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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). The most famous definition of parallelism is that of Robert Lowth:

1 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.2

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.3

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.


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.4

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

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Mitchell Dahood devoted considerable effort to identifying such word pairs and published an extensive catalog setting forth the results of his research.6 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,7 and (2)


7 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, Beithefi 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.\textsuperscript{8}

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.\textsuperscript{9} To illustrate, consider the \textit{Iliad} III, 67–75:

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


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.\(^\text{10}\)

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\(^\text{11}\) and Semitic poetry.\(^\text{12}\) Hebrew poetry is not based on meter in the same sense as Homeric epic, but rather on patterns

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\(^{10}\) 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.


\(^{12}\) 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 Formulas,” 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. 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* (*erets/hebel*), 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)

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A the lightnings lightened
B the world;
B the earth
A trembled and shook. (Psalm 77:18) 14

Although each of these passages is unique and conveys its own message, we can easily see how the poet began his composition 15 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. 16 For instance, Gevirtz 17 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, 18 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).

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14 See also 1 Chronicles 16:30; Psalms 89:11, 96:13, 97:4, 98:9; Proverbs 8:26; Isaiah 18:3, 24:6, 26:9, 26:18; Jeremiah 10:12, 25:26, 51:15; Lamentations 4:12; and Nahum 1:5.

15 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.


17 Gevirtz, Patterns, 88–90.

18 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 (chalaf) occurs in the same verse with the word mighty (gibborim), but in parallel with the word fallen (naphlhu).19

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.20 For although the Book of Mormon is predominantly a prose work,21

19 For illustrations of situations where an appreciation of the parallelism has foreclosed conjectural emendation, see Dahood, RSP I, 78–79.
20 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.

21 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,\textsuperscript{22} as well as numerous isolated instances of parallelism of various types.\textsuperscript{23} The Book of Mormon also contains many instances of chiasmus (a form of inverted parallelism),\textsuperscript{24} and although chiasmus often is formed by the repetition of the same word or phrase in a parallel collocation,\textsuperscript{25} 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, \textit{Classical Hebrew Poetry}, 44-62.


\textsuperscript{23} Most notably, see Donald W. Parry, \textit{The Book of Mormon Text Reformatted according to Parallelisitic Patterns} (Provo: FARMS, 1992).


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 are given first, then Hebrew 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, 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* 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 synonyms or antonyms; therefore, word pairs are the type of words that might naturally be found together and may occasionally recur in parallel

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26 I have excluded Book of Mormon occurrences that are quotations from the KJV Bible.
27 Hebrew transliterations have generally been simplified for ease of comparison. Although number and verb stems are reflected, most prefixes and suffixes are not.
28 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.
30 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.\(^3\) The more frequent the number of recurrences of a specific word pair, however, the less likely that the

\(^3\) 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 formularity ("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: יָרִעֲשׁ and תְּהֹמָת 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 formularity 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 formularity. 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 formularity 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 šp/šqbt,” 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 an 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 formularity would be absurd (the pair *Jacobi/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 formularity 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* ʕaph. 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.

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32 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 (יִמְגֶּי שֵׁאֹל).

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/deeps (אֲרַכִּים/דֶּקְשָׁת), 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 (אֲרַכִּים)
   B Of the deeps (דֶּקְשָׁת)
   A to the stars.33

The Ugaritic אֲרַכִּים is cognate with the Hebrew אֶרֶץ, which is normally translated "earth" or "land" in the KJV. The Hebrew אֶרֶץ 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 תֵּהוֹמֶט (depths), the Hebrew cognate to the Ugaritic דֶּקְשָׁת, and the parallel to Ugaritic usage may justify us in understanding אֶרֶץ 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 (תֵּהוֹמֶט הַאֶרֶץ) [render "depths of the netherworld"] shalt bring me up again.34 (Psalm 71:20)

Praise the Lord from the earth (אֶרֶץ) [render "the netherworld"], ye dragons, and all deeps (תֵּהוֹמֶט). (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-

33 The translation is Dahood’s; for additional references, see Dahood, RSP I, 127, and Psalms I, 106.
34 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.35

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.36 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.37 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.

35 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.”

36 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.

37 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, 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, 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

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)

40 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 (‘aph/charon [‘aph])

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

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

before the fierce anger (charon ‘aph) of the Lord come upon you,
before the day of the Lord’s anger (‘aph) 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. 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 ‘aph literally refers to the nose, but usually is used to denote anger (which shows itself in the flaring of nostrils and hard

41 Watson, Classical Hebrew Poetry, 132.
breathing). The noun *charon* most literally means "burning," but by extension "anger" or "wrath." The construct expression *charon *aph 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.

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//parur)**

*cursed* (parur) 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* (parur) is he that curseth thee. (Numbers 24:9)

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A Cursed (אָרָעִר) be
B the day wherein I was born:
B let not the day wherein my mother bare me
A be blessed (בָּרֵךְ). (Jeremiah 20:14)

Comment

Although I have focused here on the Hebrew passive participles בָּרֵךְ/אָרָעִר, 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 קָלָל for אָרָעִר:

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

This pair is also commonly found with nominal cognates, most notably in connection with the blessing (ברכה) set on Mount Gerizim and the cursing (גֶּלֶל) set on Mount Ebal (see Deuteronomy 11:29).44

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 (דָּם/וֹלוֹת)

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

44 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 (‘oloth) 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)

**Hebrew (‘ir/‘erets)**

I will destroy all the wicked of the land (‘erets); 
that I may cut off all wicked doers from the city (‘ir) 
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 (‘erets), and all that is 
therein;

45 See also Mosiah 23:25; Alma 56:14 and 62:7.
the city ('ir), and them that dwell therein (Jeremiah 47:2)

and carried it into a land ('erets) of traffick;
he set it in a city ('ir) of merchants. (Ezekiel 17:4)46

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 [of] Desolation” (Mormon 4:19).47

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 night48 (1 Nephi 17:30)

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

46 See also 2 Kings 11:20, 25:3; Ezekiel 7:23 and 9:9.
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)49

**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)50

**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*.51

**Comment**

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

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49 See also 2 Nephi 4:23, 33:3; and Enos 1:4.
50 Additional examples include Genesis 1:5, 16; 31:40; Psalms 91:5, 121:6; and Jeremiah 36:30.
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.  

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 (repha'în/‘aphar)

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


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

The Hebrew *rephaîm*, 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 *rephaîm*; 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 *rephaîm*.

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)54

54 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/ibbad)

And he shall deliver (nathan) their kings into thine hand,
and thou shalt destroy (ibbad) 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/B₁, B₂, B₃). 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)

55 Watson, Classical Hebrew Poetry, 134.
56 See also 1 Nephi 12:5; Alma 37:25; and Helaman 5:42.
Hebrew (‘erets//choshek)

And the earth (‘erets) 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 (‘erets); and behold trouble and darkness (choshek) (Isaiah 8:22)

that maketh the morning darkness (choshek), and treadeth upon the high places of the earth (‘erets) (Amos 4:13)

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)

57 See also Psalm 82:5.
Hebrew (‘erets//harim)

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

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

and comprehended the dust of the earth (‘erets) in a measure,
and weighed the mountains (harim) in scales (Isaiah 40:12)\textsuperscript{59}

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:

\textsuperscript{58} See also 1 Nephi 19:11 and 2 Nephi 26:5.
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)60

Hebrew (‘eynayim/lebab)

Because thou hast done well in executing that which is right in mine eyes (‘eynayim),
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 (‘eynayim) 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 (‘eynayim). (Psalm 19:8)61

Other62

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

60 Note that this verse involves a double collocation; there is both the chiastic parallel between lines C and C', and there is also the synonymous parallel between lines C' and B'.
61 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.
To any of this (treasure) do not “lift your eyes (inka),”
do not “raise your heart (libbaka)” to perpetrate fraud.63

11. favor//blessing

Book of Mormon

did have great favors 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 (ʾelōhim//ʾadam)

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

63 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)

**Hebrew (tob//ra') [adjectives or substantives]**

Do they not err that devise *evil* (*ra'*)?
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'ah*) upon this people,
so will I bring upon them all the *good* (*tobah*) that I have promised them. (Jeremiah 32:42)

**(heytib//ra'a'c) [verbs]**

A they are wise
B to do evil (*lehara'c*),

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64 See also Jacob 6:7; Mosiah 5:2; Alma 5:40–41; Helaman 14:31; Moroni 7:12 and 10:30.
65 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 (*leheyti*bb)
A they have no knowledge. (Jeremiah 4:22)\(^{66}\)

**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.\(^{67}\)

**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*\(^{\text{c}}\)/ha\(\text{'azan}\))**

If thou wilt diligently hearken (*shema*\(^{\text{c}}\)) to the voice of the Lord thy God,
and wilt do that which is right in his sight,
and wilt give ear (*ha\(\text{'azan}\)) to his commandments,
and keep all his statutes (Exodus 15:26)

but the Lord would not hearken (*shema*\(^{\text{c}}\)) to your voice,
nor give ear (*ha\(\text{'azan}\)) unto you. (Deuteronomy 1:45)

\(^{66}\) See also Jeremiah 10:5, 13:23; and Zephaniah 1:12.

\(^{67}\) Avishur, *Stylistic Studies*, 93, 122, 281; Watters, *Formula Criticism*, 189.
Who among you will give ear (ha'azan) to this? who will hearken (shema') and hear for the time to come? (Isaiah 42:23)\(^{68}\)

**Ugaritic**

*Hear (shm'), O Krt of T'*

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 *'ozen* (ear), as in the following examples:

A *Hear (shema')* diligently
B my speech,
B and my declaration
A with your *ears* ('azenim). (Job 13:17)

incline thine *ear* ('ozen) unto me,
and *hear (shema')* my speech. (Psalm 17:6)\(^{69}\)

**15. hearken/hear**

**Book of Mormon**

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

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\(^{68}\) See also Isaiah 28:23 and Hosea 5:1. In numerous passages the KJV has translated *ha'azan* 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.

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, a prophet of the Lord. (Jacob 5:2)

**Hebrew** (*hiqshib/shema*)

_Hear* (shema) 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)?
behold, their ear is uncircumcised, and they cannot _hearken* (hiqshib) (Jeremiah 6:10)

_Hear* (shema), all ye people;
_hearken* (hiqshib), O earth, and all that therein is_ (Micah 1:2)

**Comment**

As the verb _shema_ may be translated "hearken" and the verb _ha'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/hiqshib_ also commonly occurs, I have listed _hearken/hear_ as a separate word pair here.

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70 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.
71 See also 3 Nephi 30:1.
72 See also Hosea 5:1.
73 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)74

Hebrew (lebab//nephesh)

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

(lebab//me'im)

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

(lebab//kabed)

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

74 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.
75 See also Psalms 24:4 and 84:2, and Proverbs 2:10 and 24:12.
76 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])

7'Il 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.77 (UT, 9nt II:25–26 [CTA, 3 II:25–26])

Akkadian78

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

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78 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\textsuperscript{79}

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///nephes. It is possible, however, that at least some of the Book of Mormon occurrences relate either to the lebab///meṣim (heart/bowels) word pair or the lebab///kabed (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.”\textsuperscript{80} The emendation of kabed “liver” for kabod “glory” was suggested long ago\textsuperscript{81} and makes sense because (1) a Ugaritic parallel pair, šmch///gl (rejoice/exult [KJV: glad/rejoiceth]), is present in Psalm 16:9, which reinforces the possibility of Ugaritic usage here;\textsuperscript{82} (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,\textsuperscript{83} and (3) the Revised Standard Version in fact reads “my soul” in the three passages

\footnotesize
\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{79} Quoted with citation in Avishur, \textit{Stylistic Studies}, 569.
  \item \textsuperscript{80} For example, Watters, \textit{Formula Criticism}, 210, describes lb///mṣym as “heart///soul.”
  \item \textsuperscript{81} Tregelles, \textit{Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon}, 382.
  \item \textsuperscript{82} Dahood, \\textit{RSP I}, 245-46.
  \item \textsuperscript{83} Dahood, in “A New Translation of Ge. 49,6a,” \textit{Biblica} 36 (1955): 229, would render this verse as follows:
    \begin{quote}
      Into their counsel let not my soul enter,
      let not my liver be seen in their assembly.
    \end{quote}
\end{itemize}
for which this emendation is suggested above, and that translation fits the context of those passages far better than “glory.”

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.

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)

84 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 kabad “liver” in the Book of Mormon.

Hebrew (*shema*//bin*)

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

lest they see with their eyes,
and hear (*shema*©) with their ears,
and understand (*bin*) with their heart (Isaiah 6:10)

Have ye not known? have ye not heard (*shema*©)?
hath it not been told you from the beginning?
have ye not understood (*habin*) from the foundations
of the earth? (Isaiah 40:21)86

Ugaritic

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

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)

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86 For this same pair with nominal cognates, see Job 34:16; Proverbs 1:5, 4:1; and Isaiah 33:19.
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)\(^{88}\)

**Hebrew** *(shamayim/\(\text{\`erets}\))*

The heaven (shamayim) shall reveal his iniquity; and the earth (\(\text{\`erets}\)) shall rise up against him. (Job 20:27)

Who teacheth us more than the beasts of the earth (\(\text{\`erets}\)), 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 (\(\text{\`erets}\))? (Job 38:33)\(^{89}\)

**Ugaritic**

She gathers water and washes
With dew of heaven (shmm)
Fat of earth (arts)
Rain of the Rider of Clouds.\(^{90}\) *(UT, \textit{\textsuperscript{II}II:39 and IV:87}[CTA, 3 \textit{\textsuperscript{II}II:39 and IV:87])*

\(^{88}\) See also 1 Nephi 1:14; 2 Nephi 29:7; Alma 7:9; and Helaman 8:24.

\(^{89}\) This word pair is ubiquitous in Hebrew.

\(^{90}\) Intriguingly, Judges 5:4 preserves the three-word extension \textit{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])

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)

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92 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.93

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 (*Ya'aqob*/Yisra'el)

He hath not beheld iniquity in *Jacob* (*Ya'aqob*), neither hath he seen perverseness in *Israel* (*Yisra'el*). (Numbers 23:21)

Surely there is no enchantment against *Jacob* (*Ya'aqob*), neither is there any divination against *Israel* (*Yisra'el*). (Numbers 23:23)

How goodly are thy tents, O *Jacob* (*Ya'aqob*), and thy tabernacles, O *Israel* (*Yisra'el*)! (Numbers 24:5)94

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93 Tidwell, "A Road and a Way."
94 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//erets*)

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

and he cast himself down upon the *earth* (*erets*), 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 (‘asha r/bala’)  

O my people, they which lead (‘asha r) thee cause thee to err,  
and destroy (bala) 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 (‘or//choshek)

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

If I say, Surely the darkness (choshek) shall cover me;  
ev en the night shall be light (‘or) about me. (Psalm 139:11)

then shall thy light (‘or) rise in obscurity,  
and thy darkness (choshek) be as the noonday (Isaiah 58:10)95

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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)\(^{96}\)

**Hebrew (YHWH//’elohim)**

For I have kept the ways of the Lord (YHWH), and have not wickedly departed from my God (’elohim). (Psalm 18:21)

As for God (’elohim), his way is perfect: the word of the Lord (YHWH) is tried (Psalm 18:30)

For who is God (’elohim) save the Lord (YHWH)? or who is a rock save our God (’elohim)? (Psalm 18:31)\(^{97}\)

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\(^{96}\) 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.

\(^{97}\) This word pair is ubiquitous in Hebrew. See Avishur, *Stylistic Studies*, 21–22, 26, 45, 238–39, 254, 636; Watters, *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)*

And I will lay thy flesh upon the *mountains* (harim),  
and fill the *valleys* (ge’ayoth) with thy height.  
(Ezekiel 32:5)

*(har//biq`ah)*

They go up by the *mountains* (harim);  
they go down by the *valleys* (beqa’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//‘emeq)*

And the *mountains* (harim) shall be molten under him,  
and the *valleys* (‘amaqim) shall be cleft (Micah 1:4)

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98 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//erets)

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

it stirreth up the dead for thee,
even all the chief ones of the earth (erets);
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 (erets):
and this is the hand that is stretched out upon all the nations (goyim). (Isaiah 14:26)99

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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)

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)

100 Avishur, Stylistic Studies, 283.
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 (‘am//Yisra‘el)

Oh that my people (‘am) had hearkened unto me, and Israel (Yisra‘el) had walked in my ways! (Psalm 81:13)

Blessed be the Lord God of Israel (Yisra‘el) from everlasting to everlasting: and let all the people (‘am) say, Amen. (Psalm 106:48)

but Israel (Yisra‘el) doth not know, my people (‘am) doth not consider. (Isaiah 1:3)101

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//‘erets)

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 (‘erets), and destroy it. (2 Kings 18:25)

101 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)\(^{102}\)

**Comment**

The association of land ('erets) with both city (ʕir) 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)

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\(^{102}\) 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'īm)**

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

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

The fear of the *wicked* (*rashaʾ*), 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* (*rashaʾ*) no more:
B but the *righteous* (*tsaddiq*)
A is an everlasting foundation. (Proverbs 10:24–25)

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103 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 (3 Nephi 10:13)

Hebrew (yam/erets)

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

Or speak to the earth (erets), 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 (erets),
and of them that are afar off upon the sea (yam)
(Psalm 65:5)

Ugaritic

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

104 As “depths of the sea” is a construct formulation, “earth” could also parallel “depths” in this passage; see the discussion of erets/lehemoth in the main body of this article.
105 See also Psalm 72:8; Amos 5:8 and 9:6.
C And entered into their mouth
B The birds of the heavens

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)

Hebrew (ra'ah/shema כ)

I have surely seen (ra'ah) the affliction of my people
which are in Egypt,
and have heard (shema כ) their cry by reason of their
taskmasters (Exodus 3:7)

we have heard (shema כ) his voice out of the midst of
the fire:

106 The translation is Dahood's (see RSP I, 123), as is the suggestion of a
chiastic reading of these lines. See Dahood, Psalms III, 446; Dahood, RSP I,
122–23.
107 See also Jacob 2:31 and 3 Nephi 15:24.
we have seen (ra'ah) this day that God doth talk with man, and he liveth. (Deuteronomy 5:24)

Lo, mine eye hath seen (ra'ah) all this, mine ear hath heard (shema') and understood it. (Job 13:1)\(^{108}\)

### 34. sin//righteousness

#### Book of Mormon

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

#### Hebrew (chatta'ath/tsedaqah)

Righteousness (tsedaqah) exalteth a nation: but sin (chatta'ath) is a reproach to any people. (Proverbs 14:34)

A because thou hast not given him warning, B he shall die in his sin (chatta'ath), 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 (chatta'ath) that he hath sinned (Ezekiel 18:24)

\(^{108}\) 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*/*hishmi‘a*)

Behold, the former things are come to pass,
  and new things do I *declare* (*nagad*):
before they spring forth
  I *tell* (*hishmi‘a*) you of them. (Isaiah 42:9)

*Tell ye* (*nagad*), and bring them near:
  yea, let them take counsel together:
who hath *declared* (*hishmi‘a*) 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)\(^{109}\)

**Comment**

This pair is not only collocated in the chiastic 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‘. 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.”\(^{110}\)

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.

\(^{109}\) See also Isaiah 48:20; Jeremiah 4:5, 46:14, and 50:2.

\(^{110}\) Avishur, *Stylistic Studies*, 147, 272, 293, 307.
And so great was the prosperity of the church, and so many the blessings which were poured out upon the people,
that even the high priests and the teachers were themselves astonished beyond measure.

And it came to pass that the work of the Lord did prosper unto the baptizing and uniting to the church of God, many souls,
yea, even tens of thousands. (Helaman 3:24–26)

**Hebrew** (‘alaphim/rebaboth)

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

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

Will the Lord be pleased with thousands (‘alaphim) of rams, or with ten thousands (rebaboth) of rivers of oil? (Micah 6:7)\(^{111}\)

**Aramaic**

thousand thousands (‘eleph ‘alaphim) 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

\(^{111}\) 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

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

112 See also UT, 77:20–21 and 51 I: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.113

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)

Hebrew (‘ets//mayim)

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

and all the trees (‘atsim) 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)114

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 (mechezeyyonoth)
(Job 7:14)

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\(^{115}\)

and appears in the *dream* (*chylm\(\)\) of night
  and appears in the *vision* (*chylzw\(\)n\(\)\) of day

and out of all bad *dreams* (*chimyn*)
  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

\(^{115}\) Quoted with citations in Avishur, *Stylistic Studies*, 475.
the original language among a people accustomed to the use of parallelism.  

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)

116 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.

117 See also Alma 25:14 and Helaman 3:20.
Barney, Poetic Diction and Parallel Word Pairs

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)\(^{118}\)

**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

\(^{118}\) 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