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What's in a Name? Book of Mormon Language, Names, and [Metonymic] Naming

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Abstract   Anthropological perspectives lend insight on names and on the social and literary function of names in principle and in the Book of Mormon. A discussion of the general function of names in kinship; secret names; and names, ritual, and rites of passage precedes a Latter-day Saint perspective. Names and metonymy are used symbolically. Examples include biblical and Book of Mormon metonymic naming, nomenclature, and taxonomy. Biblical laws of purity form the foundation for a pattern of metonymic associations with the name Lamanite, where the dichotomy of clean/ unclean is used to give name to social alienation and pollution.

What's in a Name?
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and [Metonymic] Naming

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Abstract: Anthropological perspectives are presented on names, and on the social and literary function of names, in principle and in the Book of Mormon. The function of names in kinship; secret names; and names, ritual, and rites of passage are first discussed in general and then from a Latter-day Saint perspective. The symbolic use of names and metonymy or metonymic naming are then discussed. Examples are given of biblical and Book of Mormon metonymic naming, nomenclature, and taxonomy. Finally, it is suggested that biblical laws of purity form the foundation for a pattern of metonymic associations with the name *Lamanite,* where the dichotomy of clean/unclean is used to give name to social alienation and pollution.

Introduction

What's in a name? On occasion the name or title *Doctor* has been incorrectly ascribed to me—not as a conferred Ph.D.,[1] but as

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1 In 1987 Gordon Conrad Thomasson completed a Ph.D. at Cornell University, where his dissertation was based upon fieldwork among the Kpelle of West Africa. His first or given name is shared by his paternal grandfather and at least six of that ancestor's descendants, and his middle name is his mother's maiden surname, which was chosen from among a number of given names common to his maternal grandfather's family to replace their German-speaking Swiss family name of *Kunz,* which they were told would hinder their social acceptance in America. Thomasson, or the son of Thomas, is not, in this case,

an M.D. or physician. I am an interdisciplinary social scientist, an applied anthropologist, and a historian among other things, but not a medical doctor (though for some the confusion may have arisen because I have done research on and taught medical anthropology in a B.S./R.N.-degree-granting college of nursing). The confusion is natural. Everyone from plant physiologists to doctors of philosophy in theater arts is as likely to hear garrulous hypochondriacs begin a long recitation of their symptoms on hearing the title *doctor* at a party, since the majority of the population, outside the academic community, first think of medical practitioners when they hear that name or title.

Like names or titles in less secular societies, in our culture the title *doctor,* whatever academic field its origin, usually signifies that the bearer has indeed undergone certain rites of passage.[2] And the name *doctor* (as well as certain vestments, oaths, and covenants) both symbolizes and in some ways teaches the individual and the community what that particular person's role in society is to be and what skills, abilities, or authority that individual legitimately can be expected to exercise. It also structures the relationships such an individual has with the rest of the community.[3] So titles that are mistaken for that of the M.D. are quite legitimately confused, from a social point of view.

Scandinavian. The earliest known ancestor at this time is George Thomason, a member of the stationer's guild and the London Common Council at the outset of the Long Parliament. He was a social and economic radical and a friend of John Milton (whose Sonnet XIV was dedicated to the memory of Thomason's deceased wife), but he also rebelled against Cromwell's excesses in midseventeenth-century England. There is some suggestion that before this the family name was from Scotland, coming from identification as descendants of one Thomas, son of a chief of one of Scotland's outlawed or broken clans, the MacFarlanes.

2   A pattern I have seen occasionally in nineteenth-century genealogies, where *Doctor* was a given name bestowed at birth, is repeated in my own ancestry in a son of my third-great paternal grandfather, named Doctor Alfred Thomasson (b 1818, York Dist., SC, d 28 Nov 1850, York Co SC).

3   While in today's relativistic/nihilistic ethical climate many people seem to think that taking a name one has not really earned is either trivial or no offense at all, most would still draw the line when it came to having a brain tumor removed by someone who obtained the name/title of doctor or M.D. through the mail from a diploma mill, or by sending in three UPC symbols clipped from a comic book or cereal box and $15.00 plus $3.95 for shipping and

Kinship

Names, first of all, *can*, and I stress the conditional, tell us about kinship. Any Balinese, upon learning that my oldest son is named after his maternal great-grandfather, would smile and nod knowingly. How else should he be named, since from their point of view great-grandfathers are reincarnated as great-grandsons? But in our modern and increasingly secular and socially fragmented world, kin relationships are rarely reflected in anything except last names. Generations live far apart in space, time, and world view. As a result, in 1984 when this study was first presented, I knew of several thirteen-to-seventeen-year-old Raquels and many more two-to-seven-year-old Brookes and Farrahs. Such names tell us nothing specific about the genealogy of such individuals, however much they reflect the fragmentation of families in our society and the media tastes of these children's parents—just as Jared Mahonri Moriancumr Jones's name reflects his parents' religion. Many are glad for a world where no one says, "Oh, you're a son of xxxx, aren't you?" or "You're that so-and-so's son!" In our society today, children rarely suffer for the sins of their parents, at least in name.

Secret Names

An elementary point learned along the fieldwork-path to becoming an anthropologist is that names are often not what they seem to be, either for the person who bears them or for the rest of society. Among the Kpelle of West Africa with whom I worked, in a pattern found in many areas which experience a high infant mortality rate, naming serves a talismanic function: protecting children from evil. Boys are given names such as *good for nothing* or *dirt,* for example, so that they will be beneath the notice of the powers of death—unattractive targets, as it were.

handling. Only when confronted with such criminal misappropriation of names does society appear to recognize that names do have meanings. Texts such as the *Gospel of Philip* are, on the other hand, eloquent on the sin of usurping or taking a name at interest (cf. James M. Robinson, ed., *The Nag Hammadi Library in English* [New York: Harper and Row, 1977], 139, II, 3, 65, 24–31).

Upon reaching the age where they are initiated into the secret men's Poro society, these boys will be given "manly" names such as *Leopard,* that reflect their real worth to society. This fact, that people's names change through time, is a bane to the superficial genealogist. It should not be surprising to us as Latter-day Saints, if we carefully examine the entire complex of our ritual life, and this may provide some suggestions for future Book of Mormon investigations as well.

Names and Ritual: Rites of Passage

Names can be acquired by legitimate means, through ritual. With the objective of their sons being legitimate descendants of Abraham and thereby partakers of the Abrahamic covenant, Jews and Moslems still practice circumcision.[4] If we carefully study Arnold Van Gennep's pioneering classic work, *Rites of Passage,*[5] we will find a pattern of ritual name-giving associated with transitions to specific life stages that has familiar resonances within the Latter-day Saint religion. Linked with each of these passages is the usually gradual (line upon line, precept upon precept) pattern of teaching and reception of certain knowledge appropriate to that age, the making of covenants, explicit or implied, with the larger society, and the receiving of a new name. In this light, if we examine Latter-day Saint practices we will find that:

1. Upon making the transition from pre-earth life or the "spirit world" to mortality, the first thing we ritually give an infant is a "name" by which that child will be known, except in cases of bad health where the child may first be anointed and blessed to be healed.

2. As a child grows, the next transition we find it making is being baptized. Associated with certain covenants which the child (or the adult as pseudochild) makes is the taking upon oneself the

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4   See my entry on "Circumcision" in the *Encyclopedia of Mormonism,* 4 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1992), 1:283. That such ritually acquired lineage and names (*bar* or *ben Abraham/Ibrahim*) can be lost is eloquently described in John 8:31–44 (compare the outrage exhibited when Christ proclaims his lineage and name: John 5:18, 10:30–38). The prayer formula "God of our Fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob" reflects this pattern.

5   Arnold Van Gennep, *Rites of Passage* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960).

name of Christ, or, properly speaking, becoming a Christian in name, and, it is to be hoped, in behavior.

3. The next name assumed and given is that of *Brother* or *Sister,* as the newly baptized Christian is also confirmed a member of the institutional Church, entering into a theologically not-so-fictive kinship relationship with others who have made the same covenants to

> be willing to mourn with those that mourn; yea, and comfort those that stand in need of comfort, and to stand as witnesses of God at all times, and in all things, and in all places that they may be in, even until death. (Mosiah 18:9)

This named kin-relationship is reciprocally assumed and made even less "fictive" by the local congregation accepting the new member through the process of common consent (a type of adoption).

4. The next specific naming takes place approximately at puberty for boys, when our society splits what had been sexually undifferentiated patterns of childhood socialization (the Primary program prior to the Blazer/Merrie Miss age) into specific sexually differentiated associations or societies for socialization of youth into their future roles as adults.[6] Boys at approximately twelve years of age are ordained and given the name of *deacons,* with a set of scripturally mandated responsibilities and roles that give them their place within society. At the same time that boys are learning their roles as both future fathers and priesthood holders, girls are instructed in the roles they will fill. Ordination as a teacher and finally a priest gives the boy more roles, and teaches him more of society's expectations, to say nothing of conferring upon him new names.

5. At some point in this phase of preadulthood, both sexes have the opportunity to take upon them not just their personal name, but their tribe's name as well, through what we call

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6   Karen Cammack Parker (in the course on Mormon Society and Culture I taught at BYU in 1983—Anthropology 346) first noted and discussed this, in fact, rather predictable pattern of age/sex segregation as it manifests itself in Mormon culture and compared it to non-European societies.

"patriarchal" blessings, which affirm the person's lineage and give further instruction as to how that individual is to live.

6. As the men and women enter adulthood they are reintegrated socially in the Gospel Doctrine class of the Sunday School. At about this time, men, if willing and able to live the covenants and fill the expected roles, are given the name of *Elder*—an appropriate title for an adult within any social system. From this point onward it is also appropriate—other rites of passage such as missions being preferred but not absolutely required—that those entering marriage do so in a context wherein they also receive more names, based upon new covenants, learned roles, and expectations, including receiving through ritual the names of husband or wife, and later, mother or father. All these names condition the individual's social relationships and other people's expectations of them.

7. Progressing in age, men and women can gain other names. Through auxiliary and priesthood callings names such as *President* and *Bishop* are acquired. The degree to which such names structure social relationships and role expectations can be imagined if one pictures the reactions in a bar if the bartender were to say "Why, hello, Bishop," depending on if he was addressing him as a customer or a visitor.

These patterns are not new or unique to Latter-day Saints. But some, upon examining Latter-day Saint temple worship, think they find a discontinuity between it and the rest of the gospel.[7] From an anthropological perspective, there is none. The problem is, and this brings us directly back to the Book of Mormon, that these patterns of public ritual and culture are the water in which we, like fishes, swim. They are so commonplace as to be invisible to us normally, and we take them for granted until confronted by something as dramatic and personally revealing as the Latter-day Saint temple experience.[8]

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7   Compare the following citations from the Coptic, Gnostic (so-called) *Gospel of Philip*, in Robinson, ed., *The Nag Hammadi Library in English*, 133, II, 3, 54, 5–13; 137, II, 3, 61, 20–35; 140–41, II, 3, 67, 19–38, and 68, 1–17.

8   We have not yet even begun to explore carefully the possibility of patterns of ritual naming in the Book of Mormon, though I am reasonably certain, based upon their commonplaceness in other cultures, that we will find some, and I commend this study to those whom it interests.

Not Quite a Digression: On Taking the Book of
Mormon for Granted

An example of how we take things for granted is found in our own unconscious *goyische* cultural bias (gentile American, as contrasted to Latter-day Saint), having led to our missing the fact of Israelite worship, festival, and holy day observances in the Book of Mormon. For some time there has been a widespread awareness of the ancient nature of events described in Mosiah 1–6.[9] In the summer of 1984 I discovered that there was a second divine kingship allusion (Alma 20:9–12) in the Book of Mormon. A few weeks later I discovered a rather clear reference to the *Rosh ha-Shanah* through *Yom Kippur* "days of penitence (or awe)" (Alma 30:2–4), and after that I recognized that Alma 36–42 reflected a Passover ritual.[10]

What does this have to do with language in general and names in particular? I mention this revolution in approach to the Book of Mormon because it suggests why we previously may have missed obvious dimensions of the scriptures' meanings. One reason is

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[9] See, for example, lesson XXIII, "Old World Ritual in the New World" in Hugh Nibley, *An Approach to the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: The Council of the Twelve Apostles of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1957), 256–70; reprinted in *CWHN* 6:295–310; John A. Tvedtnes, "The Nephite Feast of Tabernacles" in *Tinkling Cymbals: Essays in Honor of Hugh Nibley*, ed. John W. Welch (Los Angeles: no pub., 1978), 145–77, reprinted as "King Benjamin and the Feast of Tabernacles," in *By Study and Also by Faith: Essays in Honor of Hugh W. Nibley*, ed. John M. Lundquist and Stephen D. Ricks, 2 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and F.A.R.M.S., 1990), 2:197–237; and Gordon C. Thomasson, "Mosiah: The Complex Symbolism and the Symbolic Complex of Kingship in the Book of Mormon," F.A.R.M.S. paper, 1982, revised for the *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 2/1 (Spring 1993): 21–38.

[10] I shared these discoveries and since August 14, 1984, when F.A.R.M.S. held a special seminar on Israelite religion in the Book of Mormon, there has been careful research into the occurrence of festivals and Holy Days common to Israelite religion, Judaism, and the Book of Mormon. So far participants have discovered allusions to approximately ten New Years/Divine Kingship/Tabernacles observances, from three to five Passovers, four jubilee years, two possible pre-Christian Pentecosts, explicitly quoted ritual prayers, and so forth. Many of these have been reported in *Reexploring the Book of Mormon*, ed. John W. Welch (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and F.A.R.M.S., 1992). See also my unpublished manuscript "Expanding Approaches to the Book of Mormon: Pre-Exilic Israelite Religious Patterns."

our assumptions about what we would find in the text. Another is its authors' natural tendency to take for granted their own culture and assume that later readers would automatically understand the subtle allusions they were making to what "everyone" in their society, down to almost the youngest child, would of course immediately understand. If we were to describe a sacrament meeting we would almost certainly omit details that any "man from Mars" would notice, because we take them so for granted. So it is with the Book of Mormon.

Symbolic Use of Names: Metonymy

In secularized Western societies we often take names far too lightly. As a result we miss much of what a truly polysemous text (having multiple meanings or significations) such as the Book of Mormon may communicate.[11] Many years ago Hugh Nibley gave us a huge leg-up in the study of Book of Mormon names when he showed the Old World precedents and correlations for a number of the otherwise extrabiblical and extraordinary names it contains, such as *Paanchi* and *Korihor*.[12] In the spring of 1984, after noting a few odd uses of names in the Book of Mormon, and at the risk of landing myself squarely on Bird Island,[13] based on my own research I proposed a theory which would account for some of those—in Joseph Smith's day unknown—Old World names occurring in the text. In a few words, my hypothesis is that in order to facilitate editorial condensation of the Nephite records,[14]

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11   Consider Northrop Frye's arguments concerning the essentially polysemous nature of scripture and, more to the point, the place of typology and especially metonymy in the Bible, in *The Great Code: The Bible and Literature* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982).

12   See discussions on names in Hugh Nibley, *Lehi in the Desert and the World of the Jaredites* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1952), 27–36, reprinted in *CWHN* 5:25–34; *An Approach to the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1957), 242–45, reprinted in *CWHN* 6:282–85; and *Since Cumorah: The Book of Mormon in the Modern World* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1970), 192–96, reprinted in *CWHN* 7:168–72.

13   See Hugh Nibley, "Bird Island," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 10/4 (Autumn 1977): 120–23.

14   Abridging or editorially condensing a scripture is not unprecedented. Consider the text from the King James or Authorized version of the Apocrypha of 2 Maccabees 2:19–32 (what the Anchor Bible calls "The Abridger's Preface").

> Now as concerning Judas Maccabeus, and his brethren, and the purification of the great temple, and the dedication of the altar,
>
> And the wars against Antiochus Epiphanes, and Eupator his son,
>
> And the manifest signs that came from heaven unto those that behaved themselves manfully to their honour for Judaism: so that, being but a few, they overcame the whole country, and chased barbarous multitudes,
>
> And recovered again the temple renowned all the world over, and freed the city, and upheld the laws which were going down, the Lord being gracious unto them with all favour:
>
> All these things, I say, being declared by Jason of Cyrene in *five books, we will assay to abridge in one volume.*
>
> For considering the infinite number, and the difficulty which they find that desire to look into the narrations of the story, for the variety of the matter,
>
> We have been careful, that *they that will **read** may have delight,* and that *they that are desirous to **commit** to **memory** might have ease,* and that *all into whose hands it comes might have **profit**.*
>
> *Therefore to us, that have taken upon us this painful labour of abridging, it was not easy, but a matter of sweat and watching;*
>
> Even as it is no ease unto him that prepareth a banquet, and seeketh the benefit of others: *yet for the pleasuring of many we will undertake gladly this great pains;*
>
> *Leaving to the author the exact handling of every particular, and labouring to **follow** the rules of an abridgment.*
>
> For as the master builder of a new house must care for the whole building; but he that undertaketh to set it out, and paint it, must seek out fit things for the adorning thereof: even so I think it is with us.
>
> To stand upon every point, and go over things at large, and to be curious in particulars, belongeth to the first author of the story:
>
> *But to use **brevity**, and avoid **much labouring of the work**, is to be granted to him that will make an abridgment.*

a process of **metonymic** naming was used by Mormon, Moroni, or others, wherein symbolically or historically "loaded" names may have been substituted for the actual personal names of given individuals.[15]

Metonymy or *metonymic naming* involves "naming by association," a metaphoric process of linking two concepts or persons together in such a way as to tell us more about the latter by means of what we already know about the former. For example, to call a potential scandal a "Watergate" is to suggest volumes in a single word. Similarly, if we call an individual a Judas or a Quisling, rather than giving his or her proper name, we can in one word convey an immense amount of information about how we at least feel toward that person. Names which are specific to particular castes in India have a metonymic function, linking the individual

> Here then will we begin the story: only adding thus much to that which hath been said, that *it is a foolish thing to make a long prologue, and to be short in the story itself.* (italics and boldface added)

This text raises a number of interesting questions about the "rules of an abridgment" in antiquity. How much can we know about the rules for abridging in Hellenistic culture, in Jewish culture, and in the ancient Near East generally? The editor of 2 Maccabees possibly might reflect Hellenistic canons more than Hebrew (though that might be doubted for ideological reasons, considering the focus of the revolt). But how much more can we know by examining, for example, other occurrences of a phrase like the "manner, pattern, or rules of an epitome"? I suspect that the Greco-Roman world produced rather explicit criteria for such exercises. What then can be discovered about the ancient Near East? Are there similarly explicit statements made in any of the cultures that were part of Nephi's "world" and/or Mormon and Moroni's cultural inheritance? If no formal statements or handbooks can be found, can we begin to deduce what criteria might have been by examining older/longer and more recent/shorter versions of the same text in a tradition? Can we meaningfully compare the records of abridgment in the Book of Mormon text with any of these patterns? How much can we learn from the Book of Mormon's internally documented editorial history? Also, could knowing something of the rules for abridgment in a tradition allow us in any way to project back more confidently to what the source text might have been?

[15] In May of 1984 a F.A.R.M.S. research seminar was held which explored the idea of metonymic naming in the Book of Mormon. This fed into the F.A.R.M.S. ongoing Book of Mormon names project, and this paper.

clearly to the role they are to perform in this life. In this case, these are names which the person actually bears in real life. Other names are assigned after the fact.

Biblical Metonymy

Not all names are metonymically assigned after the fact, but some, if they are not, are very convenient. In considering whether metonymy is a biblical phenomenon, I first think of Paul. When we are told that Paul was first named Saul, and that the Son of David's words to him were "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" (Acts 9:4), if we know our Bible as Saul would have known it, our minds can link King Saul, who persecuted David, with the New Testament apostle-to-be. The most explicit imagery comes when David stands outside Saul's cave with Saul's bottle and spear, saying, "wherefore doth my Lord thus pursue after his servant?" (1 Samuel 26:18; see also verses 5-20, and 1 Samuel 24:1-15.) We could describe this as a typological coincidence, or perhaps as an after-the-fact renaming of Paul by himself (or Luke?)[16] to more vividly illustrate the nature of his actions by comparing him (self) with the wicked Saul who pursued and attempted to kill the anointed one of Israel. If the latter is the case, then this would be an example of metonymic naming.

Not all names are metonymic, of course. The Joseph Smiths, Sr. and Jr., come by their real names quite legitimately, whether one chooses to see this as an inspired fulfillment of prophecy or, as do some critics, as a "coincidence."[17] There is, in any case, a legitimate metonymic association between them and the Joseph who was sold into Egypt. But in some cases we find names that are almost certainly editorial insertions. For example, while David was in flight, he sought food from a man the biblical text names as *Nabal*. It stretches credibility to believe that a man would, as an

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16 In any case, it is clear that the writer of Acts 9 was intimately familiar with the Jewish scriptures, and if Luke was the writer, that he almost certainly was a Jew himself. Details such as this are not the product of a cultural outsider.

17 I find it very amusing that people are willing to accept the literally thousands of such necessary "coincidences" that are needed to explain away Joseph Smith Jr. and the Book of Mormon, rather than honestly and prayerfully explore the much less improbable and much more testable "promise of Moroni" (10:4–5).

affluent adult Israelite, carry with him the name of *Mr. Fool*. But that is his name, according to the text, and his actions are indeed foolish—refusing food to the anointed king and consistently successful warrior, David (1 Samuel 25:25). *Nabal* is, I believe, a clear example of inspired editorial, after-the-fact metonymic naming in the Old Testament.

Metonymy in the Book of Mormon

Names can have multiple meanings and functions. The Greek "pre-historic" word *Mormo* (which is to say it is a loan word into Greek, probably from some other Mediterranean culture) refers to the sound made by wild animals, a growl or a murmur, and is an example of onomatopoeia. If the place name *Mormon* has the same root as *Mormo*, it is quite appropriately used, based upon this etymology, to refer to the wilderness area where Alma's young Church began, a place characterized by the text as being "infested, by times, or at seasons, by wild beasts" (Mosiah 18:4).[18] The word *Mormon* almost immediately took on other

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18   Hugh Nibley's "Book of Mormon Near Eastern Background" in the *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* 1:187–90, provides a summary of some name/word parallels (point 6). One in particular is noteworthy here:

> Hermounts, a country of wild beasts (cf. Egyptian Hermonthis, god of wild places)

This brings the internal textual definition of "Mormon" explicitly to mind.

> And it came to pass that as many as did believe him did go forth to a place which was called **Mormon**, having received its name from the king, being in the borders of the land having been **infested**, by times or at seasons, **by wild beasts**. (Mosiah 18:4)

> Yea, they were met on every hand, and slain and driven, until they were scattered on the west, and on the north, until they had reached the wilderness, which was called **Hermounts**; and it was that part of the wilderness which was **infested by wild** and ravenous **beasts**. (Alma 2:37)

It is quite possible that **HRMN** and **MRMN** are the same word, or at least share the same root. Is **RMN** a pure root? An "H" to "M" consonant shift or vice versa seems unlikely. Is the initial M on Mormon a prefix identifying a noun of place? Is this pair of words a reflection of the emergence of dialects among the divided Lehite colonists, or is it the result of contact/assimilation with other

associations, however, linked with the covenants entered into by the members of the new Church. It may also have good Egyptian meanings, including associations with wild animals and even with the concept of "more good." The prophet Mormon's name might make perfectly good sense in describing him as a successful military commander (the Lion of Judah, Richard the Lionhearted, etc.) but is much better understood for its link to the covenants made by Alma's flock, and may well have been given to him by his parents because of its didactic/metonymic associations. Names may have multiple meanings and functions, especially in a multi-lingual and multicultural context.

The Book of Mormon unquestionably employs metonymic naming in several contexts. First of all, kings of the Nephites, Lamanites, and peoples of Zarahemla, among others, received the name of the first king over that people, along with their own given name (see for example Jacob 1:11; Mosiah 7:21–22; and Omni 14).[19] The peoples who followed these leaders were also metonymically named, receiving the name *Nephites,* in Jacob 1:14, for instance. Those who move from one group to another or from one lifestyle to another are also metonymically named by the Book of Mormon—coming to be known as Nephites, Lamanites, or whatever by the spiritual choices they make, rather than their genealogy, as in 4 Nephi 20 where we read about the

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New World peoples. And then where, if anywhere, does the "Greek" *Mormo* of "unknown origin" (Egyptian?), that is supposed to be related onomatopoeically to the cry of wild beasts, fit in?

It should be a small task on a PC to take a list of all the Book of Mormon words in a text file and reduce each word in the list to the various "possible" root/consonant combination (e.g., Hermounts can become HRM, RMN, MNTS), based on the judgement of various language specialists [Egyptian, Arabic, Hebrew, etc.]. Then it would be simple to compare possible matches of the roots on the list. (See the discussion below, for example, comparing *ezrom* and *Ze-ezrom,* and *antion* with *Antionum* and *Antionah.*) We need an internal study of Book of Mormon roots to match the external work that has been done in the F.A.R.M.S. names project.

[19] See in this regard my "Mosiah: The Complex Symbolism and the Symbolic Complex of Kingship," 25.

people who had revolted from the church and *taken upon them* the name of Lamanites.[20]

Apart from general patterns of metonymic naming in the Book of Mormon, we find that metonymy as a technique of editorial condensation and commentary may have been employed, telling us a great deal about an individual apart from his Nephite or Lamanitishness, or his being a king or descendent of kings. I suggest that metonymy was in fact a major editorial technique in the Book of Mormon and the Bible.[21]

Names such as *Paanchi, Korihor,* and *Aha* come to mind. In different contexts, Dr. Nibley and Benjamin Urrutia have pointed out that Jaredite names appear at times when severe problems arise in Nephite society. Is a direct bull's eye such as Paanchi the person's real name, or has the guilty party's name been changed to tell more about him in a small amount of space. If Alma$_2$'s apostasy took place some time after his marriage, could this explain why he gave apparently "heavy," probably Jaredite names to his younger sons such as *Shiblon* and *Corianton,* in contrast to naming his first son, Helaman, apparently after his father's first convert. Is it a reflection of his rebellion at the time, or an after-the-fact reflection of the kind of life he was leading and led them into, before he had repented?

Given the fact that in the ancient Near East a word equivalent to the word *anti* could mean just what it means in English today, the name of the Lamanite crown prince, son of Lamoni's father, *Anti-Nephi-Lehi* is a perfectly appropriate throne name for what

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20 In this regard see my discussion "What exactly does the word "Lamanite" mean?" in the *Ensign* (September 1977): 39–40, and my entry on "Lamanites" in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* 2:804–5.

21 It is worthy of note that metonymy can be a way of changing the names to protect the innocent or the repentant, and their posterity, where the spiritual lesson to be learned is of eternal import. By comparison, this reveals the insignificance and heartlessness of the "academic" concern for secular historical "accuracy" with regard to the trivia of names and dates in Church history, especially with regard to disciplinary matters, in spite of whoever it might hurt. Metonymy makes compassion possible in narrative, and enables the writer to portray the consequences of a person's sins while covering the individual with a mantle of charity.

the Lamanites had stood for, prior to their conversion. Was *Anti-Nephi-Lehi* his real name, a ritual title, or a metonym?

The renaming of the city-site of Ammonihah as the *Desolation of Nehors* is a perfect example of metonymy, whether it was a contemporary designation or was given after the fact. Such a name conveys both cause and effect to readers of the text.

Robert F. Smith has suggested a meaning for *Gadianton*—specifically *"my fortune is [in] oppression/affliction/rapine"*—which is classically metonymic, and very much to the point in this case.

The "Nephite" *Coriantumr* of Helaman 1 may be a metonym, as his revolt leads to a scene of carnage very similar to that created at least in part by the Jaredite with the same name.

Isabel, and here I have come to agree with the majority of the F.A.R.M.S. committee, may well be metonymically linked with the Old Testament *Jezebel* who led Israel into idolatry or whoring after false gods, as the harlot Isabel does Corianton and those he should teach.

Another example, suggested by Benjamin Urrutia after I advanced the metonymy hypothesis, is to be found in *Laban*. In both the Old Testament and the Book of Mormon, Laban is a scheming kinsman who denies relatives property that is rightfully theirs, causes them to flee from his presence, exploits their resources, mounts punitive expeditions against them, and finally must be overcome, by almost any means. It is also worthy of note, as John Tvedtnes has mentioned, that *Laban* is *Nabal* backwards, and that such word-plays and puns, as well as gemmatrias—are there any of these in the Book of Mormon?—are typical of Hebrew naming.

Jack Welch has suggested that Alma's own name, potentially suggesting either eternal or hidden, may well be a metonym, or a name given to signify the change that has occurred in an individual, and a rite of passage that has been experienced.

Finally, and this is the name that convinced me to pursue this entire subject, we come to Benjamin Urrutia's correlation of *ezrom* and the name *Zeezrom*. In Alma 11 we find a seeming digression from the topic of the text in the complex discussion of Nephite weights and units of measure and equivalents. Conspicuous, now, among the names of the units of value given is that of an *ezrom*

(Alma 11:6, 12). It is a quantity of silver. Immediately after the discussion of money we find the person who is called *Zeezrom*. This appears to be a compound of the word *Ze*, which we can translate "This is an" as a prefix, and the word *ezrom*. Zeezrom is distinguished by having offered 10.5 *ezrom* of silver to Alma and Amulek if they would deny their testimonies. Zeezrom is a lawyer of dubious repute—today we might call him a bag-man, or a "fixer"—one who offers bribes, and his name entirely fits his life before he repents (Alma 11:12). His name would translate "this is a unit of silver." Besides linking him with his actions, the name links him into a typological complex with those who would sell their signs and tokens for money and to Judas's selling/betraying Christ for thirty pieces of silver. If this is not metonymic naming I am anxious to learn what it might be. Lest the likelihood of *Zeezrom* being a metonym be underrated, I subsequently noted that the largest Nephite weights and units of measure, the *antion* of gold (Alma 11:19), appears in later chapters of the text of Alma, first in referring to a chief ruler of Ammonihah—one Antionah (a big man in status and self-esteem, Alma 12:20)—and later to the big-money town or pride-in-wealth city of Antionum (Alma 31:3), home of the *noveau riche* bourgeois Zoramites (note they take upon themselves the name of an exservant, Zoram).[22]

With the name of *Zeezrom* and the probable use of the word *antion* in other related contexts, I believe that we have a *prima facia* case for pursuing the concept of metonymic naming as a mechanism for exploring the scriptures both for a deeper understanding of their meaning and as a possible key to some of the linguistic features of Nephite language, many of which appear to be quite ancient, such as its color vocabulary.[23]

[22] I hypothesize that Zoram was a Levite refugee from the Northern Kingdom, attached to Laban's household through generations of service (not servitude) to his tribe, thus accounting for his (ritual?) responsibility for keeping the plates and the appearance of what are possibly Levitical ordinances in Lehi's camp and colony prior to their joining with the Mulekites. This heritage could also account for the liturgical innovation found among the Zoramites.

[23] When the first public version of LDSView© became available, one of the first things I did was to compare the color vocabulary found in the various scriptures (see Appendix 1). I had previously studied the development of color terms in various languages (see my "Maximizing Participative Planning: Cultural and Psychological Aspects of User-Centered Soil Resource Inventory

To Be Named Unclean: Biblical Laws of Purity and Metonymic Associations of the Name *Lamanite*

As noted above, the Book of Mormon reflects ancient Israelite religion on the most macro scales at which it can be read. The book's overall historical skeleton is the biblical ritual cycle of the ancient Mosaic calendar, ranging from the fifty-year cycle of jubilees down to the preexilic (having their origins before the Babylonian captivity) annual feasts, festivals, and holy days. At the same time that it can be appreciated on this scale, the text can be read on descending levels of magnitude down to almost microscopic levels of detail as reflected in the choice of single words, yet still—like the repetitive pattern of a Mandelbrot set in "chaos" mathematical equations—essential features of Israelite religion reappear. And what are found, consistently, are not the highly elaborated and detailed codes of later rabbinic Judaism, but the more essential and fundamental patterns which emerge from historical study of the five books of Moses.

The presence of biblical laws of purity, of subtle distinctions between the clean and the unclean, and of a rhetoric of otherness based on or reflected in a pattern of metonymic naming in the Book of Mormon is strong evidence for the preexilic origin of the text and Book of Mormon cultures.24 This is in line with the

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Preparation and Presentation," in *Soil Resource Inventories and Development Planning*, Technical Monograph No. 1 [Washington, D.C.: Soil Management Support and Services Group, Cornell University/USDA/AID, 1981]: 391–400) and was aware that the more ancient the language or text the fewer color terms there are to be found. The Book of Mormon is far more consistent in this regard (restricting itself to black, white/grey, and red/scarlet) than are the King James texts.

24 Few aspects of Israelite religion are more well known or more frequently encountered by persons outside of Judaism today than, as David Boruchowitz has pointed out (private communication to the author), the Talmudic distinctions between things *kosher* ("fit," "proper," or ritually pure) and *treyf* (originally meat "torn" in the field or killed as prey, and "forbidden," it later refers generally to things impure or unclean). In virtually any American supermarket and in most kitchen pantries, foods can be found labelled variously with symbols indicating that they are Kosher, or less often that they are Kosher for Passover (without leaven). Yet beyond the occasional recognition of such symbols, the average shopper knows little if anything about the dietary laws

recent reversing of a trend of at least a century; the canonical *Torah* of Judaism is increasingly being recognized today as having ancient rather than postexilic origins. Archaeological discovery of two preexilic silver amulets which contain the text of the intrinsically most priestly blessing still in use today (Numbers 6:22–27)—what should have been postexilic "P" texts according to older evolutionary models of textual criticism—call at least the dating scheme associated with the "JEDP" hypothesis severely into question. Instead of models of a recent (postexilic) *Torah*, the picture in Deuteronomy of the *Torah* in the ark (Deuteronomy 31:26) is plausible, and the suggestions that King Josiah employed the book of the law in his religious reformation of 622 B.C. (2 Kings 23:24), and that Nehemiah indeed used the books of Moses in his Year Rite at the Water Gate (Nehemiah 8:1-8), are regaining credibility. The *Tanakh* or canonical compilation of the books of the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings is today recognized as dating back at least to the second century B.C. And every book of the Jewish canon has been found among the Dead Sea Scrolls from Qumran, with the exception of the book of Esther. Thus, the ancient laws governing purity, the clean, and the unclean should, in fact, have been part of Nephite culture, rather than being an anachronism.

Laws of the Clean and the Unclean

A typical example of the richly detailed minutiae reflecting Israelite religion in the Book of Mormon involves reflection of the most essential laws which distinguish the clean from the unclean.[25] Something of the history of the development of Israelite religion, or a lack of awareness of some of the Oral Law among the Nephites, may also be reflected. Consider first the Jaredite taxonomy of permissible foods.

(*kashrut*) that have their foundation in the biblical laws of purity and cleanness based in Genesis, and are amplified in Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14.

[25] It should be noted that in extreme circumstances there have been exceptions to these laws, where a life was at stake due to starvation, etc.

> And also all manner of cattle, of oxen, and cows,
> and of sheep, and of *swine*, and of goats, and also *many
> other kinds of animals which were useful for the food of
> man.* (Ether 9:18)

Here we find a reflection of the Noahide law (Genesis 7:2, 8; 8:20, which preceded the Law of Moses). These refugees from the Tower of Babel, existing before the patriarchs and the Abrahamic covenant, Israel as a people, and Moses, did not scruple to categorize swine as edible.[26]

In the age of the patriarchs we see that nomadism and pastoralism were the predominant lifestyles after Abram fled his father's house (e.g., Genesis 13:5–7).

> And the boys grew: and Esau was a cunning hunter,
> a man of the field; and Jacob was a plain man, dwelling
> in tents.
> And Isaac loved Esau, because he did eat of his
> venison: but Rebekah loved Jacob. (Genesis 25:27-28)

The dual pattern persists later, although hunting apparently becomes less respectable. In fact, "clean" beasts killed by hunting are acceptable food even today, but only if no other sustenance is available. Otherwise clean species, if they are taken as prey through hunting in which the animal is killed but not ritually slaughtered in a correct manner, contain substantial amounts of blood.[27] The Mosaic law elaborates on these concepts (e.g., Leviticus 10:10; 11:47; 20:25; Deuteronomy 12:22–25; 14; Ezekiel 22:26; 44:7, 25).

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26 In time of extreme calamity, the Jaredites used meats which were of a most questionable nature.

> And it came to pass that the people did follow the course of the
> beasts, and did devour the carcasses of them which fell by the way,
> until they had devoured them all. Now when the people saw that they
> must perish they began to repent of their iniquities and cry unto the
> Lord. (Ether 9:34)

27 Animals taken in snares and nets could have been slaughtered in a way that rendered them more ritually pure, especially with regard to the presence of blood in the meat.

The Lehite party, as it traveled down the Arabian peninsula, subsisted of necessity on wild game, even eating it uncooked. In contrast to the rules governing consumption of the Passover lamb (Exodus 12:8-9), the refugees ate some of their meat raw (an expedient because of the security risk fires posed in the wilderness?). There were well-known exceptions to the laws in extreme circumstances (1 Kings 17:4-6).

> For the Lord had not hitherto suffered that we should make much fire, as we journeyed in the wilderness; for he said: I will make thy food become sweet, that ye cook it not;
>
> And I will also be your light in the wilderness; and I will prepare the way before you, if it so be that ye shall keep my commandments; wherefore, inasmuch as ye shall keep my commandments ye shall be led towards the promised land; and ye shall know that it is by me that ye are led. (1 Nephi 17:12-13)

They hunted out of apparent need, and suffered when they could not find game.

> And it came to pass that we did take our bows and our arrows, and go forth into the wilderness to slay food for our families; and after we had slain food for our families we did return again to our families in the wilderness, to the place of Shazer. And we did go forth again in the wilderness, following the same direction, keeping in the most fertile parts of the wilderness, which were in the borders near the Red Sea.
>
> And it came to pass that we did travel for the space of many days, slaying food by the way, with our bows and our arrows and our stones and our slings.
>
> And we did follow the directions of the ball, which led us in the more fertile parts of the wilderness.
>
> And after we had traveled for the space of many days, we did pitch our tents for the space of a time, that we might again rest ourselves and obtain food for our families.

> And it came to pass that as I, Nephi, went forth to slay food, behold, I did break my bow, which was made of fine steel; and after I did break my bow, behold, my brethren were angry with me because of the loss of my bow, for we did obtain no food.
>
> And it came to pass that we did return without food to our families, and being much fatigued, because of their journeying, they did suffer much for the want of food. (1 Nephi 16:14–19)

While initially settling the promised land and adjusting to its new ecosystem, flora and fauna, this pattern continues. Nephi later describes the animals found some time after arriving in the promised land in the Americas.

> And it came to pass that we did find upon the land of promise, as we journeyed in the wilderness, that there were beasts in the forests of every kind, both the cow and the ox, and the ass and the horse, and the goat and the wild goat, and all manner of wild animals, which were for the use of men. And we did find all manner of ore, both of gold, and of silver, and of copper. (1 Nephi 18:25)

Giving Name to Social Alienation and Pollution

Up to the point that the Lehite colony divides into the Lamanite and Nephite factions (2 Nephi 5), the diet question lacks any obvious polemical content or implied question of ritual purity. It should be noted that by this point in their history the colonists who follow Nephi appear to have made a transition to a relatively more sedentary agricultural lifestyle. From the mention of separation, however, the Nephite records reflect a concern for the essentials of the laws of the clean and the unclean, the raw and the cooked, a distinction between purity and danger that serves as a condemnation or measure of the depravity of the Lamanites. First we are told that

> And because of their cursing which was upon them they did become an idle people, full of mischief and

subtlety, *and did seek in the wilderness for beasts of prey.* (2 Nephi 5:24)[28]

From this point onward in the text, the name Lamanite is metonymically associated with the most clear and explicit forms of ritual impurity. The force of this description only becomes obvious over time. Nephites, including their prophet/leaders, still hunted, as we see in the case of the prophet Enos.

> Behold, *I went to hunt beasts in the forests*; and the words which I had often heard my father speak concerning eternal life, and the joy of the saints, sunk deep into my heart. (Enos 1:3)[29]

After his own blessing, however, Enos comes to see something of the depravity of the Lamanites.

> And I bear record that the people of Nephi did seek diligently to restore the Lamanites unto the true faith in God. But our labors were vain; their hatred was fixed, and they were led by their evil nature that they became wild, and ferocious, and a *bloodthirsty people*, full of idolatry and filthiness; *feeding upon beasts of prey*; dwelling in tents, and wandering about in the wilderness with a short skin girdle about their loins and their heads shaven; and their skill was in the bow, and in the cimeter, and the ax. *And many of them did eat nothing save it was raw meat*;[30] and they were continually seeking to destroy us. (Enos 1:20)

Here, Enos scores the Lamanites for, among other grievous sins, not just "seeking" but for eating ("feeding upon beasts of

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28 This is a strong condemnation because beasts of prey (flesh/carrion eaters) are among the unclean animals—they fall under the biblical dietary proscription against all land animals that do not chew their cud and lack cloven feet on the one hand, and on the other hand are not vegetarian and feed on unclean meat and blood.

29 Were some of the "words" Enos had often heard from his father somehow linked to hunting, and to the clean and the unclean? Does this perception influence his subsequent description of the Lamanites?

30 The contrast here with the Lehites' desert wanderings might hinge on the question of preference when alternatives were available.

prey") and apparently for preferring to eat "raw meat" even when it is unnecessary. This consumption of unclean and thus forbidden animals, when agricultural and pastoral lifestyles are possible and are being practiced by the Nephites, is given as a sign of degeneracy. Moreover, "bloodthirsty" can refer both to people who are warlike or murderous in intent, and to dietary choices.

> And they were scattered upon much of the face of the land, and the Lamanites also. And they were exceedingly more numerous than were they of the Nephites; and they loved murder and would *drink the blood of beasts*. (Jarom 1:6)

Here we have the ultimate condemnation in the earliest of biblical terms of uncleanness. Not only are the Lamanites hunting and killing animals in an unacceptable manner when, it appears, alternatives are available, but they hunt and eat animals which are intrinsically unclean and drink their blood. The text does not question the Lamanites' "machismo" but differentiates the Nephites from the Lamanites along the most clear-cut of biblical lines, which are a part of Jewish religious consciousness to this day.

The violation of these prohibitions is a clear differentiator. The rhetoric of otherness and the unclean is consistent, and the metonymic associations linked to the name *Lamanite* are a common denominator, identifying those who rebel against God and the curse that comes upon them. Apostate Nephites are apparently scored for the same behaviors as the Lamanites.

> [Amalickiah, who was a Nephite by birth] . . . did curse God, and also Moroni, swearing with an oath that he would drink his blood; and this because Moroni had kept the commandments of God in preparing for the safety of his people. (Alma 49:25-27)

Over time, settled agriculture seems to have depleted stocks of wild game or deprived them of habitat to the point that hunting became a liability (it is time consuming and, as stocks are depleted, must be done at increasingly greater distances from more settled populations). This figured into Nephite military strategy.

But behold, there were no wild beasts nor game in those lands which had been deserted by the Nephites, and there was no game for the robbers save it were in the wilderness.

And the robbers could not exist save it were in the wilderness, for the want of food; for the Nephites had left their lands desolate, and had gathered their flocks and their herds and all their substance, and they were in one body.

Therefore, there was no chance for the robbers to plunder and to obtain food, save it were to come up in open battle against the Nephites; and the Nephites being in one body, and having so great a number, and having reserved for themselves provisions, and horses and cattle, and flocks of every kind, that they might subsist for the space of seven years, in the which time they did hope to destroy the robbers from off the face of the land; and thus the eighteenth year did pass away. (3 Nephi 4:2–4)

In conclusion, we see that the laws of ritual purity, of metonymically named distinctions between the clean and the unclean, were used to differentiate those who kept the laws of God and those who rebelled against them. Exceptions to these laws in the Book of Mormon are found to make sense in historical context and are predictable from an Old World perspective of expedients rather than absolutes. In the Lehite colony, and later as the Nephites and Lamanites differentiated themselves, one from another, adherence to the dietary laws became a crucial measure of conformity to or rebellion against the Lord's laws. The Nephite prophets came to distinguish themselves and those who followed them by using a rhetoric of otherness and a pattern of metonymic naming, based in significant degree on adherence to the laws of ritual purity, the clean and the unclean, and diet.

Finally, that which is ancient can illuminate what is modern. Book of Mormon critics' claims that the "Christianity" or Church of [Messianic] Anticipation in the Book of Mormon is anachronistic stand illuminated by the fact that some of the writers of the Dead Sea Scrolls in fact knew that one was to come who would be called not a "Teacher of Righteousness" but a

"Messiah," as forcefully argued in Robert Eisenman and Michael Wise's *The Dead Sea Scrolls Uncovered*.[31] There is no point to all of this, of course, unless it also helps us, through the scriptures' messages, to draw nearer to God. I offer these ideas in the hope that we all may so do, precisely in the name of Jesus Christ.

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31 Robert Eisenman and Michael Wise, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Uncovered: The First Complete Translation and Interpretation of 50 Key Documents withheld for over 35 Years* (New York: Penguin, 1993).

Appendix 1
Color Names in the Book of Mormon

Incidence (number of verses) of apparent color term usage in the four Standard Works and the King James Apocrypha

Color	OT	NT	BM	D&C	PGP	Tot	Apo	
Black	15	3	2	1	1/M	22		
Black . . .*	6	2	2	4	1/M	15	2	Variants: -ening, -er, -est, -ish, -ness, -ed
Brown	4					4		All refer to conflict between Jacob and Laban
Red	46	6	13	3		68	5	
Red . . .	7					7		Variants: -dish (Levitical, diagnostic), -ness
Scarlet	46	6				52	2	Mostly with reference to cloth, priesthood
Scarlets			2			2		Used with reference to cloth
Crimson	5					5		
Orange						0/2		Modern place name: Orange, Ohio
Yellow	4					4		Mostly Levitcal, diagnostic
Green	37	4		1	1/A	43	4	Often linked with vegetation (anachronistic trans?)
Green . . .	3					3		Variants: -ish (Levitical, diagnostic), -ness
Blue	49					49	3	Mostly used referring to cloth, priesthoood, temple

Color	OT	NT	BM	D&C	PGP	Tot	Apo	
Blue . . .	1							Variant: -ness (medical, a bruise)
Violet						0		
Purple	39	9				48	16	Mostly cloth, priesthood, temple, kings; once the sea
Gray/Grey	6		1			7	5	
Gray . . ./ Grey . . .	4					4		Variants: -headed, -hound
White	40	26	24	12	2/JS	104	3	
White . . .	2	2	4	1	1/JS	10	6	Variants: -ed, -ness, -er
Gold**	336	25	55	6	4/M & JS	426	102	
Gold . . .	48	13	2	1		64	11	Variant: -en (-smith not included)
Silver	264	18	47	4	2/JS	335	68	
Copper	1		8	1		10		
Brass	107	6	37	1	1/M	152	14	
Iron	83	7	15	3	1/M	109	10	
Amber	3					4		D&C 11:2 reads "in color like amber"
Emerald(s)	4	2				6	3	
Rubies	6					6		
Sapphire(s)	11	1	1			13	1	
Blood	282	93	135	39	10/ M &A	559	38	As in "Moon became as blood" (Rev. 6:12)
Bloody	15	1	1			17		

The King James or Authorized version of the Apocrypha was searched using a text supplied by Robert Kraft of CCAT at the University of Pennsylvania, using WordCruncher© software.

    * Ellipses indicate words with suffixes.

    ** Metals, precious stones, and blood totals are for comparison, since they may or may not involve references to color.