

# An Egyptian Linguistic Component in Book of Mormon Names

*Eve Koller*

In February 2012, while studying the Book of Mormon, I searched in the index of the Triple Combination to clarify the identity of an individual. I came across names starting with “Z” and noticed a pattern—*Zenephi*, *Zenos*, *Zenock*. They looked as though they were composed of scriptural names (*Nephi*, *Enos*, *Enoch*, and so forth) with different forms of a z- prefix that might mean “son of” or “descendant of.” Later, I noticed the name *Cezoram* and wondered if it was part of the same pattern, with a variation of the same prefix. Over the years, I investigated the matter further, and I eventually came across the work of Stephen Ricks and John A. Tvedtnes. They suggested that *Zeezrom* (see Alma 10–12, 14–15, 31; and Hel. 5) incorporates the Hebrew *zeh*, which would render the meaning of *Zeezrom* as “he of ezrom.”<sup>1</sup>

At first, I thought that perhaps *Zenephi*, *Zenos*, *Zenock*, and *Cezoram* also incorporated the Hebrew morpheme *zeh*, meaning “he of.”<sup>2</sup> However, in the summer of 2017, I came across Val Sederholm’s blog, in which he

---

1. *Zeezrom* may very well incorporate the Hebrew *zeh*, since it differs from the names investigated here in that “ezrom” is a common noun (the name of Nephite money) rather than a personal name and potential ancestor. It is even possible that the Hebrew *zeh* and the Egyptian *z3* are historically connected, since both the phonology and semantics overlap to a degree.

2. See Stephen D. Ricks, “A Nickname and a Slam Dunk: Notes on the Book of Mormon Names *Zeezrom* and *Jershon*,” *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 8 (2014): 191–94; and Stephen D. Ricks and John A. Tvedtnes, “The Hebrew Origin of Some Book of Mormon Place Names,” *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 6, no. 2 (1997): 257–58.

connects the Book of Mormon name *Zenephi* with the Egyptian pin-tailed duck hieroglyph (known as G39 in Gardiner's sign list of Egyptian hieroglyphs; fig. 1). Understanding the interpretation of this hieroglyph and how it can be pronounced is helpful in grasping the possible etymologies of the names I investigate in this article.

G39 denotes filiation and can bear the meaning "son of/male descendant of" or "daughter of/female descendant of." In Egyptian orthography, while G39 indicates filiation, the hieroglyph that follows it indicates the gender. Thus, when G39 is paired with the seated-man hieroglyph (known as A1), the pair means "son of." When G39 is paired with B1, the seated-woman hieroglyph, and the feminine ending *t* (represented by an image of a small loaf of bread, X1 in Gardiner's list), the interpretation is "daughter of" (fig. 2).<sup>3</sup> (This latter construction is not explored in detail in this article because there are no female names in the Book of Mormon that appear to incorporate G39). The G39 hieroglyph may have been pronounced *za* or *sa*, and the pronunciation of this morpheme is rendered as *z*<sup>3</sup> or *s*<sup>3</sup> (*z*3 or *s*3 in some Egyptian transliterations).<sup>4</sup> C. Wilfred Griggs confirms the filial use of hieroglyph G39, noting that Egyptologist Raymond O. Faulkner verifies both the phonological and semantic readings.<sup>5</sup> Sederholm thus



FIGURE 1. The Egyptian pin-tailed duck hieroglyph indicates filiation and can mean "descendant of." It is known as G39 in Gardiner's sign list of Egyptian hieroglyphs. Alan Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar: Being an Introduction to the Study of Hieroglyphs*, 3d rev. ed., repr. (Oxford: Griffith Institute, Ashmolean Museum, 2001).

3. See Alan Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar: Being an Introduction to the Study of Hieroglyphs*, 3d rev. ed., repr. (Oxford: Griffith Institute, Ashmolean Museum, 2001), 547.

4. 𓆎, sometimes written as 3, represents aleph in ancient Egyptian. Some people have proposed that the G39 morpheme is pronounced *sa* or *za*. Any pronunciation of the vowel, however, reflects scholars' best guesses, since exactly what vowels the ancient Egyptians used is unknown. The consonants (*z* and *s*) are more important to the analysis of this article, and those are known with more certainty to have existed in ancient Egypt. The phonological sound rules proposed here apply to the Book of Mormon language approximately six hundred years after Lehi left Jerusalem, and not necessarily to the original Egyptian.

5. I thank Dr. C. Wilfred Griggs, who directed me to Raymond O. Faulkner, *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian* (Oxford: Griffith Institute, 1981) and the specific page number on which the entry for *z*<sup>3</sup>/*s*<sup>3</sup> was located. Mark Collier and Bill Manley also mention the pin-tailed duck hieroglyph, referring to it as B7, in *How to Read Egyptian Hieroglyphs: A Step-by-Step Guide to Teach Yourself*

suggests that the “Ze-” in *Zenephi* was of Egyptian (not Hebraic) origin and that it follows the common Egyptian name pattern of *z3* (son of) + name: thus, “Ze + Nephi” yields “son of Nephi.”<sup>6</sup>

Inspired by this observation and by my own internal linguistic analysis, this article proposes that in addition to *Zenephi*, the Book of Mormon names *Zenos*, *Zenock*, and *Cezoram*<sup>7</sup> incorporate the names of other Book of Mormon or biblical individuals and the Egyptian morpheme *z3*-/s3- to denote filiation with these ancestors.<sup>8</sup> If this hypothesis is accurate, *Zenos* would mean “son/descendant of Enos,” *Zenock* would mean “descendant of Enoch,” and *Cezoram*, “descendant of Zoram.”<sup>9</sup> This naming practice is akin to Hebrew and Scandinavian patronymics<sup>9</sup> and, if accurate, could provide insight into some aspects of the structure of the language of the Book of Mormon. It could also reveal information about Book of Mormon naming practices and genealogical lineages of the people who received these names.

### The Ce- Prefix in Cezoram

Of the four names considered in this article, *Cezoram* may need more particular examination, since it begins with a *ce-* prefix instead of a *z-* or *ze-* prefix. The *ce-* morpheme (pronounced *se*) likely stems from the same G39 Egyptian hieroglyph and was changed to *ce-* because of a morpho-phonological<sup>10</sup>

---

(Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998). I thank Don Norton for reviewing earlier drafts of the paper in 2017.

6. Val Sederholm, “Zenephi and Zat Mormon Girl (Mormon 9:16),” *I Began to Reflect* (blog), May 31, 2014, <http://valsederholm.blogspot.com/2014/05/the-egyptian-name-zenephi-in-book-of.html>.

7. For instances of the name *Zenos*, see 1 Nephi 19:10, 12, 16; Jacob 5:1; Alma 33:3, 13, 15; and Helaman 8:19; for *Zenock*, see 1 Nephi 19:10; Alma 33:15; 34:7; Helaman 8:20; and 3 Nephi 10:16; for *Zenephi*, see Moroni 9:16; and for *Cezoram*, see Helaman 5:1; 6:15, 19.

8. See Rainer Hannig, *Ägyptisches wörterbuch 1: Altes reich und erste zwischenezeit* [Egyptian dictionary 1: Old empire and first intermediate period], *Kulturgeschichte der antiken welt* [Cultural history of the ancient world], book 98 (Mainz, Ger.: Philipp von Zabern, 2003).

9. Patronymics are names derived from those of an ancestor, usually through the addition of a prefix or suffix. For example, Stevenson (son of Steven), Andersen (son of Ander, where *-sen* is a variant of *-son*). This was also used for women—for example, Nielsdotter (daughter of Niel) and Hansdotter (daughter of Hans). Suzanne McVetty, “Anatomy of a Surname,” *Ancestry* 15, no. 4 (1997): 38–41.

10. Morpho-phonology (also “morphophonology”) refers to the interaction between word structure and sound—for example, how the pronunciation of a word changes when a prefix or suffix is added to it.

rule known as “voicing dissimilation.”<sup>11</sup> The rule would require differing pronunciations of the prefix, determined by the base name to which it is affixed.<sup>12</sup> In the case of *Cezoram*, voicing dissimilation would differentiate the *ze-* prefix from the word-initial *z-* in the base name, so as not to lose its semantic contribution in spoken communication. So for a listener hearing the name *Ze-zoram*, the *ze-* prefix could easily blend with the rest of the name, leaving the listener to interpret “Ze-Zoram” as simply “Zoram,” which also changes the semantics; the term would become simply the personal name *Zoram*, rather than a name that means “descendant of Zoram.”

Other than its prefix, *Cezoram* is presumably a Hebrew name, and Hebraist Jiří Hedánek noted that ancient transcriptions reveal partial regressive dissimilation in Hebrew dating to around 720 BC.<sup>13</sup> In other

---

11. In articulatory phonetics, “voicing” refers to a quality of a speech sound that distinguishes the sound from other speech sounds in a language. That quality is whether or not the vocal chords vibrate when the sound is made. In the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA), *s* is a voiceless alveolar fricative, meaning that when the sound is made, the vocal chords are still (voiceless), the tongue touches the alveolar ridge/hard palette (alveolar), and there is turbulent air stream (fricative). *Z* is a voiced alveolar fricative, meaning the vocal chords vibrate (voiced), the tongue touches the alveolar ridge/hard palette (alveolar), and there is a turbulent air stream (fricative). The only articulatory difference between *s* and *z* is whether or not the vocal chords are vibrating; all other factors are identical. Because of voicing dissimilation, the voicing of the sound is changed; while the sound can still be identified with its underlying form, it is differentiated from adjacent or nearby identical sounds (for example, *Ze-zoram* becomes *Se/Cezoram* so that the sound of the word-initial *ze-* can be distinguished from the sound of the *z* in *zoram*). This morpho-phonological rule of voicing dissimilation is motivated by clarity (a common motivation for rules of dissimilation).

12. One possibility I propose is that the morpheme affixed to the beginning of the name is *ze-* before both oral and nasal stops (*stop* is a linguistic term that refers to consonants that, when spoken, block the vocal tract, stopping airflow); *se-* before *z*; and *z-* elsewhere. I would have suggested a rule where the morpheme is *ze-* before obstruents (which include fricatives and stops), and *z-* elsewhere, but that rule does not work for the name *Zenock*, which I suggest is derived from *Enoch*. In Hebrew, *Enoch* would have been *הַנּוֹךְ* (Hanokh), which begins with [h], a pharyngeal fricative, which is also an obstruent.

13. Jiří Hedánek, “Phonology of Masoretic Hebrew I” (PhD diss., Hussite School of Theology of the Charles University, Prague, 2011), 112. In partial regressive dissimilation, a sound changes only in part, not completely. In other words, a sound maintains some shared features with the original sound and the later sound in the word, from which it is trying to differentiate. For example, when *z* becomes *s*, the sound is still an alveolar fricative and the only change is in the voicing (as opposed to the sound becoming something completely

words, the segments of a word sometimes changed partially to differentiate them from later segments in a word, which could be the case with *Cezoram*. That being said, evidence of Hebrew or Egyptian dissimilation is not essential to support the hypothesis of this paper because *Cezoram* appears toward the end of the Book of Mormon, after centuries of language change, so the changing of the sound from *z* to *s* could be unique to the Book of Mormon people, having developed centuries after Lehi and his family left Jerusalem. The rule of voicing dissimilation is only relevant to the name *Cezoram* in this discussion.<sup>14</sup>

### An Egyptian versus Hebraic Prefix

Like Ricks's observation for *Zeezrom*, some may observe that the Hebrew *zeh*, instead of the Egyptian *ze*, would be a likely component of the names under consideration here. However, though these Book of Mormon figures have Hebrew ancestry, from a linguistic perspective, an Egyptian rather than a Hebraic etymology is more likely for the “*ze-/ce-*” component in the names *Zenephi*, *Zenock*, *Zenos*, and *Cezoram* for at least four reasons:

1. Pronunciation. G39 has attested variations of both *z* and *s* in Egyptian; the Hebrew *zeh* does not also have a “*seh*” pronunciation of which we know.
2. Semantics. The semantics of the Egyptian *ze* are more specific to ancestry. While the Egyptian *ze* means “descendent of,” the Hebrew *zeh* means “he of,” which has a more general semantic meaning.
3. Simplicity of explanation. Hebrew would require an explanation for a deletion of the word-final *-hei*, whereas the proposed Egyptian does not. The Hebrew *zeh* is spelled *zayin-hei* (the letters *z*

---

different like a *k*). “Regressive” means sound change happens backwards—that is, the later sound in a word influences the earlier sound to change.

14. A. E. Cowley discussed consonant and vowel changes in ancient Hebrew. Although the changes he discusses do not include a rule of voicing dissimilation, the rule of dissimilation I discuss applies only to *Cezoram/Seezoram* of the few names in question. *Cezoram* appears around 30 BC and *Seezoram* about 26 BC—both roughly six hundred years after Lehi and his family left Jerusalem. Within six hundred years, a language can change quite significantly from its ancestral language, developing its own sound changes and sound rules that did not exist in the ancestral language. In this case, while it would be interesting and relevant if Egyptian or Hebrew had a rule of voicing dissimilation anciently, even if neither had such a rule, voicing dissimilation could still occur in the daughter language of the Book of Mormon six hundred years later. A. E. Cowley, *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*, 2d ed., repr. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, Oxford University Press, 1956), 68, 88.

and *h* in Hebrew). If, for instance, *Cezoram* were really *zeh-Zoram*, one would have to account for the deletion of the last letter, *hei*. Occam's razor states that the simplest solution is the most likely solution: the Hebrew *zeh* proposal is complex, whereas the Egyptian *ze* proposal requires no additional explanations of letters or sounds being added or dropped.

4. Presence in personal names. The Egyptian *ze* is commonly attested in personal names, whereas the Hebrew *zeh* is not attested in personal names and only rarely in titles (such as in "Yahweh *zeh* Sinai").<sup>15</sup>

### Egyptian Naming Patterns

In his blog, Val Sederholm noted that it was Hugh Nibley who first concluded that *Zenephi* has an Egyptian etymology. "How could it be otherwise?" asks Sederholm. "As Hugh Nibley well knew, there is no more common pattern in Egyptian naming than . . . *z3* or *z3.t* + Name," which means "Son or Daughter of So-and-So" (see fig. 2).<sup>16</sup>

To show that this Egyptian naming pattern was indeed common and is therefore a logical explanation for use of *z-* (or one of its variants) in some Book of Mormon names, I provide here some concrete examples. The pin-tailed duck prefix is attested in ancient Egyptian names, often attached to the name of a god or predecessor to create a new personal name. For example, the name *Zamonth/Samont* (Twelfth Dynasty, ca. 1800 BC) means the "son/descendant of Month."<sup>17</sup> Günter Vittmann also notes the type of naming pattern. He points out that "from the Middle Kingdom onwards," the *s3* and *s3t* prefixes were used to denote

---

15. Michael Grant, *The History of Ancient Israel* (London: Orion Publishing, 2012), ch. 4; Samuel E. Balentine, *The Torah's Vision of Worship* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999), 119; Karl van der Toorn, Bob Becking, and Pieter Willem van der Horst, *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*, 2d rev. ed. (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill Academic Publishers; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1999), 387.

16. *Z3t* or *s3t*, pronounced "zat" or "sat," is the feminine form of "descendant of." The morpheme thus means "daughter of/female descendant of" and is represented by the pin-tailed duck hieroglyph (G39) along with the feminine ending *t*, represented by a small semicircle loaf of bread (X1) and the seated woman hieroglyph (B1).

17. See "List of Viziers," Digital Egypt for Universities, 2002, <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/museums-static/digitalegypt/administration/viziers.html>; and Nigel Strudwick, *The Administration of Egypt in the Old Kingdom: The Highest Titles and Their Holders* (London: Kegan Paul, 1985), 301–3.

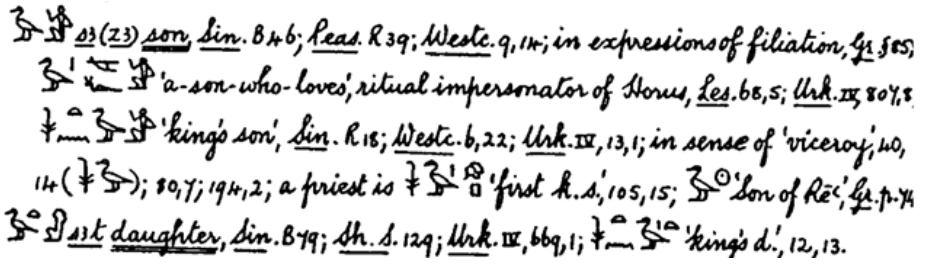


FIGURE 2. Image of Faulkner’s entry for *s*<sub>3</sub> (*z*<sub>3</sub>) from his *Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian Hieroglyphs*, 207. Note that the hieroglyph following the pin-tailed duck determines the gender—the seated man (seen in the first line) denotes a son, and the seated woman, along with the feminine ending *t*, represented by a small semicircle loaf of bread (seen in the last line), denotes a daughter. Courtesy Griffith Institute, Oxford University.

that person was a son or daughter of a god. For instance, “S<sub>3</sub>-Sbk” meant “son of Sobek” and “S<sub>3</sub>t-3wt-3r” meant “daughter of Hathor.”<sup>18</sup> Given historical precedent, it is not unreasonable to assume that the same naming pattern may have been applied to the names *Zenos*, *Zenock*, *Zenephi*, and *Cezoram* in the Book of Mormon, incorporating the same Egyptian component *z*<sub>3</sub>/*s*<sub>3</sub>, with its filial meaning.

**Table 1. Linguistic Analysis of Names with Z- Prefix**

Name	Ancestor’s Name	Morpheme Boundary	Allomorph
Zenos	Enos	Z + Enos	Z-
Zenock	Enoch	Z + Enoch	Z-
Zenephi	Nephi	Ze + Nephi	Ze-
Cezoram/Seezoram	Zoram	Ce + Zoram (Se + Zoram)	Ce- (Se-)

18. Günter Vittmann, “Personal Names: Structures and Patterns, *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology* (Los Angeles: n.p., 2013), accessed June 30, 2018, <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/42v9x6xp>. Although here the names are purely attributed to gods, there are earlier royalty who are also named after the god, so one possibility is that *s*<sub>3</sub>-*sbk* (with hieroglyph G39, the pin-tailed duck) of the Twenty-Sixth Dynasty could be referring to either or both the god Sobek and an earlier royal individual also named after the god Sobek. There were variants of the name Sobek in earlier dynasties: Sobekemhat (Senusret III) of the Twelfth Dynasty, Sobek-aa Bebi from the end of the Twelfth or Thirteenth Dynasty, and Iiie-meru Neferkare (Sobekhotep IV) of the Thirteenth Dynasty. It is likely there may have been other individuals named Sobek not included here. See Strudwick, *Administration of Egypt*, 301–3, and “List of Viziers.”



## Mixture of Egyptian and Hebrew

One objection to my proposal that these names incorporate an Egyptian morpheme is that it would require the mixing of two different languages in a single name, which some would perceive as unlikely. In this case, the Egyptian *z3/s3* is being attached as a prefix to Hebrew names (like *Enos* and *Enoch*). The more recent versions of the entry for *Cezoram* in the Book of Mormon Onomasticon (an online published collection of names found in the Book of Mormon with a brief linguistic analysis of each name) states that for *Cezoram*, it is “possible, though unlikely because it would mix languages, . . . that *ce* is Egyptian *s3*, prefix for ‘son’ (JAT), yielding the meaning ‘son of Zoram.’”<sup>19</sup>

Although the Book of Mormon Onomasticon opines that it is unlikely *Cezoram* is composed of the Egyptian *s3* and *Zoram*, where this idea originated is unclear. The Onomasticon cites “JAT,” or John A. Tvedtnes, but no source in particular. Though the entry states that such a construction is unlikely because it would “mix languages,” in actuality, mixing languages does not make this proposed etymology less likely.

Tvedtnes notes that the Tel Arad ostraca (inscriptions on potsherds from Tel Arad) dating to 598–587 BC contained both Egyptian hieratic and Hebrew scripts, with both Egyptian and Hebrew words and with some Egyptian words depicted in Hebrew script. He observes: “There are two major historical implications of the Tel Arad finds. The first is that, in the seventh century BC, there were close ties between Judah and Egypt. This, of course, is a conclusion that has been gaining much more support as time has gone by, and which was discussed by Dr. Hugh Nibley in 1950. The second historical implication is that there were in Judah, in the late seventh century BC, persons who made use of *both* the Hebrew script and the Egyptian hieratic system of writing.”<sup>20</sup>

Inscriptions sometimes contained mixtures of Egyptian and Hebrew, both with regard to content and script. Although the etymology proposed here would indeed be unlikely if no Hebrew names with Egyptian elements affixed to them were attested in the Old World, names that mix languages

---

19. The Laura F. Willes Center for Book of Mormon Studies, Book of Mormon Onomasticon, s.v. “Cezoram,” last modified October 3, 2016, <https://onoma.lib.byu.edu/index.php/CEZORAM>.

20. John A. Tvedtnes, “Linguistic Implications of the Tel-Arad Ostraca,” in *Newsletter and Proceedings of the S. E. H. A.* (Society for Early Historical Archaeology) 127 (October 1971), ed. Ross T. Christensen and Bonny M. Fifield, accessed September 11, 2018, [http://www.shields-research.org/General/SEHA/SEHA\\_Newsletter\\_127-2.PDF](http://www.shields-research.org/General/SEHA/SEHA_Newsletter_127-2.PDF), emphasis in original.



are attested in the ancient Near East. Even more convincingly, names that specifically mix Egyptian and Semitic languages are attested. According to James K. Hoffmeier, “Egypto-Semitic hybrid names are attested from ancient times in Egypt and the Levant (e.g., Abd-osir = Servant of Osiris, Ahimoth = Brother of (the goddess) Mut, Asarel = Osiris is god, Abd-hor = ‘Servant of Horus’), and might indicate bilingual or bicultural influence on the naming process.”<sup>21</sup> The proposed compositions of *Zenos* and *Zenock* would also fall into this category of Egypto-Semitic hybrid names.

### Denoting Lineage

The idea that *ze-* and its variants (*z-* and *se-*) are used as prefixes in Book of Mormon eponyms to indicate genealogy is further supported by the fact that in the earliest manuscripts of the Book of Mormon, the name of the prophet *Zenock* is spelled “Zenoch” (a clearer incorporation of the name *Enoch*).<sup>22</sup>

Because the pin-tailed duck hieroglyph (G39) is used to denote filiation, the genealogy of the individuals whose names we are examining is relevant to the study of this article. The Book of Mormon states that Lehi was a descendant of Joseph in Egypt. When Lehi is speaking to his son, Joseph, he states: “For behold, thou art the fruit of my loins; and *I am a descendant of Joseph* who was carried captive into Egypt. And great were the covenants of the Lord which he made unto Joseph” (2 Ne. 3:4, emphasis added). Lehi clarifies that he is a descendant of Joseph, and a genealogy of Joseph in Egypt can be found in the Old Testament.

Adam > Seth > Enos > Cainan > Mahalaleel > Jared > Enoch > Methuselah  
> Lamech > Noah > Shem > Arphaxad (Gen.10:22; 11:10-11) > Salah (Gen.  
10:24; 11:12) > Eber (Gen. 10:24; 11:14) > Peleg (Gen. 11:16) > Reu (Gen.  
11:18) > Serug (Gen. 11:20) > Nahor (Gen. 11:23) > Terah (Gen. 11:24) >  
Abram (Gen. 11:26) > Isaac > Jacob > Joseph > Manasseh (Gen. 48:1) > . . .  
Zenos? . . . > Zenoch? . . . > Lehi > Nephi > . . . Zenephi

FIGURE 3. A genealogy of Lehi

21. James K. Hoffmeier, “Egyptian Personal Names and Other Egyptian Elements in the Exodus-Wilderness Narratives,” in *Ancient Israel in Sinai: The Evidence for the Authenticity of the Wilderness Tradition*, ed. James K. Hoffmeier (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 224.

22. Royal Skousen has published the earliest text of the Book of Mormon and in his introduction wrote, “Longtime readers of the Book of Mormon will notice that I have modified a few familiar names so that they match their earliest spellings in the manuscripts. These include Zenoch (instead of Zenock).” Royal Skousen, ed., *The Book of Mormon: The Earliest Text* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), xli.

Joseph is a descendant of Enoch, of the city of Enoch. Enoch was the great-great-grandson of Enos, so both Enoch and Enos were ancestors of Joseph of Egypt (Gen. 5). We do not know for certain if Zenos and Zenock were descendants of Joseph of Egypt, but it seems that they may have been since Book of Mormon people descended from Lehi (a descendant of Joseph) state that they are also descendants of Zenos and Zenock. Robert L. Millet concluded similarly, when, in reference to 3 Nephi 10:15–16, he stated: “This passage certainly suggests that Zenos and Zenock were of the lineage of Joseph.”<sup>23</sup>

If Zenos and Zenock were descendants of Joseph of Egypt, they would also be descendants of Enos and Enoch. If they were not descendants of Joseph of Egypt but were ancestors from another of Lehi’s genealogical lines, then the ancestry/genealogical part of this argument would fall apart; however, it’s also possible Zenos and Zenock could have been named after prominent prophets to whom they were not related. The Book of Mormon does not give us the ancestries of Cezoram or Zenephi, but if this paper’s thesis is correct, they may have descended, respectively, from Zoram and one of the figures in the Book of Mormon named Nephi.

## Conclusion

A naming pattern that includes the ancient Egyptian morpheme represented by the pin-tailed duck hieroglyph G39 (with its filial meaning) involves attested linguistic phenomena that could point to the Book of Mormon as an authentic translation from an ancient text with both Egyptian and Hebrew linguistic components. Since we currently have access only to the English translation of the original text, the few words maintained in the original language are the only direct access we have to the morphology and phonology of the language of the ancient people who wrote the record. Names in the Book of Mormon were transliterated rather than translated and comprise a large portion of the small corpus of lexical items preserved in the original Book of Mormon language, from which we may derive a deeper understanding of the linguistics and culture of those people. If accurate, this naming pattern may also provide us with further clues regarding the genealogies of these Book of Mormon individuals.

---

Eve Koller holds a PhD in linguistics from the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa. She has a BA in anthropology with an emphasis in archaeology, an MA in linguistics, and a graduate certificate in museum practices from Brigham Young University.

---

23. Robert L. Millet, “The Plates of Brass: A Witness of Christ,” *Ensign* 18 (January 1988), <https://www.lds.org/ensign/1988/01/the-plates-of-brass-a-witness-of-christ?lang=eng>