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The Book of Mormon Originally Written in Hieroglyphics - II (Continued)

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Abstract: Offers some evidence from worldwide sources to corroborate Mormon's statement in the Book of Mormon that the text was written in reformed Egyptian characters.

The Book of Mormon Originally Written in Hieroglyphics.

BY THOMAS W. BROOKBANK.

II.

The next question to be considered is whether or not the Book of Mormon was originally written by unlearned authors, who repeated words and phrases so largely because of the meagerness of their vocabulary, or was first written by men of fluent speech who were embarrassed in their work by some unusual difficulties.

It may appear to some readers of the Book of Mormon that its vocabulary is somewhat deficient and, hence, the number of different characters required to write it in the original, was not so great as some of the foregoing remarks assume. We find, however, from a careful listing of the different words used in that work down to the close of the seventeenth chapter of Alma, and omitting every one found exclusively in the several chapters taken from Isaiah's writings, that there are about four thousand different words of all classes and forms. This number is given in less than one half of the whole volume. Now, trimming this gross list so that no proper names appear in it—that words spelled alike but having different meanings are counted as one word only—that a participle is not included, if the verb from which it is derived is numbered—that the various forms of a verb arising from inflectional terminations are set down as one word only—that singular and plural forms of the same word are not reckoned as two words—that numbers are all excluded; but, on the other hand, that such words as "abound" and "abundance," "assemble" and "assembly," "whole" and "wholly," are counted as different

words, there are a few more than two thousand in the list as thus pruned. Reducing it still further by striking out derivatives and retaining only one of them, or the base instead, about sixteen hundred and fifty different words are still left.

But the gross list should not be thus reduced in order to show what a great number of hieroglyphics was required to write the Book of Mormon records; since an adjective and a noun, or an adjective and an adverb derived from a common base, for example, could not, without causing confusion, be written in identical symbolic forms, and since the use of tense signs, and means for distinguishing between singular and plural forms, etc., must have been used, the variations occurring in the use of those sixteen hundred and fifty original hieroglyphical bases, evidently made the total number of symbols required exceed the number indicated by the severely pruned list.

Attention is now called to the fact that according to current newspaper statements four hundred different words are about an average number for "uneducated" people, and a person who can command fifteen hundred has a vocabulary of unusually large proportions—this latter number being assigned to John J. Ingalls, M. C., who was unquestionably a fluent speaker. As already stated, we find more than sixteen hundred different words in less than one half of the Book of Mormon; and though the latter portion could not be expected to give a large percentage of new words, it is, nevertheless, quite probable that the total list of different words in that work struck out approximates two thousand.

But the story of the fluency of speech enjoyed by the original writers of the Book of Mormon is yet only half told. When we consider that the volume in question does not treat largely of more than a few of the matters that occupy the attention of mankind in general—confining its records to religious and warlike subjects in the main—and that other and different words befitting other subjects, are necessarily used when they are treated upon, we find that the known vocabulary of the original, fluent, educated writers of the Book of Mormon must be largely increased—shall we not reasonably say almost doubled?

In view of these considerations, it is a plain inference that they wrote their record under circumstances which did not allow

them to express themselves unembarrassed by some controlling difficulty; and Moroni's statement that they wrote in hieroglyphics makes that difficulty known to us.

Thus again, some peculiarities in the text of the Book of Mormon which are made the subject of ridicule by its enemies are, when rightly understood as to their probable cause, strong evidence that it was written in the first place just as claimed by him, and hence "Mormonism" is the truth of God. It seems to make no difference from what point of view this work is looked at in its true aspect, the evidence of its divinity becomes manifest.

Another and different kind of argument to sustain the proposition in hand, is based on a similarity between some of the ancient American and others of the Egyptian hieroglyphical forms. We shall soon see that they are not wholly unrelated, as it was generally claimed in scientific circles until quite recently; but, on the contrary, that they have doubtless a common origin. Since the ultimate source of the ancient Phœnician hieroglyphics and letters, as also the Greek alphabet, is referred by general authority to Egypt, it will be admissible to compare symbols or letters used by the people of Phœnicia and Greece, with some which are found among the ancient American hieroglyphics. A number of them that are worthy of notice will soon follow; but before submitting them, a quotation from *Harper's Magazine*, August, 1902, page 401, will be offered by way of a starting point. It says:

Every new archæological discovery adds testimony to establish the more than hypothetical origin of our American aborigines, and the close relationship between their ancestors of Central America and the peoples of Egypt and Asia. The Bureau of Ethnography at Washington has remarked the identity of certain American hieroglyphics, in form and significance with those of Egypt and the East.

The hieroglyphics at Washington, to which reference has just been made, have not been accessible for examination by the writer, but it becomes evident from the quoted language that the similarity claimed herein is not a fanciful one, but is in harmony with scientific, ethnographical developments, as they affect the case before us.

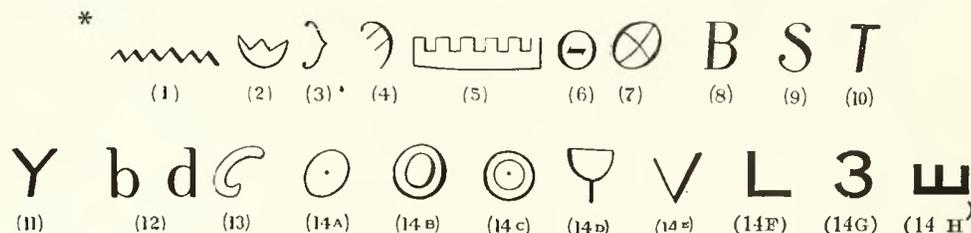
The promised list is:

1. (For hieroglyphical symbols see note).* This is both an Egyptian letter and hieroglyphic. It is given as such in Webster's *Unabridged Dictionary*, new edition (1887) page 1,936. It occurs in illustrations of Egyptian hieroglyphical writing, as given by Stephens in his *Travels in Central America*, etc., (Vol. II, twelfth edition, facing page 441), in McCabe's *History of the World*, 1878, pages 114, 122, 123, and frequently on page 128.

It is among the American hieroglyphics, as one may ascertain from an examination of Stephens' illustrations, Vol. I, page 141 2: 4, † and inverted in 6: 2; in the frontispiece Vol. II, in the hieroglyphical section just above the figure in the hands of the supposed priest at the left. In abbreviated form it is found in the same plate, at the left, also, 3: 16; and in the columns at the right in 4: 7. It occurs twice in the first plate following page 342, 19: 8; and a number of times in the third plate 12: 6.

It will be perceived from an examination of the cited illustrations of its use by the Egyptians, that this symbol was not always written with the same number of sections; and we find it, too, sometimes in a sort of back-hand style. The ancient Americans also apparently added to, or took sections from it according to their requirements. It is worthy of remark that this same hieroglyphic occurs in a fac-simile cut from the Book of Abraham; (see Pearl of Great Price, page 47), where also the much discussed **T** is written in diminutive form.

2. This was an ancient Phœnician symbol, and Egyptian also, though as the latter it appears in somewhat modified form. It is



† These figures refer to the different sections in the plates where the compared symbols are written. The first figure numbers the columns from left to right, the second the lines of sections from top to bottom. Other similarly arranged numbers which follow are for a like purpose.—T. W. B.

found among the American symbols, in less angular form, as given by Stephens, Vol. II, frontispiece, columns at left 4: 10, at the right, 1: 15 and 3: 6. In the first plate following page 342 Vol. II, it occurs in 12: 8; and in the third plate in 9: 3. In the two latter examples but little modification of form occurs. With two sections in  form it was freely used also.

3. A letter of this form is given among Webster's representations of ancient Phœnician, Hebrew and Samaritan characters. It occurs reversed in the frontispiece to Vol. II, as an American hieroglyphic; columns at the left, 1: 9. (Since all the illustrations of ancient American hieroglyphics are taken from Stephens' *Travels in Central America*, etc., it will not be necessary to mention his works again by name).

4. A letter of this form is an ancient Greek character, according to the authority last cited; and, modified, occurs twice in the illustrations of Egyptian symbols which are given by Stephens, Vol. II, page 441—once with three straight lines on the outside of the arc, and once with four.

Among the American characters, we find it in Vol. II, page 342, second plate, 17: 8; 19: 8; third plate, 14: 2; 11: 5; 10: 7; 7: 8. In a hieroglyphical section of the plate facing page 353, and just above the priest's line of sight, it is found three times. In these illustrations of the American use of this character, the number of lines joined to the arc is not uniform, being varied according to the Egyptian practice.

5. A symbol like this is sufficiently peculiar not to be readily originated by different peoples who had no knowledge of one another. It is found in Webster's lists as an Egyptian hieroglyphic, and is not given in any other list of ancient letters or symbols furnished by him.

Turning to page 349, Vol. II, we find the cut of a human figure, in stone, which is clasping to its breast an instrument or symbol that is identical in form with the character just submitted as number 5.

6. Those who are familiar at all with the Greek alphabet will readily recognize this form as one of its letters. It would not be surprising to find different peoples who wrote in hieroglyphics, or who used an alphabet founded on such symbols,

devise a circle or oval, with some kind of mark within it, as one of their characters; but such an outline with a mark like our capital "I" enclosed, puts the matter in an aspect that is not common. (Vol II, page 342, third plate 7: 8).

7. McCabe, in his *History of the World*, page 128, gives this form as an Egyptian symbol. As an ancient American character it occurs in Vol. II, frontispiece, 2: 15, columns at the right—the cross in upright position.

8. This is another familiar Greek letter, and occurs among the American hieroglyphics, Vol. II, page 454, 5: 6.

9. This Greek letter (ancient Phœnician, Hebrew and Samaritan, and also in modified form as 8 representing an Egyptian hieroglyphic) is likewise an American symbol. Vol. II, frontispiece, left columns, 1: 14; right, 3: 15; and on page 342, first plate, 11: 1.

10. Respecting this form, Stephens remarks, when speaking of a ruined palace at Palenque, Vol II, page 313: "The separating walls had apertures of about a foot, probably intended for purposes of ventilation. Some were of this form +, and some of this **T**, which have been called the Greek cross and the Egyptian tau, and made the subject of much learned speculation." For the "tau" form among the American hieroglyphics see Vol. II, frontispiece, columns at left, 2: 3; and page 344, second plate, 3: 9; 6: 12; and in 5: 9, slightly modified. These illustrations of its American use all occur with double line faces, as .

11. Greek letter and Egyptian hieroglyphic. For the latter use see McCabe's *History of the World*, page 128. It occurs as an American symbol in Vol. II, page 344, second plate, 3: 5; 6: 6; 3: 7. In this last section it is found three times.

12. These characters in the form of p were ancient Phœnician, Hebrew and Samaritan letters. As American they are represented in Vol. II, page 344, second cut, 4: 7.

13. Egyptian hieroglyphic. American also, and occurs in this double line form in a number of examples. Vol II, frontispiece, columns at left, 3: 10; 1: 16, 17; page 342, second plate, 20: 4; 17: 11; first, 8: 7; 20: 5; third, 9: 3; page 344, second

cut, 1: 16; 5: 5, 6, 10, 11, 12, 16; and in front of the priest's head at the left.

14. Other forms that might be included in this list as occurring among the American hieroglyphics are (see No. 14, characters in note) besides others.

Respecting the accuracy of the illustrations of American hieroglyphical writing which Mr. Stephens gives, he says that they may be relied upon as being faithful representations of the originals.

American symbols which have been suggested by natural objects are heads, hands, hand and fore arm, hand, and most of arm, reptiles, leaf, tortoise shell, crescents, foot, hindquarters of animals, etc.

A noticeable peculiarity of the Egyptian hieroglyphics as given in Webster's lists, is that large numbers of them are formed with double, or parallel, lines, instead of being written with a solid face, as modern writing and printing generally appear. An examination of the ancient American characters in Stephens' plates will show that a large number of them are also written by the use of double lines.

The foregoing list of symbols or letters which were common to both eastern and western systems of writing anciently, is not a very formidable one; and it must be admitted that some of the characters might have been pitched upon by different peoples who had no knowledge of one another. Yet we think no one can reasonably claim that they are all of this character. Some of them would not be devised readily by Americans who had never seen the Egyptian system of writing, and that of other nations bordering Egypt. Further, when we consider that there has been at hand only a few small plates representing the ancient American hieroglyphics, and a very limited number, comparatively, of original Egyptian letters and symbols, or of others based on them, it is evident, from the showing made, that the total dissimilarity between the two systems, which was claimed for them in years past, is not a fact; and when we take into the account what has been accomplished by the Bureau of Ethnography at Washington, Joseph Smith's statement that the Book of Mormon records were

originally written in hieroglyphics of an Egyptian order, appears to be well on the way towards a scientific demonstration of its truth. That Egyptologists are able to read, as they do, *some* of the American hieroglyphics shows that they are of Egyptian origin. That they can not decipher correctly *more* of them than they now do, tends to substantiate Moroni's statement that the ancient American hieroglyphics are *altered* or *reformed* Egyptian. Scientific developments along these lines are just right to strengthen the "Mormon" position.

SNOWFLAKE, ARIZONA.

(TO BE CONCLUDED.)

Wait a Minute.

(*For the Improvement Era.*)

Wait a minute, young man, which way are you going?
 Down street to the den where red wine is flowing?
 To meet with your friends (?) for only an hour?
 Perhaps play a game for renewal of pow'r?

Lift up your head, let me look in your eyes—
 Those eyes once so tender, caudid and wise,
 Whose clear, sparkling glow was a glory to you,
 In whose depths I read now a desire to be true.

There is danger ahead! I pray you don't go!
 This elf you call pleasure to a monster will grow.
 Now is the time, while your will is yet strong,
 To stifle this demon, to conquer this wrong.

"Only this once?" Would you forge one more link
 In the chain which is dragging you over the brink?
 Many a stout man has gone down to his death,
 With "Only this once!" on his hot, trembling breath.