 21:23)

### Hebrew (*Yaʿaqob//Yisraʿel*)

He hath not beheld iniquity in *Jacob* (*Yaʿaqob*),  
neither hath he seen perverseness in *Israel* (*Yisraʿel*).  
(Numbers 23:21)

Surely there is no enchantment against *Jacob*  
(*Yaʿaqob*),  
neither is there any divination against *Israel*  
(*Yisraʿel*). (Numbers 23:23)

How goodly are thy tents, O *Jacob* (*Yaʿaqob*),  
and thy tabernacles, O *Israel* (*Yisraʿel*)! (Numbers  
24:5)<sup>94</sup>

---

<sup>93</sup> Tidwell, "A Road and a Way."

<sup>94</sup> This word pair is ubiquitous in Hebrew; see Barney, "Understanding Old Testament Poetry," 53–54; Watters, *Formula Criticism*, 64 and 162.

## 21. knees//earth

### Book of Mormon

the king did bow down before the Lord, upon his  
*knees*;  
 yea, even he did prostrate himself upon the *earth*  
 (Alma 22:17)

### Hebrew (*bircayim*//*ʿerets*)

And Joseph brought them out from between his *knees*  
 (*bircayim*),  
 and he bowed himself with his face to the *earth*  
 (*ʿerets*). (Genesis 48:12)

and he cast himself down upon the *earth* (*ʿerets*),  
 and put his face between his *knees* (*bircayim*).  
 (1 Kings 18:42)

## 22. lead//destroy

### Book of Mormon

according to his word he did *destroy* them;  
 and according to his word he did *lead* them (1 Nephi  
 17:31)

A And he *leadeth* away  
 B the righteous into precious lands,  
 B and the wicked  
 A he *destroyeth* (1 Nephi 17:38)

seeking *to destroy* the church,  
 and *to lead* astray the people of the Lord (Mosiah  
 27:10)

**Hebrew** (*ʿashar//bala<sup>c</sup>*)

O my people, they which *lead* (*ʿashar*) thee cause thee  
to err,  
and *destroy* (*bala<sup>c</sup>*) the way of thy paths. (Isaiah  
3:12)

**23. light//darkness****Book of Mormon**

Yea, they were encircled about with everlasting  
*darkness* and destruction;  
but behold, he has brought them into his everlasting  
*light* (Alma 26:15)

there was no *darkness* in all that night,  
but it was as *light* as though it was mid-day. (3 Nephi  
1:19)

**Hebrew** (*ʿor//choshek*)

Where is the way where *light* (*ʿor*) dwelleth?  
and as for *darkness* (*choshek*), where is the place  
thereof? (Job 38:19)

If I say, Surely the *darkness* (*choshek*) shall cover me;  
even the night shall be *light* (*ʿor*) about me. (Psalm  
139:11)

then shall thy *light* (*ʿor*) rise in obscurity,  
and thy *darkness* (*choshek*) be as the noonday (Isaiah  
58:10)<sup>95</sup>

---

<sup>95</sup> See also Genesis 1:5; Job 3:4, 12:22, 30:26; Isaiah 45:7, 50:10; and Lamentations 3:2. See Avishur, *Stylistic Studies*, 117 and 283; Watters, *Formula Criticism*, 28 and 189.



## 24. Lord//God

## Book of Mormon

and did offer sacrifice and burnt offerings unto the  
*Lord*;  
 and they gave thanks unto the *God* of Israel.  
 (1 Nephi 5:9)

Behold, the *Lord* esteemeth all flesh in one;  
 he that is righteous is favored of *God*. (1 Nephi  
 17:35)

Yea, and the people did observe to keep the  
 commandments of the *Lord*;  
 and they were strict in observing the ordinances of  
*God* (Alma 30:3)<sup>96</sup>

Hebrew (*YHWH//<sup>2</sup>elohim*)

For I have kept the ways of the *Lord* (*YHWH*),  
 and have not wickedly departed from my *God*  
 (<sup>2</sup>*elohim*). (Psalm 18:21)

As for *God* (<sup>2</sup>*elohim*), his way is perfect:  
 the word of the *Lord* (*YHWH*) is tried (Psalm 18:30)

For who is *God* (<sup>2</sup>*elohim*) save the *Lord* (*YHWH*)?  
 or who is a rock save our *God* (<sup>2</sup>*elohim*)? (Psalm  
 18:31)<sup>97</sup>

---

<sup>96</sup> See also 1 Nephi 1:1, 18:16; 2 Nephi 26:7; Mosiah 7:26; Alma 16:21, 37:36–37; and Ether 3:12.

<sup>97</sup> This word pair is ubiquitous in Hebrew. See Avishur, *Stylistic Studies*, 21–22, 26, 45, 238–39, 254, 636; Waters, *Formula Criticism*, 156

## 25. mountain//valley

### Book of Mormon

A and there shall be many *mountains* laid low,  
 B like unto a *valley*,  
 B and there shall be many places which are now  
 called *valleys*  
 A which shall become *mountains*, whose height is great.  
 (Helaman 14:23)

### Hebrew (*har//gay*<sup>3</sup>)

And I will lay thy flesh upon the *mountains* (*harim*),  
 and fill the *valleys* (*ge<sup>2</sup>ayoth*) with thy height.  
 (Ezekiel 32:5)<sup>98</sup>

### (*har//biq<sup>5</sup>ah*)

They go up by the *mountains* (*harim*);  
 they go down by the *valleys* (*beqa<sup>5</sup>oth*)  
 unto the place which thou hast founded for them.  
 (Psalm 104:8)

### (*har//shephelah*)

and in the cities of the *mountains* (*har*),  
 and in the cities of the *valley* (*shephelah*) (Jeremiah  
 32:44)

### (*har//<sup>5</sup>emeq*)

And the *mountains* (*harim*) shall be molten under him,  
 and the *valleys* (*<sup>5</sup>amaqim*) shall be cleft (Micah 1:4)

---

<sup>98</sup> See also Isaiah 40:4.

## Comment

Like the word pair *deliver//destroy*, this is a fixed + variant word pair; the common word *har* (mountain) is paired with a variety of more obscure, more poetic words, all having the essential meaning of "valley."

## 26. nations//earth

### Book of Mormon

and shall be lifted up in the pride of their hearts above  
all *nations*,  
and above all the people of the whole *earth* (3 Nephi  
16:10)

### Hebrew (*goyim//ʿerets*)

And he will lift up an ensign to the *nations* (*goyim*)  
from far,  
and will hiss unto them from the end of the *earth*  
(*ʿerets*) (Isaiah 5:26)

it stirreth up the dead for thee,  
even all the chief ones of the *earth* (*ʿerets*);  
it hath raised up from their thrones  
all the kings of the *nations* (*goyim*). (Isaiah 14:9)

This is the purpose that is purposed upon the whole  
*earth* (*ʿerets*):  
and this is the hand that is stretched out upon all the  
*nations* (*goyim*). (Isaiah 14:26)<sup>99</sup>

---

<sup>99</sup> Additional examples include 1 Chronicles 16:31; Psalms 67:2, 82:8; Isaiah 11:12, 52:10; Jeremiah 10:10, 25:31, 50:23, 50:46, 51:7, 51:41; Ezekiel 32:18; and Habakkuk 3:6. See Avishur, *Stylistic Studies*, 278.

## 27. old men//young men

### Book of Mormon

and I also caused that all my *old men* that could bear arms,  
and also all my *young men* that were able to bear arms (Mosiah 10:9)

### Hebrew (*zeqenim//bachurim*)

Both *young men* (*bachurim*), and maidens;  
*old men* (*zeqenim*), and children (Psalm 148:12)

The glory of *young men* (*bachurim*) is their strength:  
and the beauty of *old men* (*zeqenim*) is the gray head. (Proverbs 20:29)

your *old men* (*zeqenim*) shall dream dreams,  
your *young men* (*bachurim*) shall see visions (Joel 2:28)<sup>100</sup>

## 28. people//Israel

### Book of Mormon

yea, they shall be numbered among the house of *Israel*;  
and they shall be a blessed *people* upon the promised land forever (1 Nephi 14:2)

And at that day shall the remnant of our seed know that they are of the house of *Israel*,  
and that they are the covenant *people* of the Lord (1 Nephi 15:14)

---

<sup>100</sup> Avishur, *Stylistic Studies*, 283.

A Wherefore, hearken,  
 B O my *people*,  
 B which are of the house of *Israel*,  
 A and give ear unto my words (2 Nephi 25:4)

### Hebrew (*ʿam*//*Yisraʿel*)

Oh that my *people* (*ʿam*) had hearkened unto me,  
 and *Israel* (*Yisraʿel*) had walked in my ways! (Psalm  
 81:13)

Blessed be the Lord God of *Israel* (*Yisraʿel*) from  
 everlasting to everlasting:  
 and let all the *people* (*ʿam*) say, Amen. (Psalm  
 106:48)

but *Israel* (*Yisraʿel*) doth not know,  
 my *people* (*ʿam*) doth not consider. (Isaiah 1:3)<sup>101</sup>

## 29. place//land

### Book of Mormon

And there were many highways cast up,  
 and many roads made,  
 which led from city to city,  
 and from *land* to *land*,  
 and from *place* to *place*. (3 Nephi 6:8)

### Hebrew (*maqom*//*ʿerets*)

Am I now come up without the Lord against this *place*  
 (*maqom*) to destroy it?  
 The Lord said to me, Go up against this *land* (*ʿerets*),  
 and destroy it. (2 Kings 18:25)

---

<sup>101</sup> This word pair is common in Hebrew. See Watters, *Formula Criticism*, 155.

But he shall die in the *place* (*maqom*) whither they  
 have led him captive,  
 and shall see this *land* (*'erets*) no more. (Jeremiah  
 22:12)

I will judge thee in the *place* (*maqom*) where thou wast  
 created,  
 in the *land* (*'erets*) of thy nativity. (Ezekiel  
 21:30)<sup>102</sup>

### Comment

The association of *land* (*'erets*) with both *city* (*'ir*) and *place* (*maqom*) explains the three-word extension *city//land//place* of 3 Nephi 6:8.

## 30. pride//wisdom

### Book of Mormon

See that ye are not lifted up unto *pride*;  
 yea, see that ye do not boast in your own *wisdom*  
 (Alma 38:11)

### Hebrew (*zadon//chakmah*)

When *pride* (*zadon*) cometh, then cometh shame:  
 but with the lowly is *wisdom* (*chakmah*). (Proverbs  
 11:2)

Only by *pride* (*zadon*) cometh contention:  
 but with the well advised is *wisdom* (*chakmah*).  
 (Proverbs 13:10)

---

<sup>102</sup> See also Jeremiah 7:7.

### 31. righteous//wicked

#### Book of Mormon

I had spoken hard things against the *wicked*, according  
to the truth;  
and the *righteous* have I justified (1 Nephi 16:2)

And he raiseth up a *righteous* nation,  
and destroyeth the nations of the *wicked*.

A And he leadeth away

B the *righteous* into precious lands,

B and the *wicked*

A he destroyeth (1 Nephi 17:37–38)

#### Hebrew (*tsaddiq//resha ʿim*)

The Lord will not suffer the soul of the *righteous*  
(*tsaddiq*) to famish:  
but he casteth away the substance of the *wicked*  
(*resha ʿim*). (Proverbs 10:3)

The mouth of a *righteous man* (*tsaddiq*) is a well of  
life:  
but violence covereth the mouth of the *wicked*  
(*resha ʿim*). (Proverbs 10:11)

The fear of the *wicked* (*rasha ʿ*), it shall come upon  
him:  
but the desire of the *righteous* (*tsaddiqim*) shall be  
granted.

A As the whirlwind passeth,

B so is the *wicked* (*rasha ʿ*) no more:

B but the *righteous* (*tsaddiq*)

A is an everlasting foundation. (Proverbs 10:24–25)<sup>103</sup>

<sup>103</sup> This word pair is ubiquitous in Proverbs; see further 10:16, 28, 30, 32; 11:8, 10, 21, 23, 31; 12:5, 7, 10, 12, 26; 13:5, 9, 25; 14:19, 32; 15:6, 28–29;

### 32. sea//earth

#### Book of Mormon

from the isles of the *sea*,  
and from the four parts of the *earth* (2 Nephi 10:8)

And they were spared and were not sunk and buried up  
in the *earth*;  
and they were not drowned in the depths of the  
*sea*<sup>104</sup> (3 Nephi 10:13)

#### Hebrew (*yam//ʿerets*)

The measure thereof is longer than the *earth* (*ʿerets*),  
and broader than the *sea* (*yam*). (Job 11:9)

Or speak to the *earth* (*ʿerets*), and it shall teach thee:  
and the fishes of the *sea* (*yam*) shall declare unto  
thee. (Job 12:8)

who art the confidence of all the ends of the *earth*  
(*ʿerets*),  
and of them that are afar off upon the *sea* (*yam*)  
(Psalm 65:5)<sup>105</sup>

#### Ugaritic

A They set a lip against the *netherworld* (*arts*),  
B a lip against the heavens

---

18:5; 21:12, 18; 24:15, 24; 25:26; 28:1, 12, 28; 29:2, 7, and 16. See also Job 10:15; Psalms 7:9, 11; 11:5; 34:21; 37:21–22; 58:10; 75:10; 125:3; 129:4; Isaiah 5:23; Jeremiah 12:1; Ezekiel 13:22; 18:20, 24; and 33:12. See Avishur, *Stylistic Studies*, 68–69, 117–18, 275, 294, 322.

<sup>104</sup> As “depths of the sea” is a construct formulation, “earth” could also parallel “depths” in this passage; see the discussion of *ʿerets//tehemoth* in the main body of this article.

<sup>105</sup> See also Psalm 72:8; Amos 5:8 and 9:6.



C And entered into their mouth  
 B The birds of the heavens  
 A and the fish of the *sea* (*ym*) (*UT*, 52:62–63 [*CTA*,  
 23:62–63])<sup>106</sup>

### 33. *seen//heard*

#### Book of Mormon

Ye have *seen* an angel, and he spake unto you;  
 yea, ye have *heard* his voice from time to time  
 (1 Nephi 17:45)

for I truly had *seen* angels, and they had ministered  
 unto me.  
 And also, I had *heard* the voice of the Lord speaking  
 unto me in very word (Jacob 7:5)

there are none of them that have *seen* so great things as  
 ye have *seen*;  
 neither have they *heard* so great things as ye have  
*heard*. (3 Nephi 19:36)<sup>107</sup>

#### Hebrew (*raʿah//shema*<sup>c</sup>)

I have surely *seen* (*raʿah*) the affliction of my people  
 which are in Egypt,  
 and have *heard* (*shema*<sup>c</sup>) their cry by reason of their  
 taskmasters (Exodus 3:7)

we have *heard* (*shema*<sup>c</sup>) his voice out of the midst of  
 the fire:

---

<sup>106</sup> The translation is Dahood's (see *RSP I*, 123), as is the suggestion of a chiasmic reading of these lines. See Dahood, *Psalms III*, 446; Dahood, *RSP I*, 122–23.

<sup>107</sup> See also Jacob 2:31 and 3 Nephi 15:24.

we have *seen* (*raʿah*) this day that God doth talk with man, and he liveth. (Deuteronomy 5:24)

Lo, mine eye hath *seen* (*raʿah*) all this,  
mine ear hath *heard* (*shemaʿ*) and understood it.  
(Job 13:1)<sup>108</sup>

### 34. sin//righteousness

#### Book of Mormon

Behold, my soul abhorreth *sin*,  
and my heart delighteth in *righteousness* (2 Nephi 9:49)

#### Hebrew (*chattaʿh*//*tsedaqah*)

*Righteousness* (*tsedaqah*) exalteth a nation:  
but *sin* (*chattaʿh*) is a reproach to any people.  
(Proverbs 14:34)

A because thou hast not given him warning,  
B he shall die in his *sin* (*chattaʿh*),  
B and his *righteousness* (*tsedaqah*) which he hath done  
A shall not be remembered (Ezekiel 3:20)

All his *righteousness* (*tsedaqah*) that he hath done shall not be mentioned:  
in his trespass that he hath trespassed,  
and in his *sin* (*chattaʿh*) that he hath sinned (Ezekiel 18:24)

---

<sup>108</sup> See also 2 Kings 20:5; Isaiah 38:5, 64:4, 66:8 and 19. See Avishur, *Stylistic Studies*, 87 263, 286; Watters, *Formula Criticism*, 160.

## 35. tell [publish]//declare

**Book of Mormon**

A for behold, I have things to *tell* you concerning

B that which is to come.

C And the things which I shall *tell* you

D are made known unto me by an angel from  
God.

E And he said unto me: Awake;

F and I awoke, and behold he stood before  
me.

E And he said unto me: Awake,

D and hear the words

C which I shall *tell* thee;

B for behold, I am come

A to *declare* unto you the glad tidings of great joy.

(Mosiah 3:1-3)

For they did *publish* peace;

they did *publish* good tidings of good;

and they did *declare* unto the people

that the Lord reigneth. (Mosiah 27:37)

**Hebrew** (*nagad*//*hishmiʿa*)

Behold, the former things are come to pass,

and new things do I *declare* (*nagad*):

before they spring forth

I *tell* (*hishmiʿa*) you of them. (Isaiah 42:9)

*Tell* ye (*nagad*), and bring them near:

yea, let them take counsel together:

who hath *declared* (*hishmiʿa*) this from ancient time?

who hath *told* (*nagad*) it from that time? (Isaiah

45:21)

*Declare (nagad)* this in the house of Jacob,  
and *publish (hishmi'a)* it in Judah (Jeremiah 5:20)<sup>109</sup>

### Comment

This pair is not only collocated in the chiasmic structure of Mosiah 3:1–3, it is also collocated in the parallelism at the end of that chiasm, which may be rewritten as follows:

Awake, and hear the words which I shall *tell* thee;  
for behold, I am come to *declare* unto you the glad  
tidings of great joy.

Interestingly, a similar double collocation occurs in the alternating pattern of Isaiah 45:21.

The verb rendered “tell” in Isaiah and “publish” in Jeremiah is the *hiphil* or causative form of the verb *shema*<sup>c</sup>. In the *qal* or simple active stem this verb means “to hear,” but in the *hiphil* it means “to tell” (that is, to cause one to hear). It is interesting that in one passage Joseph uses the translation “tell,” and in a related passage (compare the expression “glad tidings of great joy” from Mosiah 3:3 with “good tidings of good” from Mosiah 27:37) he renders the verb with the alternate translation “publish.”<sup>110</sup>

### 36. thousands//ten thousands

#### Book of Mormon

A Yea, will ye sit in idleness  
B while ye are surrounded with *thousands* of those,  
B yea, and *tens of thousands*,  
A who do also sit in idleness (Alma 60:22)

A insomuch that there were *thousands*  
B who did join themselves unto the church  
C and were baptized unto repentance.

<sup>109</sup> See also Isaiah 48:20; Jeremiah 4:5, 46:14, and 50:2.

<sup>110</sup> Avishur, *Stylistic Studies*, 147, 272, 293, 307.

D And so great was the prosperity of the church,  
 and so many the blessings which were poured  
 out upon the people,  
 E that even the high priests  
 E and the teachers were themselves astonished  
 beyond measure.  
 D And it came to pass that the work of the Lord  
 did prosper  
 C unto the baptizing  
 B and uniting to the church of God, many souls,  
 A yea, even *tens of thousands*. (Helaman 3:24–26)

### Hebrew (*ʿalaphim//rebaboth*)

How should one chase a *thousand* (*ʿeleph*),  
 and two put *ten thousand* (*rebabah*) to flight  
 (Deuteronomy 32:30)

A *thousand* (*ʿeleph*) shall fall at thy side,  
 and *ten thousand* (*rebabah*) at thy right hand (Psalm  
 91:7)

Will the Lord be pleased with *thousands* (*ʿalaphim*) of  
 rams,  
 or with *ten thousands* (*rebaboth*) of rivers of oil?  
 (Micah 6:7)<sup>111</sup>

### Aramaic

thousand thousands (*ʿeleph ʿalaphim*) ministered unto  
 him,  
 and ten thousand times ten thousand (*ribbo ribwan*)  
 stood before him (Daniel 7:10)

### Ugaritic

Behold *chzz*-troops by the *thousand* (*alp*)  
 And *kmyr*-troops by the *myriad* (*rbt*); literally, “ten

<sup>111</sup> See also Deuteronomy 33:17; 1 Samuel 18:7, 21:11, and 29:5.

thousand") (*UT, Krt:92–93 and 180–81*[*CTA, 14 II:92–93 and IV:180–81*])

He casts silver by *thousands* (*alpm*) (of shekels)

Gold he casts by *myriads* (*rbtt*) (*UT, 51 I:28–29* [*CTA, 4 I:28–29*])

By the *thousand* (*alp*) acres

Yea *myriad* (*rbt*) hectacres (*UT, 51 V:86, 118–19 and VIII:24–25*[*CTA, V:86, 118–19 and VIII:24–25*])<sup>112</sup>

## Comment

As a number generally does not have a true synonym, a common practice in Hebrew poetry was to increase the number in the first line by some fixed factor in the second line to form the parallelism. The most common such pattern may be symbolically represented as  $A//A+1$ , as in Micah 5:5:

then shall we raise against him *seven* shepherds,  
and *eight* principal men.

The word pair *thousands//ten thousands* may be understood either as number parallelism of the pattern  $A//10A$ , or simply as a normal lexical pair.

Watters, following Gevirtz, made the following observation:

In the eulogy of Saul and David (1 Samuel 18:7), the following praise is given the commanders, Saul and David:

Saul has smitten his *thousands*,  
and David his *ten thousands*.

This lyric has been customarily understood as a criticism of Saul's ability as a soldier. By a proper understanding of the use of the word pair "thousand/ten

---

<sup>112</sup> See also *UT, 77:20–21 and 5nt VI:4–5, 17–18* [*CTA, 24:20–21 and VII:4–5, 17–18*].

thousand," . . . however, Gevirtz is able to show that the increase in the numerical sequence (here "1/10") is but a common method of filling out the parallelism of the line for the ancients. The fixed pair of numerical increase occurs in both Ugaritic and Hebrew poetry. The verse rings not of insult, but of lavish praise for *both* commanders.<sup>113</sup>

### 37. tree//waters

#### Book of Mormon

which led to the fountain of living *waters*,  
 or to the *tree* of life;  
 which *waters*  
 are a representation of the love of God;  
 and I also beheld that the *tree* of life  
 was a representation of the love of God. (1 Nephi  
 11:25)

Come unto me and ye shall partake  
 of the fruit of the *tree* of life;  
 yea, ye shall eat and drink  
 of the bread and the *waters* of life freely (Alma 5:34)

---

<sup>113</sup> Watters, *Formula Criticism*, 25–26, following Gevirtz, *Patterns*, 15–24. But cf. Samuel E. Loewenstamm, "Remarks on Stylistic Patterns in Biblical and Ugaritic Literatures," *Leshonenu* 32 (1967–68): 33–35, who argues that the ten thousand can stand in contradistinction to the thousand in Hebrew, although it does not in Ugaritic. In the Book of Mormon examples quoted above, as well as occurrences in juxtaposition at Alma 3:26, 3 Nephi 3:22 and 4:21, the two terms do not stand in contradistinction. See Avishur, *Stylistic Studies*, 10, 15, 18, 24, 185, 302, 326, 440; Cassuto, *The Goddess Anath*, 27; Umberto Cassuto, "Biblical Literature and Canaanite Literature (Conclusion)" (in Hebrew), *Tarbiz* 14 (1942): 4; Dahood, *Psalms II*, 143, 332; Dahood, *Psalms III*, 333, 446; Dahood, *RSP I*, 114; Gevirtz, *Patterns*, 15–24; Gordon, *UT*, 145; Haran, "The Graded Numerical Sequence," 238–67; John H. Patton, *Canaanite Parallels in the Book of Psalms* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1944), 34; W. M. W. Roth, *Numerical Sayings in the Old Testament: A Form-Critical Study, Vetus Testamentum Supplement* 13 (1965); Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry*, 144–49; Watters, *Formula Criticism*, 25, 166, 204.

**Hebrew** (*ʿets//mayim*)

and shall fell every good *tree* (*ʿets*),  
and stop all wells of *water* (*mayim*) (2 Kings 3:19 and  
25)

and all the *trees* (*ʿatsim*) of Eden, the choice and best  
of Lebanon,  
all that drink *water* (*mayim*), shall be comforted in  
the nether parts of the earth. (Ezekiel 31:16)<sup>114</sup>

**38. visions//dreams****Book of Mormon**

A And now I, Nephi, do not make a full account  
B of the things which my father hath written,  
C for he hath written many things  
D which he saw in *visions*  
D and in *dreams*;  
C and he also hath written many things  
B which he prophesied and spake unto his children,  
A of which I shall not make a full account. (1 Nephi  
1:16)

Behold, I have dreamed a *dream*;  
or, in other words, I have seen a *vision*. (1 Nephi 8:2)

**Hebrew** (*chizzayon//chalom*)

Then thou scarest me with *dreams* (*chalomoth*),  
and terrifiest me through *visions* (*mechezeyyonth*)  
(Job 7:14)

---

<sup>114</sup> Avishur, *Stylistic Studies*, 26 and 220; Gevirtz, "On Canaanite Rhetoric—The Evidence of the Amarna Letters from Tyre," *Orientalia* 42 (1973): 165–67.



He shall fly away as a *dream* (*chalom*), and shall not be found:  
 yea, he shall be chased away as a *vision* (*chizzayon*)  
 of the night. (Job 20:8)

and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,  
 your old men shall dream *dreams* (*chalomoth*),  
 your young men shall see *visions* (*chezeyonoth*) (Joel  
 2:28)

### Aramaic<sup>115</sup>

and appears in the *dream* (*chylm*<sup>?</sup>) of night  
 and appears in the *vision* (*chy[zw]n*<sup>?</sup>) of day

and out of all bad *dreams* (*chlmy**n*)  
 and out of [hated] *visions* (*chyzwnyn*)

### Comment

1 Nephi 8:2 has a cognate accusative, “dreamed a dream,” which is reminiscent of the cognate accusative in Joel 2:28, “shall dream dreams,” where the noun *chalomoth* (dreams) is the object of the cognate verb *chalam* (dream).

It seems likely to me that a more literal translation of 1 Nephi 8:2 would be as follows:

Behold, I have dreamed a dream,  
 and I have seen a vision,

the two lines being joined by a simple *waw* conjunction. As the small plates of Nephi were not edited in antiquity by Mormon or Moroni, the words “or, in other words” would appear to be a translator’s gloss, explaining to the modern English reading audience that the thought of the second line is in essence a restatement of the first, an explanation that would have been unnecessary in

---

<sup>115</sup> Quoted with citations in Avishur, *Stylistic Studies*, 475.

the original language among a people accustomed to the use of parallelism.<sup>116</sup>

### 39. walk//observe

#### Book of Mormon

And it came to pass that king Mosiah did *walk* in the ways of the Lord,  
and did *observe* his judgments and his statutes,  
and did keep his commandments in all things  
whatsoever he commanded him. (Mosiah 6:6)

and he did *walk* uprightly before God;  
and he did *observe* to do good continually,  
to keep the commandments of the Lord his God (Alma 63:2)

and they do *walk* circumspectly before God,  
and they do *observe* to keep his commandments and  
his statutes  
and his judgments according to the law of Moses.  
(Helaman 15:5)<sup>117</sup>

---

<sup>116</sup> For a similar translator's gloss, see the last sentence of the headnote preceding 1 Nephi 1:1: "This is according to the account of Nephi; or in other words, I, Nephi, wrote this record," where Joseph appears to have restated the literal words of the conclusion of the headnote, which were written in the third person, into a first-person perspective so as to make for a smooth transition into Nephi's first-person narrative beginning with the words "I, Nephi" in 1 Nephi 1:1. The original text (assuming the headnote to have been part of the original text, as the few who have commented on it seem to do) either read "this is according to the account of Nephi" or, possibly, "I, Nephi, wrote this record"; it seems unlikely in the extreme that Nephi actually wrote the literal equivalent in his language of all of the words "this is according to the account of Nephi; or in other words, I, Nephi, wrote this record." See Avishur, *Stylistic Studies*, 474–75, 494; Watters, *Formula Criticism*, 192.

<sup>117</sup> See also Alma 25:14 and Helaman 3:20.

**Hebrew** (*halak//shamar*)

if thou wilt *walk* (*halak*) before me,  
 as David thy father walked,  
 and do according to all that I have commanded thee,  
 and shalt *observe* (*shamar*) my statutes and my  
 judgments (2 Chronicles 7:17)

and entered into a curse, and into an oath,  
 to *walk* (*halak*) in God's law,  
 which was given by Moses the servant of God,  
 and to *observe* (*shamar*) and do all the  
 commandments of the Lord our Lord,  
 and his judgments and his statutes. (Nehemiah 10:29)

And David my servant shall be king over them;  
 and they all shall have one shepherd:  
 they shall also *walk* (*halak*) in my judgments,  
 and *observe* (*shamar*) my statutes, and do them.  
 (Ezekiel 37:24)

**40. way//law****Book of Mormon**

A And ye will not suffer your children that they go  
 hungry, or naked;  
 B neither will ye suffer that they transgress the *laws*  
 of God,  
 C and fight and quarrel one with another,  
 D and serve the devil,  
 E who is the master of sin,  
 E or who is the evil spirit  
 D which hath been spoken of by our fathers,  
 C he being an enemy to all righteousness.  
 B But ye will teach them to walk in the *ways* of truth  
 and soberness;

A ye will teach them to love one another, and to serve  
one another. (Mosiah 4:14–15)

And ye have led away much of this people that they  
pervert the right *way* of God,  
and keep not the *law* of Moses which is the right *way*  
(Jacob 7:7)

### Hebrew (*derek*//*torah*)

Blessed are the undefiled in the *way* (*derek*),  
who walk in the *law* (*torah*) of the Lord (Psalm  
119:1)

For the commandment is a lamp; and the *law* (*torah*) is  
light;  
and reproofs of instruction are the *way* (*derek*) of life  
(Proverbs 6:23)

But ye are departed out of the *way* (*derek*);  
ye have caused many to stumble at the *law* (*torah*)  
(Malachi 2:8)<sup>118</sup>

### Index of Word Pairs

1. anger//fierce anger
2. blessed//cursed
3. blood//burnt offerings
4. city//land
5. day//night
6. dead//dust
7. deliver//destroy
8. earth//darkness
9. earth//mountains
10. eyes//heart

---

<sup>118</sup> See also Psalm 119:29.

11. favor//blessing
12. God//man
13. good//evil
14. hearken//give ear
15. hearken//hear
16. heart//soul
17. hear//understand
18. heavens//earth
19. highway//road
20. Jacob//Israel
21. knees//earth
22. lead//destroy
23. light//darkness
24. Lord//God
25. mountain//valley
26. nations//earth
27. old men//young men
28. people//Israel
29. place//land
30. pride//wisdom
31. righteous//wicked
32. sea//earth
33. seen//heard
34. sin//righteousness
35. tell//declare
36. thousands//ten thousands
37. tree//waters
38. visions//dreams
39. walk//observe
40. way//law