2C. Early Modern English Grammatical Forms

In analyzing the earliest test of the Book of Mormon, Royal Skousen and Stan Carmack have developed a hypothesis that "the linguistic fingerprint of the Book of Mormon, in hundreds of different ways, is Early Modern English." ("Joseph Smith Read the Words," *Interpreter* 18 (2016:41-64).   As to whether that hypothesis will become theory is a matter of debate. In other words, according to the 2010 *Random House Kernerman Webster's College Dictionary:*

> A hypothesis is a conjecture put forth as a possible explanation of phenomena or relations, which serves as a basis of argument or experimentation to reach the truth . . . . A theory in technical use is a more or less verified or established explanation accounting for known facts or phenomena.

However, I must add that while I consider Royal Skousen and Stanford Carmack to be the most pre-eminent linguistic scholars regarding the text of the Book of Mormon, other opinions have been proposed. But before I continue with their ideas, let me answer the question: What is Early Modern English?

In a September 12, 2014 blog, Kirk Magleby wrote: "Scholars of English demarcate eras in the evolution of the language." He then lists the following eras:

A.D. 450 was the beginning of Old English which continued until A.D. 1100 - 1170.

A.D. 1100 - 1170 was the beginning of Middle English which continued until A.D. 1300.

A.D. 1300 was the beginning of Late Middle English which continued until A.D. 1470 - 1500.

A.D. 1470 - 1500 was the beginning of Early Modern English which continued until A.D. 1670 – 1700. (Some even put the end of Early Modern English as late as A.D. 1800.)

A.D. 1670 - 1700 was the beginning of Modern English aka Late Modern English which has become Earth's lingua franca.

(Source: Kirk Magleby, "Early Modern English," http://bookofmormonresources.blogspot.com)

In Part 1 of the 3-part Volume 3 of *The History of the Text of the Book of Mormon: Grammatical Variation* (2016), Royal Skousen writes [p. 3]:

The Book of Mormon, when it was first published in 1830 (Palmyra, New York), was immediately recognized as written in a biblical style but also filled with numerous instances of nonstandard English. As might be expected, that earlier text has undergone grammatical editing over the years, especially by Joseph Smith when he prepared the book for its second edition in 1837 (Kirtland, Ohio), along with additional editing by him for the third edition published in 1840 (Cincinnati, Ohio/Nauvoo, Illinois). Virtually all subsequent editions have continued the editing.

(Early Modern English)

On page 13 Skousen continues:

In quite a few cases, the Book of Mormon usage is restricted to Early Modern English and died out by the 1700s. One surprising finding is that nearly all the Book of Mormon usages that many have thought to be simply Joseph Smith's Upstate New York dialect have actually been identified as Early Modern English. In other words, the original Book of Mormon text is archaic English (dating from Early Modern English) rather than Joseph Smith's dialectal English.

Stanford Carmack writes that much of what we know concerning Early Modern English comes from the KJV Bible. Yet there are multiple Early Modern English grammatical forms in the Book of Mormon that are not found in the Bible, or their usage percentage in the Book of Mormon is not equivalent with that found in KJV Bible text. These grammatical forms in the Book of Mormon have been previously treated as poor English, and edited to a more "acceptable" grammatical form, even by Joseph Smith. However, these phrases, once scorned by critics, now become support for two very important ideas. That   (1) the KJV Bible is a very important companion to the Book of Mormon in phrasing;

yet   (2) the Book of Mormon does not represent a plagiarism of the KJV.

Carmack writes:

I would assert that it is no longer possible to argue that the earliest text of the Book of Mormon is defective and substandard in its grammar. . . . [Moreover] Even if the composition of the book had been consciously manipulated by [Joseph] Smith and his associates in order to create a structurally and lexically plausible work of scripture based on the Bible they knew; the evidence is abundantly clear that the language is broader in scope and in many cases deeper in time than what might possibly have been derived from the KJV.

(Source: Stanford Carmack, "A Look at Some 'Nonstandard' Book of Mormon Grammar." *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 11 (2014): 209-262, pp. 258-259)

Although Stanford Carmack and Royal Skousen have published a number of articles (see the "Sources" Volume), their work on Early Modern English as it relates to the Book of Mormon is ongoing. Thus I have set aside this special section of my Introduction. My purpose is neither to prove or disprove their hypothesis, as I do not lay claim to any formal training in languages, especially Early Modern English. Rather my intention is to provide a limited perspective of their proposed "discoveries" as they relate to my structured parallelistic text, in the hope that further insight can be achieved and catalogued.

To begin with, and for the benefit of the reader, what follows in this section is mainly derived from Carmack's article, "A Look at Some 'Nonstandard' Book of Mormon Grammar."

(Note: The History of the Text of the Book of Mormon Part three: The Nature of the Original Language by Royal Skousen (with the help of Stanford Carmack) which treats the Early Modern English in the text of the Book of Mormon, would be published in 2018.)

I will first list some of the topics he covers, and then give more detail.

    (1) **The phrase "they <u>was</u>"**
    (2) **The phrase "them days"**
    (3) "**Smitten" / "Smote"**
    (4) **Plural noun / Singular verb**
    (5) **Singular noun / Plural verb**
    (6) **The phrase "faith on the Lord [Jesus Christ]"**
    (7) **The phrase "it supposeth me"**
    (8) **The past participle "arriven"**
    (9) **The phrase "the more part of"**
    (10) **The use of the phrase "beseech of you/thee"**
    (11) **The phrase "much + plurals"**
    (12) **The Use of the phrase "did go"**

       As I have previously mentioned in Part 1 of this Introduction (Method #13), as I list the textual examples from the categories listed above in which there has been a change from Early Modern English to Modern English, I will sometimes color the modern grammar in pink, then a slash, and then the change in pink that has been made to the text. Then at the right margin I will insert a pink {AG} Other times I will color the present text in pink and insert at the right margin the original grammatical form in pink in brackets, followed by a pink {AG}. I will also alert the reader to the fact that there are some instances in which the archaic grammar is still present in the text. In those cases, I will just color the text in pink and place the customary {AG} ("Archaic Grammar") at the right margin. Sometimes I will note when the archaic grammar was deleted, which in most instances was during the extensive editing of 1837.
[deleted in 1837]

<u>Examples</u>:   (For Alma 4:3)

[Original text]   "so great was their afflictions"

[Present text]   "so great were their afflictions"

Example #1:   "so great was/were their afflictions"   [𝒫, 1830 / 1837→]   {AG}

Example #2:   "and great were their afflictions"   ["was" – 𝒫]   {AG}

Example #3:   (2 Nephi 3:45 – Full structured text)

3 **And** so   GREAT
          was/were   their   afflictions   [𝒫, 1830 / 1837→]   {AG}
    that EVERY soul   had cause

               to   mourn

(1) **The phrase "they <u>was</u>":**   **(plural pronoun/singular verb)**

According to Stanford Carmack, The phrase "<u>they was</u>" is uncommon in the Book of Mormon. It occurs five times, while "<u>they were</u>" occurs 628 times. Yet it is well attested in Early Modern English where plural pronouns we, ye, you, and they were used with the singular "was."

Originally, the Book of Mormon contained a construction "there were no" followed by a singular noun (see 3 Nephi 4:4; 3 Nephi 11:3; Mormon 1:12). All of these have since been standardized. According to Carmack, the KJV doesn't have any such examples of this construction.

<u>Example</u>: Alma 9:31-32

31 **Now** **it came to pass**

   that when I   Alma

                    had   **spoken**   these **words**

[A] **behold**   the **people**

                    were   **wroth**   with   me
[B] **because**   I   [Alma]   **said**   unto   them

        that   **they** was/were **a**   **hard-hearted**   [𝒫/ 1837]   [AG]
                    and   **a**   **stiffnecked**   **people**

  32 **And also**
[B] **because**   I   [Alma]   **said**   unto   them

        that   **they**   were   a   **lost**
                    and   a   **fallen**   **people**

[A]   **they** was/were   **angry**   with   me   [𝒫/ 1837]   [AG]

The phrase "we was" does not occur in Volume 4a, and neither does "we were." However the phrase "ye was/were" occurs in Alma 7:18:

18   **For as**   I   [Alma]   **said**   unto   **you**   **from the beginning**

        that   I   [Alma]
                    had   MUCH **desire**

        that   **ye** was /were   NOT   in   the   state
                                                   of   dilemma
like   [unto]   your **brethren**

The phrase "there was" followed by a plural noun occurs 30 times in the Book of Mormon, compared to 120 instances of the phrase "there were."

Examples:

Alma 1:16	there was/were many	[𝒫/ 1837]	{AG}
Alma 2:13	there was/were appointed captains	[𝒫/ 1837]	{AG}
Alma 4:1	there was/were no contentions	[𝒫/ 1837]	{AG}
Alma 4:5	there was/were about three thousand	[𝒫/ 1837]	{AG}
Alma 4:9	there was/were envyings and strifes	[𝒫/ 1837]	{AG}

Originally, the Book of Mormon contained a construction "there were no" followed by a singular noun (see 3 Nephi 4:4, 11:3, Mormon 1:12). All of these have since been standardized. Interestingly, the KJV doesn't have any such examples of this construction.

(Source: Stanford Carmack, "A Look at Some 'Nonstandard' Book of Mormon Grammar." *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 11 (2014): 209-262, pp. 217, 221-225; Royal Skousen with the collaboration of Stanford Carmack, *The History of the Text of the Book of Mormon, Part Two: Grammatical Variation.* Provo, Utah: FARMS and BYU Studies, 2016, p. 881-915). *Book of Mormon Critical Text*, Vol. I and II, FARMS, 1986.)

(2) **The phrase "them days"**:

We see the phrase "them days" twice in the original text of the Book of Mormon. While not normal Early Modern English, it is not abnormal either. I have yet to find any examples in Volume 4a, however I did find a somewhat similar example.

Example: Alma 11:39

39 . . .

Yea   He_____   [the   Son of God]

         is   **The   Very Eternal Father**

                              of   Heaven

                        and   of   Earth   [𝒫/ 1920]

                        and   [of]   All Things Which in Them Is/Are

The two examples from the original text are listed below:

Helaman 7:8 " Yea, if my days could have been in them days"
Helaman 13:37: " . . . And this shall be your language in them days"

Both instances have since been edited to read "those days."

(Early Modern English)

(3) "**Smitten" / "Smote**":

According to Stan Carmack, the past-participial *smitten* is used 42 times in the Book of Mormon. In the original text, the past-participial form "had smote" is used 6 times.

Examples: I have yet to find any examples in Volume 4a.

Interestingly, the Oxford English Dictionary informs us that "smote" functioned as a past participle for centuries in English, beginning in the 16th century.

(4) **Plural noun / Singular verb**:

In modern-day noun phrases, we correlate a plural noun with a singular verb. In Early Modern English, this is not always the case.

Example: Alma 1:30

30 **And thus**

in their prosperous circumstances,

they did NOT send away ANY

who was/were naked [𝒫 / 1837]

or that was/were hungry

or that was/were **athirst**

or that was/were sick

or that had NOT been nourished

and they did NOT set their **hearts**

upon riches

Example: Alma 6:2

2 **And it came to pass**

that whoso**ever** did NOT **belong** to the **church**

[but] who **repented** of their sins

was / were **baptized** [𝒫 / 1837]

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		unto	**repentance**
and	was / were	**received**	
		into	the **church**

Example: Alma 9 (Preface)

The words of Alma, and also the words of Amulek, which was / were declared unto the people who were in the land of Ammonihah.

Example: Alma 10:12

and also   [there   was   MORE   than   ONE **witness**]
            [**who**   **testified**] of   the   **things**
                which was/were   **to**   **come**   [𝒫 / 1837]

Example: Alma 15:4

4 **Now when**   he [**Zeezrom**]   **heard**
        that   **Alma** and **Amulek**
                    was / were_____*in*   *the land of Sidom*

Example: Alma 16:13

and also   in   their **synagogues**   *[places of worship]*
        which   was / were   **built**   after   the   manner   [𝒫 / 1837]
                                        of   the   **Jews**

Examples:
Alma 3:25	wars and contentions was/were	[𝒫 / 1837]
Alma 4:2	fields of grain which was/were trodden	[𝒫 / 1837]
Alma 4:3	so great was/were their afflictions	[𝒫 / 1837]
Alma 4:15	persecutions which was/were	[𝒫 / 1837]
Alma 4:19	contentions which was/were	[𝒫 / 1837]
Alma 5:11	words which was/were	[𝒫 / 1837]
Alma 5:33	arms of mercy is/are	[𝒫 / 1837]
Alma 5:44	things which is/are	[𝒫 / 1837]
Alma 5:54	works which is/are	[𝒫 / 1837]
Alma 7:8	things which is/are	[𝒫 / 1837]
Alma 7:12	bands of death which binds/bind	[𝒫 / 1837]
Alma 9:16	promises which is/are	[𝒫 / 1837]
Alma 9:30	works which is/are	[𝒫 / 1837]
Alma 10:12	things which was/were	[𝒫 / 1837]
Alma 11:20	suits which was/were	[𝒫 / 1837]

(Early Modern English)

Alma 12:2	words . . . was/were	[𝒫 / 1837]
Alma 14:23	Alma and Amulek was/were	
Alma 15:3	Alma and Amulek was/were	
Alma 15:16	all his gold and his silver . . . which was/were	
Alma 16:13	synagogues which was/were	[𝒫 / 1837]

Third-person <u>plural</u> subjects are used with archaic third-person <u>singular</u> inflection.

<u>Example</u>: Alma 5:15

15 . . .

			to	be	**judged**	
				according to	the	**deeds**
	which	have	been	**done**	in	the	mortal body **?**	["hath" – *O,𝒫*] [AG]

(Source: Stanford Carmack, "A Look at Some 'Nonstandard' Book of Mormon Grammar." *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 11 (2014): 209-262, pp. 217, 234; Royal Skousen with the collaboration of Stanford Carmack, *The History of the Text of the Book of Mormon, Part Two: Grammatical Variation.* Provo, Utah: FARMS and BYU Studies, 2016, p. 881-915). *Book of Mormon Critical Text*, Vol. II, FARMS, 1986)

(5) **Singular noun / Plural verb**:

<u>Example</u>:   Alma 10:32

32   The object of these lawyers were/was to get gain   [𝒫 / 1837]

(Source: Stanford Carmack, "A Look at Some 'Nonstandard' Book of Mormon Grammar." *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 11 (2014): 209-262, pp. 230-231; Royal Skousen with the collaboration of Stanford Carmack, *The History of the Text of the Book of Mormon, Part Two: Grammatical Variation.* Provo, Utah: FARMS and BYU Studies, 2016, p. 881-915)

(6) **The phrase "faith on the Lord** [**Jesus Christ**]:

Although the Book of Mormon parallels the Bible in using phrases such as "faith in God," faith in the Lord," and faith in him," ONLY the Book of Mormon uses phrases like "faith on the Lord," or "faith on the name of the Lord."

<u>Example</u>: Alma 7:14

14	**that**	ye	may have **faith**	on the	**Lamb of God**	{AG}

<u>Example:</u> Alma 9:27

| 29 | | having | **faith** | on | the | Lord | | {AG} |

(Source: Stanford Carmack, "A Look at Some 'Nonstandard' Book of Mormon Grammar." *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 11 (2014): 209-262, pp. 235-236)

(7) **The phrase "it supposeth me"**:

Phrases like "it supposeth me," "it sorrowth me," and "it whispereth me" are found in the Book of Mormon, but not in the KJV Bible. However, the phrase "it repenteth me" is found in Genesis 6:7 and 1 Samuel 15:11.

<u>Example:</u>   At present I have yet to find any example in Volume 4a.

(Source: Stanford Carmack, "A Look at Some 'Nonstandard' Book of Mormon Grammar." *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 11 (2014): 209-262, pp. 237-238)

(8) **The past participle "arriven"**:

The verb "arrive" or the past participle "arriven" is not used in the KJV, yet Acts 20:15 and Luke 8:26 contain the past tense arrived. The past participle "arriven" (Early Modern English) is used five times in the Earliest Text edition of the Book of Mormon:

<u>Example:</u> At present I have yet to find any example in Volume 4a.

(Source: Stanford Carmack, "A Look at Some 'Nonstandard' Book of Mormon Grammar." *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 11 (2014): 209-262, p. 238)

(9) **The phrase "The more part of"**:

While the KJV uses the phrase "the more part" twice (Acts 19:32, 27:12), the full phrase, "the more part of" does not appear in the KJV. Yet it does appear numerous times in the Book of Mormon:

<u>Example:</u> Alma 14:2

2	**But**	the MORE part of them			{AG}
		were	**desirous**		
	that	**they**	might	**destroy**	**Alma**

and   Amulek

Apparently, the phrase was in use from about 1380 to about 1610.

(Source: Stanford Carmack, "A Look at Some 'Nonstandard' Book of Mormon Grammar." *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 11 (2014): 209-262, pp. 240-241)

(10) **The use of the phrase "beseech of you/thee"**:

In the KJV we find the following pattern: " I/we beseech you/thee . . . . . would / might"
In the Book of Mormon we find: "I beseech **of** you / thee" . . . should"

Example: At present I have not found any examples in Volume 4a.

Other Examples: Jacob 6:5; Alma 34:33, 36:33; Moroni 7:9.

(Source: Stanford Carmack, "A Look at Some 'Nonstandard' Book of Mormon Grammar." *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 11 (2014): 209-262, p. 243)

(11) **The phrase "much + plurals"**:

In the earliest text of the Book of Mormon we find the singular modifier "much" connected with a number of plurals, in much the same manner as in Early Modern English.

Example: Alma 2:5

having   MUCH   **dispute**
                                    and   **wonderful contentions**   {AG}

Example: Alma 7:5

that   my   **joy**   over   **you**
                                              should *come*
                                                    by the   cause   of so MUCH   afflictions   {AG}

In the KJV we find an example of this construction in Luke 12:19: "much goods."

(Source: Stanford Carmack, "A Look at Some 'Nonstandard' Book of Mormon Grammar." *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 11 (2014): 209-262, p. 253)

(12) **The use of the phrase "did go"**

This grammatical form is very recognizable from the Book of Mormon. It is used in Early Modern English for emphasis and contrast. The phrase "did + infinitive appears more than 1,000 times in the Book of Mormon, and 54 times as "did go" or didst go." In comparison, the KJV never uses "did(st) . . . go", but rather "went" or "wentest"—more than 1400 times.

Example: Alma 3:22

22   **Now**   [he] Alma
                    himself
                    being   afflicted with   a   wound
                    did   NOT   *go   up*   to   **battle**   at this time   {AG}
                                   against the   Lamanites

(Source: Stanford Carmack, "A Look at Some 'Nonstandard' Book of Mormon Grammar." *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 11 (2014): 209-262, p. 255)

(13) **Miscellaneous examples:**

Some of the other Early Modern English word uses in the Book of Mormon are as follows:

Examples: Alma 5:48   And behold It is He That Cometh to Take Away the Sins
                              of the World   [present tense to indicate the future]
               Alma 5:50   the Son of God cometh in His glory

               Alma 7:10   the Son of God cometh upon the face of the earth
               Alma 11:41   the day cometh that ALL shall rise from the dead

Note: Interestingly, while the Early Modern English phrase "if it so be" is found 9 times in Volume 1 and 11 times in Volume 2 (the writings of Nephi), it is NOT found at all in Volumes 3, 4a, 4b, 4c, or 5 from the abridgment of Mormon.

(Source: "Use of Early Modern English" in the Editor's Preface, page xxxvii, *The Book of Mormon: The Earliest Text*, edited by Royal Skousen, 2009.)

Note: In an intriguing comment submitted by David Brown on January 8, 2016 in response to Stanford Carmack's article, "Joseph Smith Read the Words" (*Interpreter A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 18 (2016): 41-64) he writes:

   Neurolinguistic research conducted at the University of Liverpool has looked at different brain responses to different forms of text. Phillip Davis and his team have discovered that of all the different forms of English, Early Modern English stimulates the brain like no other. While

current English texts tend to lull the brain into relative inactivity, EmodE texts excite the brain into a deep, self-assessing state.

A summary of Davis' work stated that, "The research also found that reading poetry in particular, increases activity in the right hemisphere of the brain, an area concerned with 'autobiographical memory', helping the reader to reflect on and reappraise their own experiences in light of what they have read.

Note: There are some very intriguing Hebraistic grammatical constructions that are worthy of discussion in this Early Modern English section. In a similar sense they were so foreign-sounding to Oliver Cowdery and Joseph Smith that they edited them out in the early editions of the Book of Mormon. Concerning one example Royal Skousen writes:

In Hebrew, an *if*-conditional clause like "if you come, I will come" (or "if you come, then I will come") would be literally rendered as "if you come **and** (then) I will come". . . . And it is precisely this kind of construction that is found in the original Book of Mormon text . . . But such a construction is definitely not English; thus the overwhelming tendency for scribes, typesetters, and editors has been to remove the extra **and** from this construction, as in these cases involving various subordinate conjunctions:

Alma 16:21 (extra and removed in the 1837 edition, marked by Joseph Smith in $\mathcal{P}$)
        And now after the church having been established throughout all the land
            [after]   having got the victory over the devil

            and the word of God being preached in its purity in all the land
            and the Lord pouring out his blessing   upon the people

            and thus ended the fourteenth year of the reign of the judges
                                        over the people of Nephi

. . .   [Other examples from other books in the Book of Mormon are listed]

The main point here is that as far as I have been able to discover, this construction is foreign to English, whether we consider earlier English (including Early Modern English) or modern English, or the English of Joseph Smiths time and place.

Sources: Royal Skousen, *The History of the Text of the Book of Mormon Part three: The Nature of the Original Language*, 2018, p. 50-51. See also Royal Skousen, *The History of the Text of the Book of Mormon Part One: Grammatical Variation*, 2016, p. 361-409.