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Textual Similarities in the Words of Abinadi and Alma's Counsel to Corianton

John Hilton III

The text of the Book of Mormon makes it clear that individuals who lived in later time periods had access to the teachings of earlier prophets. King Benjamin “caused that the words which he spake should be written and sent forth among those that were not under the sound of his voice, that they might also receive his words” (Mosiah 2:8). This instance was not the only sending forth of the written prophetic word. In Alma 63:12, Mormon tells us, “All those engravings which were in the possession of Helaman [these likely included the words of Alma, Amulek, Abinadi, Benjamin, and others] were written and sent forth among the children of men throughout all the land.”

When preaching to the people of Ammonihah, Alma alludes to King Benjamin's words, suggesting that, although apostate, the people of Ammonihah may have had access to the prophetic word of a previous generation (see Alma 13:28, compare Mosiah 3:19). In his address to the poor Zoramites, Alma clearly alludes to Zenos, Zenock, and Moses, leading the reader to believe that even these individuals with lower socioeconomic status were familiar with teachings from the brass plates (see Alma 33:3–20). Helaman's counsel to his sons Nephi and Lehi indicates that they had access to the works of previous prophets.¹ Later textual evidence suggests that words

1. He told them, “O remember, remember, my sons, the words which king Benjamin spake unto his people. . . . And remember also the words which Amulek spake unto Zeezrom, in the city of Ammonihah” (Hel. 5:9–10). “Nephi and Lehi likely used the precise words of King Benjamin in their preaching, just as their father had quoted to them some of the words of King Benjamin: ‘Remember that there is no other way nor means whereby man can be saved, only through the atoning blood

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Last year, one of my colleagues suggested that I read the Book of Mormon carefully and annotate each verse by the person speaking. As I did this, I started to notice some interesting patterns and themes in terms of how Book of Mormon prophets use, or do not use, certain phrases. I was also struck by Grant Hardy's suggestion in *Understanding the Book of Mormon*: "It would be interesting to track various phrases throughout the Book of Mormon to determine which Nephite prophets were particularly influenced by which of their predecessors" (134).



Many years ago, my grandfather created computer programs to analyze the text of the Book of Mormon. Since those programs are obsolete, I wondered if software was available that could help me find scriptural echoes from one prophet to another. Using the programs described in this article, I began researching connections between different prophets. I noticed a large cluster of textual connections between Abinadi's words and Alma 39–42, which led to the present paper.

Studying and finding intertextual patterns between prophets in the Book of Mormon has deepened my understanding and feelings about this great book. Currently, I am studying how later Book of Mormon prophets used Jacob's words in their teaching. I am also working on a paper that shows how Jesus Christ, in his ministry among the Nephites, quoted not only from biblical prophets but Nephite prophets as well.

from Alma, Amulek, and Zeezrom had been circulated among the people generally. When speaking to a group of Lamanites and apostate Nephites, Aminadab said, "You must repent, and cry unto the voice, even until ye shall have faith in Christ, who was taught unto you by Alma, and Amulek, and Zeezrom" (Hel. 5:41).²

The fact that later Nephite prophets had access to the words of earlier ones opens the possibility for intentional intertextual quotations and allusions within the Book of Mormon. Dubious readers may see repetitive words or phrases in the Book of Mormon as evidence of a stuttering problem. When looked at through an intertextual lens, however, the repetition may be most illuminating. Exploring intertextuality within the Book of Mormon is a fruitful area of study. As Kerry Muhlestein has pointed out, "Intertextual studies have become important in biblical scholarship as well as in the study of other sacred texts. In recent decades, biblical studies have been greatly enhanced by an understanding of how certain scriptural themes and ideas developed throughout Israelite history as evidenced by intertextual studies. Rarely has this type of work been applied to the Book of Mormon."³

While much work remains to be accomplished, researchers have already found several instances of intertextual allusions in the Book of Mormon. For example, John W. Welch shows multiple examples of "internal textual consistency [that occur] within the Book of Mormon" such as Alma quoting verbatim twenty-one words from Lehi or Samuel the Lamanite's twenty-word quotation from King Benjamin.⁴ Noel Reynolds points out a variety of

of Jesus Christ' (Helaman 5:9, compare Mosiah 3:18; 4:8)." John W. Welch, "Textual Consistency," in *Reexploring the Book of Mormon*, ed. John W. Welch (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book; Provo, Utah: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies [FARMS], 1992), 22–23.

2. These words had been spoken forty-five years previously, indicating a reliance on oral or written traditions, as opposed to the people in Helaman 5 having recently heard these words. It is also clear that a wide variety of people had access to the words on the brass plates, including both the wealthy priests of King Noah and the poor Zoramites (see Mosiah 12:20–21 and Alma 33:15). However, the fact that these words were circulated does not necessarily indicate widespread literacy among the Nephites. It is possible that the words were given to literate individuals in the community who then read them to others. Either way, it is clear that many people in the Book of Mormon were expected to be familiar with the teachings of earlier Nephite prophets.

3. Kerry Muhlestein, "Insights Available as We Approach the Original Text," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 15, no. 1 (2006): 61.

4. See Alma 36:22, compare 1 Nephi 1:8; and Helaman 14:12, compare Mosiah 3:8. These passages show that while citations were not always explicitly given, they are clearly evident. See Welch, "Textual Consistency," 21–23.

ways in which Zenos's words are used across the Book of Mormon.⁵ Close parallels exist between King Benjamin's speech and many of Alma's words.⁶ Certain phrases (for example, *firm, steadfast, and immovable*) frequently appear together, demonstrating intertextuality throughout the book.⁷

One must exercise caution, however, when trying to find connections between the statements of different prophets. As Richard Hays observes: "Quotation, allusion, and echo may be seen as points along a spectrum of intertextual reference, moving from the explicit to the subliminal. As we move farther away from overt citation, the source recedes into the discursive distance, the intertextual relations become less determinate, and the demand placed on the reader's listening powers grows greater. As we near the vanishing point of the echo, it inevitably becomes difficult to decide whether we are really hearing an echo at all, or whether we are only conjuring things out of the murmurings of our own imaginations."⁸

This conjuring of echoes can be multiplied by the relatively recent use of electronic resources. Writing of the difficulty in determining true allusions, Lincoln Blumell stated, "With the aid of electronic databases and search engines where a word, root of a word, or even a short phrase, can be readily searched across a huge corpus, if one is willing to look hard enough, they can usually find numerous scriptural echoes and reminiscences. However, the obvious problem with this is that just because one can find a rare word or a distinct phrase . . . does not automatically guarantee the author . . . was necessarily echoing or reminiscing [another] passage."⁹

Thus, one of the challenges in uncovering intertextual connections within the Book of Mormon is discerning whether one prophet was in fact quoting from another or whether the apparent quotation could more feasibly be explained in a different way. For example, if Alma's words are similar to Benjamin's in a given passage, is it an intentional quote, a coincidence, a result

5. Noel B. Reynolds, "Nephite Uses and Interpretations of Zenos," in *The Allegory of the Olive Tree*, ed. Stephen D. Ricks and John W. Welch (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1994).

6. John W. Welch, "Benjamin the Man: His Place in Nephite History," in *King Benjamin's Speech: "That Ye May Learn Wisdom,"* ed. John W. Welch and Stephen D. Ricks (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1998), 44–45; and Grant Hardy, *Understanding the Book of Mormon: A Reader's Guide* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 134.

7. John A. Tvedtnes and Kevin L. Barney, "Word Groups in the Book of Mormon," in *Pressing Forward with the Book of Mormon: The FARMS Updates of the 1990s*, ed. Melvin J. Thorne and John W. Welch (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1999), 213.

8. Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 23.

9. Lincoln H. Blumell, *Lettered Christians: Christians, Letters, and Late Antique Oxyrhynchus* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2012), 220.

of both Benjamin and Alma pointing to another unknown text, or both being similarly inspired by the same Spirit? Speaking specifically of intertextuality in the Book of Mormon, Grant Hardy wrote, "In the absence of explicit citations . . . we might wonder if verbal parallels indicate deliberate quotations and allusions, or whether they might best be explained as due to the common language and phrasing of Joseph Smith. . . . Yet there are many instances where the correspondence between phrases is unique, or nearly so."¹⁰

How can one determine if similar passages demonstrate intentional quotations or allusions? In a study focusing on intertextuality between the Book of Mormon and the book of Moses, Reynolds used seven criteria to determine the likelihood that any two passages were textually dependent on each other. Six of these criteria are broad enough to be applied to intertextuality generally:

1. The greater the number of significant terms repeated in parallel phrasings in two texts, the less likely they are to be independent.
2. The more precise the similarities between parallel phrasings in two texts, the less likely they are to be independent.
3. The more deliberately shaped the repetition in parallel phrasings in two texts, the less likely they are to be independent.
4. The more similar the contexts in which parallel phrasings occur, the less likely they are to be independent.
5. Author awareness of [the earlier source] reduces the likelihood of independence.
6. The more distinctive the terminology repeated in parallel phrasings in two texts, the less likely they are to be independent.¹¹

When considering intertextuality in the Book of Mormon, some additional issues need to be considered. While a separate paper could be written addressing these items, I will consider them briefly here. First, the Book of Mormon is both an abridged and a translated work, thus it can be difficult to determine if minor textual similarities or differences are the result of the abridgement by Mormon, of the translation by Joseph Smith, or are part of the text from an original writer. Two phrases that appear to be slightly

10. Hardy, *Understanding the Book of Mormon*, 133.

11. Noel B. Reynolds, "The Brass Plates Version of Genesis," in *By Study and Also by Faith: Essays in Honor of Hugh W. Nibley on the Occasion of His Eightieth Birthday, 27 March 1990*, ed. John M. Lundquist and Stephen D. Ricks, 2 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1990), 2:138. Hays set forth similar criteria in *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 29–31.

different may have been, in fact, originally the same, with the slight variation occurring through the processes of abridging and translating.

Second, because we do not have a complete record of what was on the brass plates, apparent instances of intertextuality among Book of Mormon prophets may in fact represent their citing of works on the brass plates. For example, the words *carnal*, *sensual*, and *devilish* appear together in the Book of Mormon in only two places and never appear together in the Old Testament. However, they do appear together twice in the Pearl of Great Price. Thus, it is possible that these writings from the book of Moses were included in the brass plates, and, consequently, what appears to be an intertextual connection in the Book of Mormon could be two separate allusions to the brass plates.¹²

Third, some phrases in the Book of Mormon share strong connections with the New Testament. While one could argue that such phrases are anachronous, such an argument misses the point of intertextuality within the Book of Mormon. If a specific phrase is spoken or written in the Book of Mormon by only two individuals, this is important, regardless of a textual relationship to the New Testament. For example, if Alma and Abinadi both use a phrase that appears in the New Testament, the question remains, why does this phrase appear only in the words of Alma and Abinadi? Even if New Testament language somehow influenced the translation of the Book of Mormon, why is this phrase used by only these two individuals? The point would therefore remain that within the Book of Mormon there likely exists an intertextual relationship between the two passages.

With the foregoing considerations in mind, we can attempt to discern whether an allusion is intentional or coincidental. Such efforts to identify scriptural echoes can be beneficial. Elder Bruce R. McConkie said, “Our understanding of the prophetic word will be greatly expanded if we know how one prophet quotes another, usually without acknowledging his source.”¹³

The purpose of this article is to demonstrate and examine a series of textual similarities between the words of Abinadi and the words of Alma the Younger (herein simply referred to as Alma) as he speaks to his son Corianton. Before turning to a specific analysis of the parallel phrases in these passages, I will explain the methodology used to find and explore these connections.

12. Noel Reynolds suggests this may be the case in “The Brass Plates Version of Genesis,” 136–73.

13. Bruce R. McConkie, “The Doctrinal Restoration,” in *The Joseph Smith Translation*, ed. Monte S. Nyman and Robert L. Millet (Provo, Utah: BYU Religious Studies Center, 1985), 17.

Methodology

One method of discovering allusions between two texts is to harness the computational power of the computer and let it find textual matches. This has the advantage of being able to quickly find every identical match between the two texts. Another method is to pore over the documents, searching for similarities between the two. This has the advantage of utilizing the power of the human mind to find connections that might not appear obvious at first glance. Both of these methods have merit, and I used both in this paper.

First, I created two text documents containing all the words spoken by Abinadi in Mosiah 12–17 and all of the words spoken by Alma in Alma 39–42. I next used two different computer programs to analyze these texts, the first of which was WordStat. WordStat can take two texts and find every two-to-seven-word phrase match in the two documents. Thus, one does not have to generate phrases and search electronically to see if they appear in another place; the software itself can generate the matching phrases. Running a WordStat analysis on these two documents yielded eighteen phrase matches. I analyzed each phrase to determine whether Alma appeared to be intentionally alluding to Abinadi. Some of these eighteen matching phrases were probably not allusions (for example, *kingdom of God*) as they are used frequently in the Book of Mormon by a variety of individuals. However, WordStat did find several direct connections (discussed at length in this paper).

One weakness of WordStat is that it found only exact phrase matches, in which the same words appeared in the same sequence. Similar phrases (such as *good tidings* and *glad tidings*) would not count as phrase matches. In addition, for reasons unknown, WordStat missed some exact phrase matches.¹⁴ Michael Bean (an undergraduate computer science major at Brigham Young University) created a Java-based program that was able to find textual matches that WordStat missed.¹⁵ Bean's program also analyzes both exact and nonexact phrase matches, such as instances in which three out of four words in any given phrase were the same. By searching for these relatively close matches, I found dozens of additional potential matches. Due to the fuzzier nature of this search, it captured many phrases that were not clear instances of Alma alluding to Abinadi. However, Bean's program did uncover several additional phrase matches that had been missed by WordStat. Thus, the power of the computer was harnessed to identify phrase matches, and human intelligence was used to determine which of

14. For example, Wordstat did not find the phrase *this immortal*, which is shared by both texts.

15. This program can be downloaded at <https://sites.google.com/site/beanmichael2/downloads>.

these phrase matches were most likely intentional allusions on the part of Alma; human intelligence also identified surrounding textual echoes missed by the computer.¹⁶

Intertextuality between Mosiah 12–17 and Alma 39–42

As stated previously, the purpose of this article is to highlight and examine a series of textual similarities between the words Abinadi spoke and Alma's counsel to Corianton. Searching for intertextuality between these two passages makes sense for a number of reasons. First, Alma appears to be a prophet who did not hesitate to quote from previous prophets. In addition to several pieces of textual evidence demonstrating that he did so (some of which are discussed in this paper), Alma explicitly said that he referenced the words of others (see Alma 40:15–16, 24).

Second, others have noted that Alma has a general tendency to quote Abinadi.¹⁷ This observation is reasonable, given that Abinadi taught Alma's father the gospel. In fact, because Alma the Elder "did write all the words which Abinadi had spoken" (Mosiah 17:4) his son may have had particular interest in this text.¹⁸ In addition, when speaking to the people of Zarahemla, Alma made it explicit that that he was familiar with the words of Abinadi (see Alma 5:11).

Third, Mormon plainly tells us that the text we have in Alma 39–42 comes from Alma's writing: "And we have an account of his [Alma's] commandments, which he gave unto them according to his own record" (Alma 35:16). Thus we can be reasonably confident that Alma had access to records of Abinadi's teachings and that what we read in Alma 39–42 are actually Alma's words, rather than a reconstruction of Alma's words by Mormon.

While Alma could have quoted many other prophets, in Alma 39–42 there are many more allusions to the words of Abinadi than to other prophets.¹⁹ Altogether, at least thirteen phrases in Alma 39–42 appear to be borrowed directly from Abinadi. Many of these phrases are used in

16. WordCruncher (<http://wordcruncher.byu.edu>) has recently added the capability of finding phrases that two texts have in common.

17. Hardy, *Understanding the Book of Mormon*, 134.

18. Because we have Abinadi's words as recorded by Alma₁, it may be that Alma₂ is not actually quoting the exact words of Abinadi but his father's recollection of those words.

19. Based on the records we have, Alma could have quoted extensively from Nephi, Jacob, or King Benjamin (as well as others from whom we do not have records); however, a computer-based comparison of the text of Alma 39–42 with the words of these individuals shows relatively fewer unique connections than those associated with

Table 1
Alma's Use of Abinadi When Speaking to Corianton
(Organized in the Order of Alma's References)

Case #	Alma's Words	Abinadi's Words	Allusion	Times Exact Phrase Is Used Elsewhere in Scripture*
Case 1	Alma 39:8	Mosiah 17:10	<i>Stand as a testimony against you at the last day</i>	0
Case 2	Alma 39:15–16, 18	Mosiah 15:10–11, 18	<i>Salvation unto his people</i>	1 (Luke 1:77)
Case 3	Alma 40:2	Mosiah 16:10	<i>Put on immortality, . . . put on incorruption</i>	1 (1 Corinthians 15:53–54)
Case 4	Alma 40:13	Mosiah 16:2	<i>Gnashing of teeth</i>	23 (but only once in the Book of Mormon)
Case 5	Alma 40:13	Mosiah 15:26	<i>They have no part</i>	0
Case 6	Alma 40:15–17	Mosiah 15:21–26	<i>First resurrection</i>	9 (Revelation 20:5, 6; Mosiah 18:9; D&C 45:54; 63:18; 76:64; 132:19 [twice], 26)
Case 7	Alma 40:16–20; 41:2	Mosiah 15:21	<i>Resurrection of Christ</i>	3 (Acts 2:31; Helaman 14:17; 3 Nephi 6:20)
Case 8	Alma 40:21	Mosiah 16:10	<i>Brought to stand before God . . . be judged . . . according to their works</i>	0
Case 9	Alma 40:21–23, 26	Mosiah 15:24, 26–27	<i>Bringeth about the restoration</i>	0 (but 2 Nephi 30:8 is nearly identical)
Case 10	Alma 42:9–11	Mosiah 16:4	<i>Carnal, sensual, devilish</i>	2 (Moses 5:13, 6:49)
Case 11	Alma 42:11	Mosiah 15:19	<i>Were it not for the redemption</i>	0
Case 12	Alma 42:15	Mosiah 15:9	<i>Demands of justice</i>	2 (Alma 34:16 [twice], and 2 Nephi 9:26 is nearly identical)
Case 13	Alma 42:26	Mosiah 15:19	<i>Prepared from the foundation of the world</i>	9 (Mosiah 4:6, 7; Mosiah 18:13; Alma 12:30; 13:3, 5; 18:39; 22:13; Ether 3:14)

* Information on how frequently certain variant phrases appear is included in the footnote for each individual case.

the Book of Mormon in only these two instances. Standing alone, each of these examples may appear insignificant, but taken together they indicate the extent to which Abinadi influenced Alma's words. I will discuss these textual similarities in the order in which Alma alludes to them in the text. I will first look at Abinadi's use of a given phrase and then examine how Alma quoted or alluded to it. Table 1 summarizes the thirteen allusions that will be discussed in this paper and illustrates how relatively infrequently these allusions appear outside of the teachings of Alma and Abinadi. While one could argue that these similarities are coincidental, the high number of parallel phrases appearing so closely together, along with their scarcity elsewhere, argues that an intertextual connection exists between Abinadi's speech and Alma's counsel to Corianton.

Textual Similarities between Specific Phrases

Case 1: *Stand as a testimony against you at the last day*

When faced with the flames, Abinadi declares, "If ye slay me ye will shed innocent blood, and this shall also *stand as a testimony against you at the last day*" (Mosiah 17:10). Abinadi teaches that serious sins cannot be hidden and will have to be accounted for at Judgment Day. As Alma begins to teach Corianton, he alludes to this phrase, saying, "Ye cannot hide your crimes from God; and except ye repent they will *stand as a testimony against you at the last day*" (Alma 39:8).²⁰ It may be that Alma is quoting Abinadi's words and hopes that his son will recognize that just as Abinadi's murderers will be held accountable for their crimes, so too will Corianton if he does not repent.

Case 2: *Salvation unto his people*

Speaking to those in King Noah's court, Abinadi says, "O how beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that is the founder of peace, yea, even the Lord, who has redeemed his people; yea, him who has granted *salvation unto his people*" (Mosiah 15:18). Alma uses

Abinadi. However, it is important to note that Alma does make allusions to other prophets in these chapters.

20. This connection of sins standing "as a testimony" against people "at the last day" occurs only in these two verses. Nephi uses the phrase *stand as a testimony against you* in 2 Nephi 25:28, and Moroni uses this same phrase in Ether 5:4. Both Nephi and Moroni refer to the words they wrote standing as a testimony against others. King Benjamin and Mormon both use similar phrases regarding the words they had spoken or written standing as a testimony at the last day (see Mosiah 3:24, Moroni 8:21). Abinadi and Alma are the only ones who speak of actions standing as a testimony against us.

a similar phrase when he counsels Corianton, saying, “[Christ] cometh to declare glad tidings of *salvation unto his people*” (Alma 39:15).²¹

The probability that Alma is making a direct allusion to Abinadi’s words is strengthened by similar phrases that surround *salvation unto his people*. In connection with those who bring *salvation unto his people*, Abinadi talks of those who “[bring] good tidings” (Mosiah 15:18). Alma states that Christ will come to “declare glad tidings” and tells Corianton, “this was the ministry unto which ye were called, to *declare these glad tidings* unto this people” (Alma 39:16).²²

One of Abinadi’s overarching messages in this section is the importance of those who [*bring*] *good tidings of salvation unto his people*. It may be that Alma is directly quoting or paraphrasing these phrases to say in effect to Corianton, “You had the opportunity to be the person of whom Abinadi spoke, but you squandered it.”

Case 3: *This mortal . . . put on immortality, this corruption . . . put on incorruption*

Teaching about the resurrection, Abinadi explains, “Even *this mortal* shall *put on immortality*, and *this corruption* shall *put on incorruption*, and shall be brought to stand before the bar of God” (Mosiah 16:10). Alma tells Corianton, “There is no resurrection—or, I would say, in other words, that *this mortal* does not *put on immortality*, *this corruption* does not *put on incorruption*—until after the coming of Christ” (Alma 40:2).²³

Alma teaches Corianton about the resurrection because he perceives Corianton is worried about this doctrine (see Alma 40:1). Alma likely uses Abinadi’s words to address concerns about the resurrection because Abinadi talks about *resurrection* more than any known prophet Alma could

21. The phrase *salvation unto his people* is used only these two times in the Book of Mormon. It also occurs in Luke 1:77. A similar phrase, *bring my people unto salvation*, appears in 2 Nephi 3:15 and JST Genesis 50:33, raising the possibility that either Abinadi or Alma (or both) were drawing on one of these sources.

22. The connection to the “glad tidings” in these verses may be more connected to Abinadi’s paraphrase of Isaiah 52:7 than Alma’s allusion to Abinadi; however, given the matching phrase *salvation unto his people*, it may be that Alma was drawing on Abinadi’s expansion of Isaiah. The terms *salvation unto his people* and *tidings* appear only in Alma 39:15 and Mosiah 15:18.

23. *Put on immortality* and *put on incorruption* appear together only in these two places in the Book of Mormon. The phrase *put on immortality* is also found in Enos 1:27 and Mormon 6:21, and the phrases *put on incorruption* is also found in 2 Nephi 9:7. A connection with *put on immortality* and *put on incorruption* is also shared with 1 Corinthians 15:53–54.

turn to. Nephi and his father, Lehi, each use the word only once, and King Benjamin never uses it. In contrast, Abinadi uses *resurrection* sixteen times. Thus if Alma wants to turn to scripture to explain the resurrection, Abinadi is his best option.²⁴

Case 4: *Gnash their teeth / Gnashing of teeth*

The allusion just cited demonstrates a connection between Mosiah 16:1 and Alma 40:10. The case for a connection is strengthened by the close relationship between Mosiah 16:2 and Alma 40:13. After Abinadi explains that the day will come when all will confess before God, he says, “Then shall *the wicked be cast out*, and they shall have cause to howl, and *weep, and wail, and gnash their teeth*; and *this because* they would not hearken unto the voice of the Lord” (Mosiah 16:2). Alma echoes these words, saying, “And then shall it come to pass, that the spirits of *the wicked . . . [will] be cast out* into outer darkness; there shall be *weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth, and this because* of their own iniquity” (Alma 40:13).²⁵

Case 5: *They have no part*

Another connection between Alma 40:13 and the words of Abinadi occurs in the phrase *they have no part*. Abinadi, speaking of those who willfully chose evil over good, says that “*they . . . have no part* in the first resurrection” (Mosiah 15:26). Likewise, Alma says, “The spirits of the wicked, yea, who are evil—for behold, *they have no part* nor portion of the Spirit of the Lord; for behold, they chose evil works rather than good” (Alma 40:13).²⁶

24. Alma could also have turned to Jacob, who uses *resurrection* nine times.

25. The phrase *cast out* is fairly common in the Book of Mormon; however, all forms of *teeth gnashing* appear only three times in the Book of Mormon. The third reference is found in Alma 14:21. The concepts of being *cast out* and *gnashing of teeth* appear together in the Book of Mormon exclusively in these two verses (see also Matt. 8:12). References to teeth gnashing occur relatively frequently in other scriptural texts (five times in the Old Testament, nine times in the New Testament, six times in the Doctrine and Covenants, and twice in the Pearl of Great Price). It is possible that both Alma and Abinadi are drawing on an earlier text in their use of these words (for example, Ps. 112:10 or Moses 1:22).

26. The phrases *they have no part*, as well as the shorter *have no part* are exclusive to Abinadi and Alma in the Book of Mormon. The phrase *have no part* appears five times in the Old Testament. The shorter *no part* is used only two additional times in the Book of Mormon. While *no part in* and *no part of* can be construed to have different meanings here, it is significant that these are the only two occurrences of *have no part* in the Book of Mormon.

Thus, both prophets teach that those who rebel against God will *have no part* in some of the fruits of the Atonement. As Alma's conversation with Corianton progresses, it becomes apparent that Corianton is confused about why the wicked are not saved. As will be discussed, this confusion may stem from Corianton's misunderstanding of Abinadi's words. Perhaps Alma uses Abinadi's teachings to clarify and emphasize what Abinadi taught: that the wicked are not partakers of the same blessings as the righteous.

Case 6: *First resurrection*

Abinadi teaches, "And there cometh a resurrection, even a *first resurrection*; yea, even a *resurrection of those that have been, and who are, and who shall be, even until the resurrection of Christ*—for so shall he be called" (Mosiah 15:21). The words italicized in the previous verse are all phrases of two words or more that appear in the following statement from Alma: "And behold, again it hath been spoken, that there is a *first resurrection, a resurrection of all those who have been, or who are, or who shall be, down to the resurrection of Christ from the dead*" (Alma 40:16).²⁷ Even many of the non-italicized words in these two verses show clear connections. In fact, Alma leaves no doubt that he is drawing on other words, stating, "It hath been spoken" (Alma 40:16, see also Alma 40:17, 22, 24). This statement provides additional credibility to the idea that Alma had a record of Abinadi's words and was so familiar with them that he could work them into his teachings.

Alma's usages of *first resurrection* follow his pattern of quoting from Abinadi to clarify doctrinal points. Abinadi had taught that those who kept the commandments would "come forth in the *first resurrection*," but those who "die in their sins . . . have no part in the *first resurrection*" (Mosiah 15:22, 26). While Abinadi's words may seem clear to many Latter-day Saints, apparently some Nephites had trouble understanding the concept of the *first resurrection*. Perhaps Corianton (and others generally) was confused about what was meant by the *first resurrection*. Alma acknowledges that some believed the first resurrection involved spirits going to paradise or darkness. He explains, "I admit it may be termed a resurrection, the raising of the spirit or the soul and their consignation to happiness or misery, according to the words which have been spoken. . . . Now we do not suppose that this *first resurrection*, which is spoken of in this manner, can be the resurrection of their souls and their consignation to happiness or misery. Ye cannot

27. The phrase *first resurrection* appears ten times in the Book of Mormon: six times in the words of Abinadi, once in the words of Alma the Elder, and three times in the words of Alma the Younger. The phrase *first resurrection* also appears twice in Revelation 20:5–6 and six times in the Doctrine and Covenants.

suppose that this is what it meaneth. Behold, I say unto you, Nay; but it meaneth the reuniting of the soul with the body, of those from the days of Adam down to the resurrection of Christ” (Alma 40:15–18). Thus Alma uses Abinadi’s words to clarify for Corianton the meaning of resurrection. This theme is further developed in the next section.

Case 7: *The Resurrection of Christ*

The allusion just mentioned, regarding the first resurrection, relates to another connection between the texts: the phrase *the resurrection of Christ*.²⁸ Abinadi defines the first resurrection as “a resurrection of those that have been, and who are, and who shall be, even until *the resurrection of Christ*” (Mosiah 15:21). Alma borrows this concept when he tells Corianton that the meaning of the first resurrection is “the reuniting of the soul with the body, of those from the days of Adam down to *the resurrection of Christ*” (Alma 40:18).

In Alma 40:17 (the verse preceding the use of the phrase *the resurrection of Christ*), Alma clearly states that he is alluding to others’ words, saying, “We do not suppose that this first resurrection, *which is spoken of in this manner*, can be the resurrection of the souls and their consignment to happiness or misery. Ye cannot suppose that this is what it meaneth.” Then in Alma 40:18, Alma proceeds to rework Mosiah 15:21. Thus Alma clarifies Abinadi’s words to alleviate Corianton’s misunderstandings regarding the resurrection.

Case 8: *Brought to stand before God . . . be judged . . . according to their works*

Abinadi teaches that men will “*be brought to stand before the bar of God, to be judged of him according to their works* whether they be good or whether they be evil” (Mosiah 16:10). Similarly, Alma testifies that there is a “time which is appointed of God that the dead shall come forth, and be reunited, both soul and body, and *be brought to stand before God, and be judged according to their works*” (Alma 40:21).²⁹

28. This phrase appears nine times in the Book of Mormon and also in Acts 2:31. The phrase *the resurrection of Christ* is first used by Abinadi and later used by Alma, Mormon, and Samuel the Lamanite. Each uses it one time, except for Alma who uses it five times in Alma 40:16–20. Alma and Abinadi are also the only people to discuss the resurrection of Christ in connection with the first resurrection. The phrase *resurrection of Jesus Christ* appears twice in the New Testament (1 Pet. 1:3; 3:21).

29. These phrases appear together only in the words of Abinadi and Alma. Nephi is the only other voice in the Book of Mormon to speak of people being “brought to stand before God” to be “judged” by their “works” (1 Ne. 15:33). He uses

It may be that when Alma clarifies Abinadi's teachings on the first resurrection and the resurrection of Christ, he wants Corianton to see the connection between resurrection and judgment. The context of Alma 39–42 indicates that Corianton is confused about the principle of accountability, and Alma uses Abinadi's words to illustrate how accountability relates to the concepts of resurrection, restoration, and the justice of God.

Case 9: *Bringeth about the restoration*

In speaking about the righteous and those who died in ignorance, Abinadi says, "And these are those who have part in the first resurrection. . . . And thus the Lord *bringeth about the restoration* of these; and they have a part in the first resurrection, or have eternal life, being redeemed by the Lord" (Mosiah 15:24). In contrast to the pleasant state of the righteous, Abinadi teaches that "the Lord redeemeth none such that rebel against him and die in their sins" (Mosiah 15:26).

Similarly, in Alma 40:22–23, Alma tells Corianton that after the resurrection all will be judged, and this "*bringeth about the restoration* of those things of which has been spoken by the mouths of the prophets" (Alma 40:22). Alma then speaks of the "awful death [that] cometh upon the wicked" (Alma 40:26).³⁰ The surrounding context of resurrection and punishment of the wicked adds context that suggests Alma bases his conversation with Corianton on these teachings from Abinadi.

Perhaps the most interesting connection between these verses is how Alma and Abinadi use the words *restoration* and *resurrection*. There appears to be some confusion in Corianton's mind concerning the meaning of the word *restoration*, and Alma states that "some have wrested the scriptures, and have gone far astray because of this thing" (Alma 41:1). The concepts of *restoration* and *resurrection* appear together in the words of Jacob, Abinadi, Amulek, and Alma, and all four individuals use these words in

the phrase *to be judged of their works*, a slight variant of the phrase used by Abinadi and Alma. The four-word phrase *brought to stand before* appears only seven times in scripture, exclusively in the Book of Mormon (see 1 Ne. 15:33; Mosiah 16:10; Alma 11:43; Alma 12:8; Alma 24:15; Alma 40:21; and Morm. 9:2). The four-word phrase *according to their works* and its variants is more common, appearing forty-one times in scripture: five times in the Old Testament, nine times in the New Testament, nineteen times in the Book of Mormon, and eight times in the Doctrine and Covenants.

30. The phrase *bringeth about the restoration* is used only by Abinadi and Alma. Nephi uses a nearly identical phrase (*bring about the restoration*) in 2 Nephi 30:8; however, Nephi is clearly referring to the gathering of Israel.

ways that could be interpreted as being interchangeable.³¹ This may have led to Corianton's confusion "concerning the restoration of which has been spoken" (Alma 41:1). Abinadi uses both *restoration* and *resurrection* in the context of those who die without knowing of Christ and teaches that those who die in ignorance will be restored to eternal life (see Mosiah 15:24).

Perhaps Corianton believed that those who feigned ignorance to God's commandments could "have a part in the first resurrection" (Mosiah 15:24). Or maybe he had tricked himself into believing in a universal restoration to good things, not realizing that while the resurrection is universal, a restoration to good is not. To provide clarification, Alma states that after the resurrection, all will "be brought to stand before God, and be judged according to their works. Yea, *this* [God's judgment at the last day] *bringeth about the restoration* of those things of which has been spoken by the mouths of the prophets" (Alma 40:21–22). It may be that Alma's use of the phrase *bringeth about the restoration* was intended to provide both an allusion and an amplification (continued throughout Alma 41) to Abinadi's words that would clarify a doctrinal misunderstanding about the meaning of the word *restoration*. The restoration spoken of by Alma and Abinadi is more than a universal resurrection. It also includes a restoration to the kind of being we were in mortality (see Alma 41:3–4).

Case 10: *Carnal, sensual, devilish*

Speaking of those who do not repent, Abinadi teaches that "the devil has power over them; yea, even that old serpent that did beguile our first parents, which was the cause of their fall; which was the cause of all mankind becoming *carnal, sensual, devilish*" (Mosiah 16:3). Similarly, in discussing the effects of the Fall, Alma explains that mankind have "become *carnal, sensual, and devilish*" (Alma 42:10).³²

The contexts surrounding these words are similar. In both instances, Alma and Abinadi teach about the Fall and point out that, because of God's redemption, these effects of the Fall can be overcome (discussed in the next allusion). The fallen state of man may have been part of the reason why Corianton felt that it was unjust for God to condemn sinners (see Alma 42:1). Alma acknowledges the results of the Fall but then provides Corianton with hope as to how he can overcome these consequences.

31. See 2 Nephi 9:12; Mosiah 15:24; Alma 11:43; and Alma 40:23.

32. The words *carnal, sensual, and devilish* appear together in the Book of Mormon only in the words of Alma and Abinadi. These words also appear together in Moses 5:13 and Moses 6:49. Thus, both Abinadi and Alma could potentially be referencing the brass plates. James 3:15 includes the phrase *earthly, sensual, devilish*.

Case 11: *Were it not for the redemption*

Abinadi says, “For *were it not for the redemption* which he hath made for his people, . . . all mankind must have perished” (Mosiah 15:19). In Alma 42:11, Alma also employs a similar phrase to highlight the supreme importance of Christ in the plan of redemption. He says, “And now remember, my son, *if it were not for the plan of redemption*, (laying it aside) as soon as they were dead their souls were miserable, being cut off from the presence of the Lord.”

While the exact wording is slightly different in the two passages,³³ in both cases Alma and Abinadi state that in absence of God’s plan for us, all mankind would perish. Christ provides hope for all mankind and supplies the means by which all who desire to repent can do so. Thus Alma uses Abinadi’s words to resolve Corianton’s concern regarding the justice of God in condemning the sinner (see Alma 42:1).

Case 12: *The demands of justice*

Abinadi teaches that Christ has power to make intercession for us, “having ascended into heaven, having the bowels of *mercy*; . . . having redeemed them, and satisfied *the demands of justice*” (Mosiah 15:9). Alma echoes this phrase in teaching Corianton that Christ “atoneth for the sins of the world, to bring about the plan of *mercy*, to appease *the demands of justice*” (Alma 42:15).³⁴

Both Alma and Abinadi explain that Christ is able to exercise *mercy* and meet the *demands of justice* because of his atoning sacrifice. Once again we see how Alma draws on the words of Abinadi to clarify Corianton’s confusion (in this case regarding the justice of God). While God does require justice, he has also prepared a plan of mercy—mercy that can be extended to Corianton.

Case 13: *Prepared from the foundation of the world*

Abinadi teaches of the “redemption” that Christ “hath made for his people, which was *prepared from the foundation of the world*” (Mosiah 15:19). Near the end of his conversation with Corianton, Alma says, “And thus God bringeth about his great and eternal purposes, which were *prepared from*

33. In a previous sermon, Alma had clearly quoted Abinadi’s statement in Mosiah 15:19 while again substituting the phrase *plan of redemption* for *redemption*, increasing the possibility that Alma was alluding to Abinadi in this case. See Alma 12:25 compared with Mosiah 15:19.

34. The phrase *the demands of justice* is used only by Abinadi, Alma, and Amulek, increasing the likelihood that there is a connection between these two verses. Amulek uses the phrase *the demands of justice* twice in Alma 34:16.

the foundation of the world. And thus cometh about the salvation and the redemption of men, and also their destruction and misery” (Alma 42:26).³⁵ Alma uses Abinadi’s words to provide Corianton with encouragement. From the beginning, a plan had been put in place for Corianton and others to overcome the effects of the Fall, to be redeemed and stand in the presence of God.

Broader Themes

Stepping back to look at the larger picture reveals that Alma borrows phrases clustered around specific themes from Abinadi. First, Alma makes two allusions to Abinadi that may have helped Corianton connect his ministry with Abinadi’s (Alma 39:8, compare Mosiah 17:10; and Alma 39:15, compare Mosiah 15:18). All of Alma’s remaining quotations from Abinadi relate to Corianton’s major concerns, namely, the resurrection, the restoration, and the justice of God in punishing the sinner.

Three of Alma’s allusions to Abinadi relate to resurrection. Phrases such as *this mortal does not put on immortality* (Alma 40:2, compare Mosiah 16:10), *first resurrection* (Alma 40:15, compare Mosiah 15:21), and *the*

35. The connection between *redemption* and *prepared from the foundation of the world* rarely appears elsewhere in the Book of Mormon. The phrase *prepared from the foundation of the world* appears eleven times in scripture (all in the Book of Mormon). It is used twice by King Benjamin (Mosiah 4:6–7), once by Abinadi (Mosiah 15:9), once by Alma the Elder (Mosiah 18:13), four times by Alma the Younger (Alma 12:30; Alma 13:3, 5; Alma 42:26), twice by Mormon (Alma 18:39, Alma 22:13), and once by Jesus Christ (Ether 3:14). If we assume that Alma the Younger picked up the phrase from a previous prophet, the question is, was it King Benjamin or Abinadi? While Alma the Younger undoubtedly studied the words of both, it may be more likely that Abinadi is the source of this phrase. This is based on two pieces of textual evidence. First is the flow of the phrase from Abinadi to Alma the Elder. If Alma the Elder is borrowing the phrase, it most likely came from Abinadi. While Alma the Younger might not have been alive when his father was quoted as using the phrase, the fact that it is one of only four phrases that Alma the Elder directly quotes from Abinadi may indicate it was one Alma the Younger would have noticed. A second piece of textual evidence is the connection between the word *redemption* and the phrase *prepared from the foundation of the world*. Abinadi speaks of the “redemption” that Christ “hath made for his people, which was prepared from the foundation of the world” (Mosiah 15:19). Alma the Elder states that eternal life comes “through the redemption of Christ, whom he has prepared from the foundation of the world” (Mosiah 18:13). Three of the four times Alma the Younger uses *prepared from the foundation of the world*, he uses the word *redemption* in connection with the phrase (Alma 12:30; Alma 13:3; Alma 42:26). In contrast, King Benjamin does not use the word *redemption* in connection with *prepared from the foundation of the world*. Similar phrases also appear in Matthew 25:34; Ephesians 1:4; and 1 Peter 1:20.

resurrection of Christ (Alma 40:16, compare Mosiah 15:21) directly point to the resurrection.

Two of Alma's allusions concern the restoration. Both Abinadi and Alma discuss how Christ "bringeth about the restoration" (Alma 40:22, compare Mosiah 15:24), and Alma explains that restoration includes mankind being "brought to stand before" God and being "judged according to their works" (Alma 40:21, compare Mosiah 16:10).

The remaining six allusions address the issue of the justice of God in punishing the sinner. Alma and Abinadi are the only Book of Mormon prophets to speak of the wicked being "cast out" and "gnashing [their] teeth" (Alma 40:13, compare Mosiah 16:2). They alone say that the wicked who have become "carnal, sensual, and devilish" "have no part" in some of the fruits of the Atonement (Alma 42:10, compare Mosiah 16:3; and Alma 40:13, compare Mosiah 15:26). They both teach that "were [it] not for the plan of redemption" that had been "prepared from the foundation of the world," "the demands of justice" would take effect at the judgment day (Alma 42:11, compare Mosiah 15:19; Alma 42:26, compare Mosiah 15:19; and Alma 42:15, compare Mosiah 15:9).

In addition to common themes, the majority of Alma's quotations come from one section of Abinadi's words. Table 2 illustrates the order, in the words of Abinadi, for the thirteen passages quoted by Alma as he speaks to Corianton.

As demonstrated in table 2, Alma's quotations from Abinadi come almost exclusively from the thirty-three verses from Mosiah 15:9 to Mosiah 16:10. The tight clustering of these passages makes it seem more plausible that Alma intentionally uses a specific section of Abinadi's words when teaching Corianton.

Conclusion

After we examine these common phrases, a natural question to consider is, why does Alma quote so frequently from Abinadi? Any answers to this question must be at least a little speculative. Nevertheless, I believe there are several possible reasons why Alma would frequently quote Abinadi when speaking to Corianton.

First, perhaps Alma frequently quotes Abinadi because Abinadi is a recent prophet and one who addresses topics that are of concern to Corianton. Second, as stated previously, Alma could have had a special interest in the words of Abinadi because his father had recorded them (see Mosiah 17:4). This leads to a third reason why Alma would quote Abinadi's words to Corianton: Alma loves Corianton and wants to teach him doctrine that will bring him to repentance. It seems natural to turn to the prophetic words that once had this very effect on Corianton's grandfather—Alma the Elder. The family foundation of conversion to the gospel of Christ is Alma the

Table 2
Alma’s Use of Abinadi’s Words When Speaking to Corianton

Abinadi’s Words	Alma’s Words	Allusion
Mosiah 15:9	Alma 42:15	<i>Demands of justice</i>
Mosiah 15:10–11,18	Alma 39:15–16,18	<i>Salvation unto his people</i>
Mosiah 15:19	Alma 42:11	<i>Were it not for the redemption</i>
Mosiah 15:19	Alma 42:26	<i>Prepared from the foundation of the world</i>
Mosiah 15:21	Alma 40:16–20; 41:2	<i>Resurrection of Christ</i>
Mosiah 15:21–26	Alma 40:15–16	<i>First resurrection</i>
Mosiah 15:24, 26–27	Alma 40:21–23, 26	<i>Bringeth about the restoration</i>
Mosiah 15:26	Alma 40:13	<i>They have no part</i>
Mosiah 16:2	Alma 40:13	<i>Gnashing of teeth</i>
Mosiah 16:4	Alma 42:9–11	<i>Carnal, sensual, and devilish</i>
Mosiah 16:10	Alma 40:21	<i>Brought to stand before God . . . be judged . . . according to their works</i>
Mosiah 16:10	Alma 40:2	<i>Put on immortality, . . . put on incorruption</i>
Mosiah 17:10	Alma 39:8	<i>Stand as a testimony against you at the last day</i>

Elder’s transcription of Abinadi’s teachings. Perhaps Corianton has heard his grandfather speak glowingly of Abinadi and is particularly interested in the words of one who has deeply impacted his family’s heritage. Alma may be thinking, “If the words of Abinadi sunk deep into my father’s soul and provoked a mighty change within his heart, what better words to share with his wayward grandson?”

Another question we could ask at the conclusion of a study such as this is, so what? If Alma does intentionally use Abinadi’s words, what relevance does that have for us today? I believe there are at least two important lessons that we can learn. First, Alma has clearly studied the scriptures. He has paid a price to be so conversant in Abinadi’s words that he can weave them into a conversation as though they were his own. Because he has carefully studied Abinadi’s words, when he is faced with a very difficult situation (a wayward son who has committed serious sin while serving a mission), Alma is able to help Corianton by explaining the words of recent prophets.³⁶

36. Similarly, it is evident from the text that Alma has deeply pondered the concept of a first resurrection. It is also clear that he has carefully studied what Abinadi

A second implication of this study is simply that the Book of Mormon is deep and rich, full of theological and textual connections that have yet to be tapped. The allusions described in this study shed light on Corianton's concerns and lead us to ponder on possibilities about where those concerns came from. Corianton appears to have bought into the Nehorite doctrine that "in the end, all men should have eternal life" (Alma 1:4). Perhaps Corianton has misconstrued Abinadi's words to justify his beliefs. It may be that Alma turns to Abinadi in order to explain to Corianton the true meaning of words that Corianton has misunderstood.

In addition, the repeated connections between Abinadi's discourse and Alma's conversation with Corianton demonstrate the textual integrity of the Book of Mormon. The Book of Mormon claims to be an ancient record authored by multiple individuals. The findings of this paper support this claim. By closely reading the text, we can picture a later prophet (Alma) poring over the words of his predecessor as he resolves his son's concerns. The consistent patterns of allusions in Alma 39–42 argue for textual intentionality. This was not something Joseph Smith made up.

Elder Neal A. Maxwell wrote, "The book [of Mormon] is like a vast mansion with gardens, towers, courtyards, and wings. There are rooms yet to be entered, with flaming fireplaces waiting to warm us. The rooms glimpsed so far contain further furnishings and rich detail yet to be savored."³⁷ This study may provide a glimpse into one small corner of such a room—a room focused on the textual allusions within the Book of Mormon. Much more work needs to be done with intertextuality in the Book of Mormon.³⁸ Does Alma allude to Abinadi as frequently in his other writings? Which other prophets does Alma most frequently quote? Whom do later prophets such as Nephi₂ and Samuel the Lamanite frequently draw upon?³⁹

taught on the subject. When we wrestle with doctrinal questions, we can likewise engage in a serious study of what modern prophets have taught on the subjects we ponder.

37. Neal A. Maxwell, *Not My Will, but Thine* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1988), 33.

38. Even the chapters discussed in this paper have additional layers of intertextuality to uncover. Heather Hardy, in reviewing this paper, pointed to additional intertextual lenses with which Alma 39–42 could be examined. For example, she suggested connections can be found between Alma 39–42 and the other sermons Alma gave to his sons, Alma's teachings in Ammonihah, and Alma's teachings to the Zoramites.

39. Grant Hardy wrote, "It would be interesting to track various phrases throughout the Book of Mormon to determine which Nephite prophets were particularly influenced by which of their predecessors." Hardy, *Understanding the Book of Mormon*, 134.

Over two decades ago, a group of researchers wrote, “Words and phrases may tell a great deal about such things as the meaning, history, peculiarity, and artistry of the Book of Mormon. Remarkable patterns of word distributions and phrase densities may indeed yield valuable results, although it is too early to tell what such findings may or may not ultimately mean. An enormous amount of research and reflection remains to be done before scholars can speak definitively about such matters.”⁴⁰

This statement still holds true today. However, two decades ago it was much harder to study intertextuality in the Book of Mormon than it is today. Research that took place in the 1980s and 1990s to identify phrase matches in the Book of Mormon was extremely difficult.⁴¹ At that time, it was difficult to use a computer to perform calculations to find the types of connections presented in this paper. Software now allows such calculations to be accomplished in seconds. This allows work to be done much more quickly in terms of finding intertextual allusions in the Book of Mormon. This present study is an attempt to add to what should be a fast-growing study of textual echoes in the Book of Mormon.

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40. John W. Welch and others, “Words and Phrases,” in Welch, *Reexploring the Book of Mormon*, 284.

41. For example, see John L. Hilton, “Listing of the Book of Mormon References for Passages of Major Authors and their Literary Forms, Plus Word Counts from the Text of the Printer’s Manuscript,” unpublished paper, September 23, 1982. Producing some of these calculations required Hilton to leave computers running all night to perform various calculations and analyses.