



Review of Books on the Book of Mormon 1989–2011

Volume 13 | Number 2

Article 4

2001

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Ash, Michael R. (2001) "Lehi of Africa," *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon 1989–2011*: Vol. 13 : No. 2 , Article 4.

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NEAL A. MAXWELL INSTITUTE
FOR RELIGIOUS SCHOLARSHIP

BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY • PROVO, UTAH

Title Lehi of Africa

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Reference *FARMS Review of Books* 13/2 (2001): 5-20.

ISSN 1099-9450 (print), 2168-3123 (online)

Abstract Review of *Manifestations Mysteries Revealed: An Account of Bible Truth and the Book of Mormon Prophecies* (2000), by Embaya Melekin.

LEHI OF AFRICA

Michael R. Ash

I have written a book titled, “Manifestations mysteries revealed,” by Embaye Melekin. I proved, beyond the shadow of a doubt that the Book of Mormon is an African book and about Africans. . . . My book will change the church and the belief of the Mormons drastically.

Embaye Melekin¹

The location of scripturally based events has intrigued many people through the years. Biblical scholars have long argued over the location of numerous biblical sites. As one author for *National Geographic* observed: “The Bible’s account of Moses is, alas, as geographically perplexing as it is spiritually enlightening. Scores of geographic place-names in the Books of Exodus through Deuteronomy—wherein Moses’ story is told—simply cannot be pinpointed on a modern map with any certainty.”² One scholar has even suggested that the Old

1. Embaye Melekin, unsolicited e-mail, 1 December 2000.

2. Harvey Arden, “In Search of Moses,” *National Geographic* (January 1976): 3.

Review of Embaye Melekin. *Manifestations Mysteries Revealed: An Account of Bible Truth and the Book of Mormon Prophecies*. Self-published, 2000. 380 pp. \$25.00, hardback; also available as a paperback.

Testament history occurred in Arabia rather than Palestine.³ Similarly, Book of Mormon students have at times taken different positions on Book of Mormon geography. While most scholars of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints believe that Book of Mormon events transpired in the area now known as Mesoamerica,⁴ a few competing theories for Book of Mormon locations have always existed. Some early Latter-day Saints believed (as do some Latter-day Saints today) that Book of Mormon events took place over both the North and South American continents. Others have suggested that Book of Mormon events were confined to South America or to northeastern North America.⁵ This is the first author I am aware of, however, to assert that the Book of Mormon took place in Africa.

Melekin, who is not a Latter-day Saint, was born in Eritrea, Africa, and now lives in Canada. Several years ago he came to the conclusion that virtually all things, including the Bible, originated in Africa. He published a book, entitled *Abyssinia Shall Rise*, detailing his theories. Sometime during the writing of this book he read the Book of Mormon, which he received from some LDS missionaries. Although Melekin never joined the church and believes that church members incorrectly interpret the Book of Mormon, he nevertheless believes that the Book of Mormon is the word of God.⁶

Melekin does not appear to have a complete grasp of the issues of which he writes. He claims, for example, that while he never joined the church, he attended a “few Mormon seminars” in “one of the Mormon Temples.”⁷ He also mentioned in an e-mail message to me that he met with “Elder Harvey,” the “President of the Mormon

3. Kamal S. Salibi, *The Bible Came from Arabia* (London: Cape, 1985); my thanks to Daniel Peterson for alerting me to this theory.

4. See, for example, John L. Sorenson, *An Ancient American Setting for the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1985); F. Richard Hauck, *Deciphering the Geography of the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1988); and Joseph L. Allen, *Exploring the Lands of the Book of Mormon* (Orem, Utah: S.A. Publishers, 1989).

5. For details, see John L. Sorenson, *The Geography of Book of Mormon Events: A Source Book*, rev. ed. (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1992), 42–206.

6. Melekin, e-mail correspondence to the author, 2 December 2000 and 6 September 2001.

7. Melekin, e-mail correspondence to the author, 6 September 2001.

Church in Canada,” who was “convinced” by Melekin’s claims.⁸ I have been unable to determine who this “Elder Harvey” is. He apparently is not the area or mission president. Given Melekin’s confusion over a visit to a “seminar” in “one of the Mormon Temples,” “Elder Harvey” could be just about anybody from a branch president to a simple member.

In order to understand Melekin’s theory, a little background information on northeastern Africa is useful—something which the author never provides for the reader. It is believed that in about the second millennium B.C. Hamito-Semitic-speaking Cushites crossed the Red Sea from southern Arabia and founded a kingdom in modern Eritrea and Ethiopia,⁹ driving out the aboriginal inhabitants.¹⁰ In subsequent years Egyptian pharaohs would send purchasers to the new Ethiopians to acquire spices, incense, and myrrh. To the Egyptians these people were known as “habashat”—from which the term *Abyssinia* later derived.¹¹

Meanwhile, in the mountain regions of southern Arabia (modern-day Yemen), “a sequence of kingdoms extending back to about 1300 BC rose, . . . culminating in the kingdom of Saba, which achieved its greatest prominence in the eighth century BC.”¹² Sometime during the first millennium B.C., the Semitic-speaking Sabaeans, who already had commercial contact with the African coast on the Red Sea, settled in northeastern Africa and intermarried with indigenous inhabitants.¹³ The Sabaeans influenced Ethiopian society, economy, religion, and art.¹⁴

In the second century A.D., Ethiopia became known by the name of its capital, Aksum (or *Axum*).¹⁵ By the fourth century the Aksumites

8. Melekin, e-mail correspondence to the author, 2 December 2000.

9. Andrew Dalby, *Dictionary of Languages: The Definitive Reference to More Than 400 Languages* (London: Bloomsbury, 1998), 23.

10. *The New Encyclopedia Britannica*, 15th ed., s.v. “Ethiopia.”

11. *Ibid.*; Dalby, *Dictionary of Languages*, 23.

12. John Reader, *Africa: A Biography of the Continent* (New York: Knopf, 1998), 209.

13. Joseph E. Harris, *Africans and Their History*, 2nd rev. ed. (New York: Meridian, 1998), 40–41.

14. *New Encyclopedia Britannica*, s.v. “Ethiopia.”

15. *Ibid.*; Harris, *Africans and Their History*, 40.

developed Africa's only indigenous script, called Ge'ez.¹⁶ This script, which was possibly influenced by the Sabaeans, was the predecessor to the modern Ethiopian script.¹⁷ The Ge'ez, or Ethiopic, language is a Semitic language and the ancestor of the modern Tigrinya and Tigré languages of Eritrea and Ethiopia;¹⁸ it is related to Amharic, "the national language of modern Ethiopia."¹⁹

Some of the earliest literary works in Ge'ez are translations of Christian writings.²⁰ The Bible was translated into Ge'ez between the fifth and seventh centuries. By the first millennium A.D. the language began to decline in use, and by the seventeenth century, Ge'ez ceased to be spoken, being replaced by Amharic, also a Semitic language that has affinities with the Tigrinya and Tigré languages.²¹ The ancient language continued, however, as a liturgical language.²²

The term *Abyssinia* (which Embaye Melekin frequently uses but never defines) continued to be applied to the cluster of small kingdoms in northeast Africa until the mid-1800s, when Ethiopia conquered the other independent nations.²³ Eritrea, which was the site of the principal ports in the Aksumite Empire and was linked to the beginning of the Ethiopian kingdom, "retained much of its independence until it fell under Ottoman rule in the 16th century. From the 17th to the 19th century, control of the territory was disputed among Ethiopia, the Ottomans, the kingdom of Tigray, Egypt, and Italy. . . . In 1941 the area came under British administration and remained so until Eritrea was federated as an autonomous unit to Ethiopia in 1952. Eritrea was absorbed into the Ethiopian empire on Nov. 14, 1962."²⁴ Then, in April 1993, after "a long and bitter civil war," Eritrea became an independent nation.²⁵

16. *New Encyclopedia Britannica*, s.v. "Ethiopic alphabet."

17. Reader, *Africa: A Biography*, 209.

18. Dalby, *Dictionary of Languages*, 184.

19. *Ibid.*, 23.

20. *New Encyclopedia Britannica*, s.v. "Ethiopian literature."

21. *Ibid.*; see Austin Ogunsuyi, "Africa's Oldest Alphabet," at africancultures.about.com/library/weekly/aa012400a.htm.

22. *New Encyclopedia Britannica*, s.v. "Ge'ez."

23. Bonnie K. Holcomb and Sisai Ibssa, *The Invention of Ethiopia: The Making of a Dependent Colonial State in Northeast Africa* (Trenton, N.J.: Red Sea Press, 1990), 1.

24. *New Encyclopedia Britannica*, s.v. "Eritrea."

25. Dalby, *Dictionary of Languages*, 629.

While some of the details concerning the early history of “Abyssinia” are unknown, the Ethiopians have their legends. In about the sixth century A.D. a text entitled the *Kebrā Nagast* appeared; the compiler was probably a Coptic priest.²⁶ *Kebrā Nagast* apparently translates as “the glory of the kings.”²⁷ Steven Kaplan writes of this early text:

According to the *Kebrā Nagast*, the Queen of Sheba, known as Makeda, traveled from Aksum to visit King Solomon in Jerusalem. During her stay, Solomon not only dazzled her with his wisdom, but also tricked her by a clever ruse into having sexual relations with him. The Queen conceived a son, whom she bore upon her return to Aksum. When he reached maturity, this son, Menelik, journeyed to Jerusalem to meet his father. At the completion of Menelik’s visit, Solomon commanded that the first-born sons of the priests and elders of Israel accompany him to Aksum. Before setting out, however, Menelik and his companions led by Azariah, the son of the High Priest, stole the Ark of the Covenant from the Temple. Thus, the glory of Zion passed from Jerusalem and the Children of Israel to the new Zion, Aksum, and the new Israel, the Ethiopian people.²⁸

While Embaye Melekin never mentions this legend, it is apparent that he must be familiar with it. In fact, recognition of this legend is a key to understanding Melekin’s theories concerning the Book of Mormon and his own African ancestors.

Melekin believes that when the Lehitese left Jerusalem they ended up in what is now Eritrea. “The Book of Mormon, the Abyssinian Book,” reads the cover of *Manifestations*, “is the history of the Africans, their sojourn, fate and final destiny. The Book of Mormon is traced to Africa and the black race. It verifies that Africans are direct descendants of Abraham, Isaac, Israel, Joseph and Manasseh.”

26. Gerald Hausman, ed., *The Kebrā Nagast: The Lost Bible of Rastafarian Wisdom and Faith from Ethiopia and Jamaica* (New York: St. Martin’s, 1997), 15.

27. *Ibid.*, 11.

28. Steven Kaplan, *The Beta Israel (Falasha) in Ethiopia: From Earliest Times to the Twentieth Century* (New York: New York University Press, 1992), 22–23.

Manifestations Mysteries Revealed is actually Melekin's second book. In his first book, *Abyssinia Shall Rise!* (which I have not read, but to which he alludes in *Manifestations*), Melekin seems to claim that the white races were the scattered children of Israel, that the descendants of Judah became the Jews, and that "the remnants of the children of Israel became the black Africans, the Abyssinian people" (p. 30). According to Melekin, the Israelites crossed from present-day Yemen—via the Gulf of Aden—into Eritrea, Africa. Based on this belief, Melekin is convinced that the Egypt of the Bible is not the same as the Egypt of today. Instead, he places the biblical Egypt in the Arabian Peninsula (see p. 47).

To Melekin, *everything* seems to have originated from Abyssinia. The cradle of civilization, Melekin assures us, was not to be found among the "Greeks, the Romans, [or] the Chinese, or other imaginary people" but rather among the Abyssinians (p. 20). "The very origin of the Greeks," writes Melekin, "and the supposedly great contributions they are said to have made to civilization, I found highly questionable.²⁹ Every indication proved that the Abyssinians were responsible for most of the discoveries and developments in the region and elsewhere" (p. 8). Even Mount Sinai, he assures us, was in Africa (see p. 50). The foundation for such conclusions rests on Melekin's understanding of the language of his forefathers.

While it is believed that Tigré is a language descended from the ancient liturgical Ethiopian language, Ge'ez, Melekin maintains that Tigré was the original language and that Ge'ez "was a derivative that became the language of the churches in Eritrea and Ethiopia" (p. 16). Although the Ge'ez script has been referred to by some as "Abyssinian,"³⁰ Melekin refers to Tigré and Ge'ez as the "Abyssinian" languages—something which Jan Blommaert, head of the Department of African Languages and Cultures at Ghent University, does not

29. This is not an uncommon claim among some Afrocentrists. See, for example, George G. M. James, *Stolen Legacy: Greek Philosophy Is Stolen Egyptian Philosophy* (Trenton, N.J.: Africa World Press, 1992). For a rebuttal to this claim, see Mary Lefkowitz, *Not Out of Africa: How Afrocentrism Became an Excuse to Teach Myth as History* (New York: BasicBooks, 1995), also available at www.Wellesley.edu/CS/Mary/.

30. See www.abysiniacybergateway.net/fidel/.

think exists.³¹ Grover Hudson, linguistics professor at Michigan State University and specialist in Ethiopian languages, says that when it comes to early African languages, Melekin “doesn’t know what he . . . is talking about.”³²

Melekin correctly notes that Arabic, Amharic, and Hebrew are related to Tigré and Ge‘ez, but he incorrectly claims that Tigré is the ancestral language of Greek, Latin, and English as well (see p. 16).³³ Tigré—or Abyssinian—claims Melekin, is “the-mother-of-all-languages” or the “Language of the Almighty.” Melekin even suggests that “‘speaking in tongue[s]’ means speaking in Tigre” (p. 43).

This inability to understand linguistics and the relationship of languages inclines Melekin to conclude that the Bible was originally written in the “Abyssinian languages” (p. 16). This confusion of language relations is at the heart of Melekin’s theories as well. Melekin claims to “transliterate” the words of the Bible, the Book of Mormon, and even English³⁴ into Abyssinian. To transliterate means to represent letters or words in the corresponding characters of another alphabet. For example, the Greek βαπτίζω is transliterated into *baptizo*, which means “to immerse, dip, or submerge.” Melekin engages in transliterations from the English Roman alphabet to “Abyssinian” and then back into English. In the process, the pronunciation makes a few changes. Of course, Melekin admits that “slight changes in pronunciation produce a more appropriate transliteration. Same words could have different meanings in Tigre” (p. 48). By employing this creative dialectic, Melekin can change pronunciations when the originals don’t suit his needs. If a word doesn’t transliterate into the preferred word, it is acceptable to simply change the pronunciation until you get the desired results.

31. Jan Blommaert, e-mail correspondence to the author, 25 June 2001. Blommaert calls Melekin’s theories “nonsense.”

32. Grover Hudson, e-mail correspondence to the author, 21 February 2001.

33. Christopher Culy, former African language instructor at Iowa State University, e-mail correspondence to the author, 27 June 2001.

34. Those who speak English he calls the “Aryan Race” (p. 17).

Next, Melekin provides his “translations” of these “transliterations.” His methods yield some interesting results. According to Melekin, for instance, the following are actually Abyssinian:

- *all seven days of the week in English*

For example, Saturday is *Sa't-u'r-d-a'y* which, according to Melekin, means “Time-prohibit-work” or “what the Sabbath day signifies” in Abyssinian (p. 17).

- *zodiac signs*

Melekin claims that the horoscope is so convincingly “Abyssinian” that an easy test would be to “go to my semi-illiterate mother and tell her what month you were born in and she would describe your characteristics with almost precision. Centuries and ages of passing wisdom from generation to generation must be responsible for such a knowledge” (p. 20).

- *all books of the Bible*

For example, *Genesis* in Melekin’s Abyssinian means “beginning” or “creation.” Melekin contrives an Abyssinian “interpretation” for every book in the Bible (see pp. 25–28). Naturally, this means to Melekin that the Bible was written in Abyssinian and that the African people—the Abyssinians—are the true Israelites, the heirs of the first covenant God made with mankind, and the “custodians of the Holy Books” (p. 25). One of the many examples which Melekin cites as proof that the Bible was written in Abyssinian is the name *Christ*, which in Melekin-Abyssinian means “Cyr-ist” or “Change-beginning,” referring to a “new beginning for mankind” (p. 33). Even Jesus’ last words apparently have an Abyssinian alternative. “‘Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?’ That is to say, ‘My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?’” translates in Abyssinian to “My death, my death shall bring prosperity, after committing sin, and repenting” (p. 37).

- *the twelve tribes of Israel*

Ephraim (one of twelve examples) becomes *Efra-i'm* and “could mean ‘Child or fruit-of misfortune’” (p. 43).

Melekin’s Abyssinian word association does not end with the Bible, however. He claims that virtually all (if not completely all)

English words have Abyssinian meanings. Thus he can claim that the word *miracle* transliterated *mira-cle* means “Vision of-barrier or hidden things”; *rebuke* or *re'b-uke* means “discipline of-wrong”; *husband* or *Y'usb-a'nd* means “By virtue of-bonding” (pp. 54–55). And *Titanic* or *Tit'anic* means “Will-sink.” “And you know what?” comments Melekin, “It sunk into the bottom of the ocean. The language of God does not lie” (p. 61). Even animals are not immune to his Abyssinian retranslations. *Lion* or *liyon* means “Leadership, kingship, guardianship”; *giraffe* or *gira'ffe* means “Regurgitation” (p. 57).

By far the most interesting of his Abyssinian translations are proper names. *Kovorkian* or *Ko'w-o'r-kian*, he assures us, means “Pour-blind-evilness”; *Oprah* or *O'b-ray*, means “Eye wick of-vision”; *Bill Cosby* transliterates into *Bi'll Kosby*, which means “By unanimity, public, worldwide . . . Benefactor or profiteer.” *Dennis Rodman* turns into *De'nnis Ro'd-man*, meaning, “Crush-commotion-create”; *Mike Tyson* becomes *Myke T'a'y-son*, “Wish, promise . . . Survival of-death”; and *Michael Jordon* or *Miky'a-el Y'or-da'n* obviously means “Target, aim, objective of-God . . . Blindness-crush, destroy, judge” (p. 59). How can anyone remain unconvinced?

What is Melekin's source for his “transliterations” and “translations”? Which dictionaries, lexicons, or other books does he use as guides? Which experts does he consult? Which ancient texts provide his decoding keys? It appears that his sole source of information is “Calab.” And who is Calab? Melekin tells us:

Calab is the name I gave to my inner voice. He guided me when I wrote my first book. It is a voice within me that I could not avoid but have learnt to cope with. Calab is rarely wrong and could prophesy future events with accuracy and warn me of impending dangers ahead of time. Everyone has a Calab in him and only the level of adherence varies between different individuals. (p. 5)

Calab is an interesting alter ego. According to Melekin, he can be “persistent and sometimes even rude when imparting his messages.” “Sometimes,” reveals Melekin, “I just agreed [with Calab] to get away from his nagging. He doesn't seem to feel that I have the faculties to

make reasonable decisions on my own. I sometimes don't even know if he does" (p. 21). Melekin tells us that he accepts the teachings of Calab at times because he does not "want to argue with him" (p. 80). Other times Melekin seems to feel that Calab pressures his opinion by coercion. Melekin records one such conversation with Calab:

"I know you are trying to exhaust me and then enforce your opinion on me. You have no regard for my opinion," I complained.

"Your opinion means nothing. You are nothing until you accept the word of God as it is. Only the negroes of the Lamb of God matter. Nothing more and nothing less," Calab replied with an air of pride. (p. 93)

It appears that, to Melekin, the voice of Calab is generally a blessing "for guidance and directions" (p. 68), and he credits Calab with converting him to Christianity and inducing him to accept Jesus as his Savior (see p. 5). Nevertheless, Melekin reveals that at the beginning the "constant interference by Calab was becoming a nuisance and affecting my normal activities. . . . He was expecting me to do numerous things outside the norms I was used to" (p. 5). Melekin tells his readers that discussing the wrong topic with Calab "could provoke the wrong nerve and the confrontation could sound unpleasant. However, the final conclusion is mostly satisfactory mainly because I am convinced, at least temporarily, for a great number of the time" (p. 164).

Calab was Melekin's inspiration for his first book, *Abyssinia Shall Rise!* which Calab later referred to as "crap" purchased primarily by "heathens" (p. 7). Melekin admits that at times he was himself skeptical of the claims he was making and that a few of the people who had read his first book "obviously thought that I was some kind of a lunatic." Calab, however, convinced Melekin that he was on the right track and he was "the 'messenger' that will bring 'Good tidings' to the 'Decaying human race.'" He also convinced Melekin that he was the "proverbial six-six-six"—which, after conversing with Calab, he believed was a good thing (p. 65).

Melekin's first book seems to have been somewhat of an autobiography relating his supposed discovery that the Bible was an Abyssinian book.³⁵ After writing his first book, Melekin became concerned that he had made many enemies. Eventually he lost his job at De Havilland Aircraft in Canada (see p. 10). According to Melekin, the vice-president in the company human resources department—who was black—agreed to have him meet with a white (i.e., gentile) management consultant to hear his complaint over the loss of employment. During the interview it suddenly dawned on Melekin that he was talking to a demon. Melekin tried to air his grievances with the vice-president, but he referred Melekin instead “to a South African psychologist, as if I had any emotional problems” (p. 11).

While his opinions may not have been accepted, apparently Melekin feels that he has achieved some sort of celebrity status among Latter-day Saints. “Mormon missionaries come to my house, buy the book and take pictures with me.”³⁶

Eventually Melekin was hired as a telephone repair technician at Bell Canada (see p. 10), and he relates a few details of his life in this capacity, including his resentment, “despite my . . . efforts to reason with myself,” for the Jews. “There seems to be,” he admits, “an innate passion that drives me to despise the Jews” (p. 14). Although Melekin admits some anti-Semitic inclinations, he also has harsh words for Mormonism—which his alter ego labels a “cult” (p. 224)—and he criticizes the Anglicans and Roman Catholics (see pp. 85–87). In Abyssinian, Melekin tells us, *Catol-lic* means “Massacre of-genius” (p. 88).

In his first book, and again in his second, Melekin notes his belief that the Book of Mormon, like the Bible, was an Abyssinian book (see p. 44). Sometime after the completion of his first book, Calab revealed that Book of Mormon events took place in Africa. “The book [Book of Mormon] is about the origin of the African people and their habitation in the continent. It has nothing to do with the Native Indians in the Americas,” Calab said” (p. 68).

35. I have not read his first volume but am basing this information on the few details given in his second publication.

36. Embaye Melekin, e-mail correspondence to the author, 2 December 2000.

The contemporary history of Africa started with the arrival of Lehi from Jerusalem at about 600 B.C. Prior to that we are told that the Jaredites inhabited the area. Unfortunately, the Abyssinian Book says that these people did not survive eventually. Hence, our documented history, in the Book of Mormon, starts with the arrival of Lehi and his children and his settlement along the Red Sea shores of the continent. (p. 89)

According to Melekin, the entire African continent was eventually occupied by Lamanites, who hunted down the Nephites and slew them (see p. 251). If the Nephites recorded the Book of Mormon in Africa, how did the plates get to upstate New York where Joseph Smith found them? Since Melekin does not deal with this issue in his book, I queried him by e-mail. His response was, “That is a mystery. I am still praying over it and will probably get an answer. When I do I shall inform you.”³⁷

What, in Melekin’s world, is the connection between the Abyssinian Book of Mormon and Joseph Smith? “As a Gentile,” writes Melekin, “his job was to find the plates, translate them to English and bring the book to the remnants of the house of Israel” (p. 69). Melekin not only believes that Joseph Smith fulfilled that mission, but he also praises the Prophet and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints for preserving this record (see p. 246). He also expresses his gratitude to God for Joseph Smith translating the plates—which, of course, were actually written in Ge‘ez or Tigré instead of reformed Egyptian (see p. 344). Melekin believes that Joseph’s rendition is accurate and thanks God that the young prophet did not try to “distort” the translation (p. 151).

Although Joseph was the instrument of God in translating the Book of Mormon, he did not—and was not supposed to—understand the meaning of the Book of Mormon (see p. 69). Only a true Nephite—a literal descendant of the house of Israel—could understand the true meaning of the Book of Mormon. Calab convinced Melekin that it was his destiny to “decode the messages and under-

37. Embaye Melekin, e-mail correspondence to the author, 23 February 2001.

stand your history and your destiny” (p. 69). Melekin’s belief that he is the chosen messenger to decode the Book of Mormon relies, in part, on 3 Nephi 21, which deals with the gathering of Israel.

For in that day, for my sake shall the Father work a work, which shall be a great and a marvelous work among them; and there shall be among them those who will not believe it, although a man shall declare it unto them.

But behold, the life of my servant shall be in my hand; therefore they shall not hurt him, although he shall be marred because of them. Yet I will heal him, for I will show unto them that my wisdom is greater than the cunning of the devil. (3 Nephi 21:9–10)

Here is the discussion of these verses between Calab and Melekin:

“This is the man that is given the mandate to convince the people,” I [Melekin] said.

“This is the man that will show the remnants of the house of Israel who they are, the Gentiles who they are and the Jews who they are,” Calab responded.

“And who could that man be?” I asked.

“That man can never be anyone else but you,” Calab spoke bluntly. (p. 223)

How could Melekin be the one spoken of in the scriptures? Because, Calab pointed out, Melekin is a “Nephite” (p. 254). Initially, Melekin was unconvinced until he had the following experience:

One day, when I was watching the Oprah Winfrey Show, something strange happened to me. My thoughts were totally focused on the program. The guest in the show invited a woman from the audience and asking her to empty her bag. She was blaming her for not respecting money because the notes were squashed together in her bag. It was on the twenty-ninth day of September, nineteen ninety-eight. Then I heard a voice very clearly. I turned around to see if there was anyone in the house. I didn’t see anybody around me.

What I heard would shock me. The voice inside me said, "Embay'e, Neby'i; Embay'e, Neby'i; Embay'e, Neby'i . . ." continuously.

This is how I found out that Embaye and Nephi mean the same thing. Embay'e and Neby'i could mean "Roaring." Surprisingly, the same names could also mean "Tearfulness."

When I discovered the connections, I was frozen on the carpet, where I was sitting, with my left hand resting on the sofa. For a moment, I thought I was dreaming. I knew, instantaneously, the implications of the connections of the names. I told my wife who, as usual, never made anything out of it. I was, however, shaken by the realization that I was indeed, what Calab has been telling me that I am supposed to be. (pp. 259–60)

With his left hand "resting on the sofa," no less! And to think that his wife, as usual, "never made anything out of it." Returning to 3 Nephi 20:29–42, Melekin notes:

The Lord speaks of a servant who shall deal with things in a prudent manner. . . . However, my face shall be disfigured or marred tremendously. It is very obvious that I shall be portrayed as the 666 because of my birth date, 16/06/56. The notion established is that the person who shall fit the profile of the biblical 666, shall be Satan's incarnate. As is already, the 666's face has been marred long before my appearance. There is no one in history of mankind whose visage had been so distorted. All my pictures show the most gruesome and grotesque appearance of a human being. (p. 326)

Armed with the knowledge that he was a "Nephite" chosen to decode the Abyssinian language underlying the Book of Mormon, Melekin wrote his second book. "I am bestowed and anointed, by the Almighty God and our Savior, to be the seer. I shall be an instrument to the bringing of my covenanted people unto the knowledge of God and unto the knowledge of themselves" (back cover). "I shall be exalted and extolled and be very high" (p. 326), he writes elsewhere. "I have fulfilled my obligation to unseal the Abyssinian Book" (p. 376). He

also informs us that “the African people shall inherit the white people. Odd [as] it might sound, the black people shall rule the white people” (p. 226).

Melekin makes virtually no attempt to reconcile the teachings of Calab with the geography of Africa and appears to be unaware of any theoretical Book of Mormon maps proposed by Book of Mormon students. He also seems to be oblivious to the works of LDS scholarship on the Book of Mormon. Instead, Melekin reaches his conclusions by engaging in a strange transliteration and Calab-inspired translation. This unique process is oddly reminiscent of the “power word” game employed by anti-Mormon Loftes Tryk in his book *The Best Kept Secrets in the Book of Mormon*.³⁸ Readers familiar with Tryk might recall Daniel Peterson’s review of this book in the *FARMS Review of Books on the Book of Mormon*, wherein Peterson noted Tryk’s “decoding” of several Book of Mormon names. Tryk provided his readers with entertaining examples such as “Corihor,” which Tryk asserted was comprised of the French *coeur* or “heart,” and the element *hor*, thereby forming “whorish heart” in a design to “insult the Savior.”³⁹ And, of course there was Tryk’s translation of “Ether” as really meaning “a spiritous substance,” which was a reference to Satan as “an unembodied *spirit*.”⁴⁰

I wouldn’t be surprised if Melekin produces more volumes on his ideas—either with or without Calab’s assistance. In fact, he may be assisted by other identities. Melekin notes:

Lately also, I have been hearing a faint voice that was different from that of Calab. This voice was subtle and very brief and precise in delivering the intended messages. No arguments but specific orders. Everytime I heard the voice I felt a sense of fulfillment.

38. Loftes Tryk, *The Best Kept Secrets in the Book of Mormon* (Redondo Beach, Calif.: Jacob’s Well Foundation, 1988).

39. Daniel C. Peterson, “A Modern *Malleus maleficarum*,” *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* 3 (1991): 247.

40. *Ibid.*, emphasis in original.

At the beginning the voice was very faint but now I could hear the voice of God clearly. (p. 21)

Although Melekin's book was highly entertaining, I cannot give it a good recommendation. While I'm sure that Melekin is sincere in his endeavors and bears testimony of the goodness of God and the redeeming powers of the Savior throughout the book, he presents no real evidence that we should accept his strange theories. Indeed, his "proof" amounts to little more than the "translations" of his alter ego, Calab. Even as a white-elephant gift, I would have to deny a recommendation—it's way too long. A large portion of his narrative involves "decoding" Book of Mormon passages. In fact, he tackles this project chapter by chapter. His tome covers 380 pages of fairly small print in an estimated 270,000 words (about the same number of words as the Book of Mormon).

So, buyer beware: if you are looking for a scholarly treatise on Book of Mormon geography in Africa, you will be disappointed. If you are looking for some amusement and don't mind wading through the long sections of scriptural eisegesis, then you are bound to find it in *Manifestations Mysteries Revealed*.