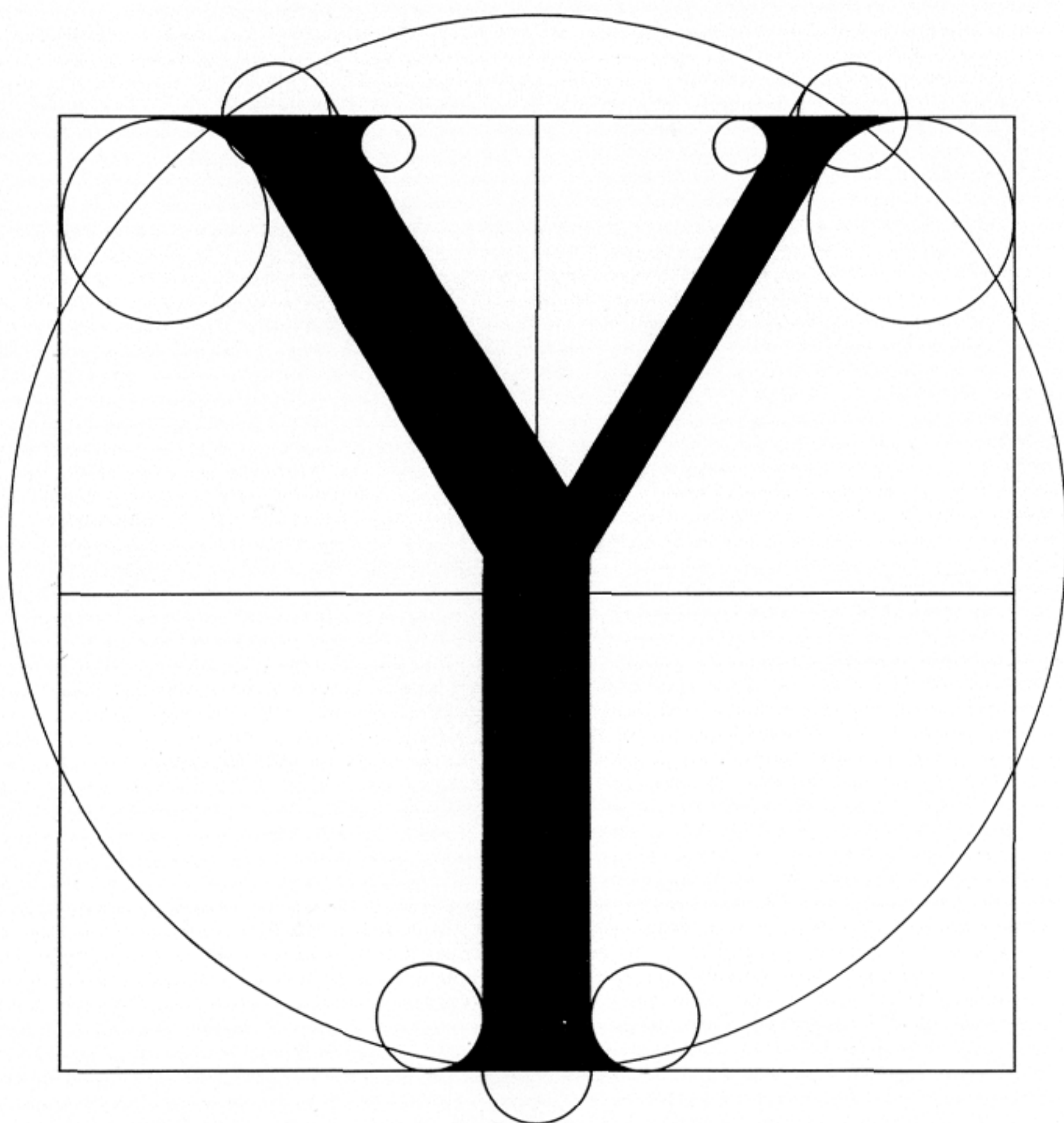


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Brigham Young University Studies

Volume 26

Fall 1986

Number 4

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EDITORIAL INTERNS of *BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY STUDIES*:

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ISSN 0007-0106

Brigham Young University Studies is published quarterly at
Brigham Young University
Provo, Utah
84602.

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Printed in the United States of America.

9-87-33543-4M

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Through a Glass Darkly: Trying to Understand the Scriptures

Royal Skousen

INTRODUCTION

In 1965, while on my mission in Finland, I came across a most interesting book in the personal library of one of the missionaries. I was very impressed by the scholarly approach that this book took in discussing the early history of the Christian church. I borrowed that book and spent many enjoyable hours reading it. Later, after my mission, I tried to get a copy of the book for my own library, but discovered that by that time this book was unfortunately out of print. A few years later, when I was teaching at the University of Texas, I decided to use this book for an institute class on the history of the primitive church, but the book was still out of print. I phoned Sam Weller's in Salt Lake City and was able to get an early version of this book: from 1952 through 1954 this book had served as the Melchizedek Priesthood manual for the Church. So I now had a bound copy of the three original priesthood manuals, but I still did not have the version I really wanted. Finally, in 1984, this book was reprinted—so now I am the proud owner of a book that has played an important part in my gospel education. The book, of course, is James L. Barker's *Apostasy from the Divine Church*.¹

It is for me, then, a great honor to be named the James L. Barker Lecturer in Language and Linguistics for 1985–86. This evening I would like to honor James L. Barker for his valuable contribution to gospel scholarship. Rather than talking about probabilistic and stochastic linguistics—a subject of great interest to you all—I have instead decided to give a talk on a gospel subject, but from a linguistic point of view. In other words, I hope to give a talk that would represent the spirit of James L. Barker's gospel writing—namely, scholarship in defense of the kingdom.

I have decided to speak tonight about a number of passages from the scriptures that have caused misunderstanding and confusion.

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In each of these passages the source of the difficulty has been the language of the passage itself. Sometimes archaic words or changes in word meaning cause misunderstanding. Other times incorrect translations and even misprints can cause problems. Much of our confusion over these passages can be resolved when we seek to determine what the words in the scriptures originally meant. By dealing with such semantic difficulties, we will find that our understanding of the scriptures will be greatly enhanced.²

OBSOLETE WORDS

In this first section of my paper I would like to deal with the problem of obsolete words in the scriptures. The King James Version of the Bible dates from 1611 and many of the words used in that version are now archaic and basically indecipherable to the ordinary reader.

Consider, as a first example, the word *mete*: “and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again” (Matt. 7:2, King James Version [hereafter cited as KJV]). The Greek word here is *metreite*, meaning simply ‘you measure’. In other words, “with what measure you measure, it will be measured to you.” The word *mete* has essentially dropped out of the English language, although there is occasionally a literary use of it, as in the phrase “to mete out punishment.”³

Another example is the word *privily*: “Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, enquired of them diligently what time the star appeared” (Matt. 2:7, KJV). The Greek word in this case is *lathrai*, which means ‘secretly’. We still have a few relics of the word *privy* in English: the euphemistic *privy* for an outhouse (also a euphemism); the Privy Council in England; and the idea of “being privy to some information.” But the adverbial form *privily* is completely gone, and an ordinary reader might therefore miss the sneakiness of Herod’s methods.

As a final example of this type in the New Testament, consider the word *manger*: “And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn” (Luke 2:7, KJV). There really is no common modern use of the word *manger* except in the nativity scene. The English word *manger* was borrowed from French and is related to the French verb *manger*, meaning ‘to eat’. Essentially, a manger is a feeding trough for animals.

It should be noted, however, that there are other, more general meanings that may be given to *phatnē*, the original Greek word that underlies *manger*. Like *manger*, *phatnē* is based on a verb meaning

‘to eat’ (namely, *pateomai*⁴). But in addition to the meaning ‘manger’ for *phatnē*, there are two other possibilities: ‘stall’ and ‘stable’. Consider, for instance, the use of *phatnē* in Luke 13:15, where any of the three meanings could be possible: “Doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall [*apo tēs phatnēs*], and lead him away to watering?” (KJV). It is not difficult to see that the word for the feeding trough itself could be generalized to refer to the place where the animal would feed from the trough. In fact, given the context of Luke 2:7, especially the last phrase in the verse, it probably makes better sense to translate the verse so that she “laid him in a stable because there was no place for them in the inn.” The intended contrast in this verse seems to be between a place for keeping animals—a stable—and a place for humans to spend the night—an inn.⁵ This is further supported by the context of verse 12, in which the angel would most reasonably tell the shepherds to look for the baby in a stable. Thus I would translate the angel’s message as: “You will find the baby wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a stable.”

Finally, let us turn to an example from the Doctrine and Covenants: “reproving betimes with sharpness, when moved upon by the Holy Ghost; and then showing forth afterwards an increase of love” (D&C 121:43). The ordinary reader probably interprets *betimes* to mean ‘at times’ (that is, ‘occasionally’ or ‘sometimes’), but originally *betimes* meant ‘early’, ‘immediately’, or ‘in good time’.⁶ For instance, in Genesis 26:31 we have the meaning ‘early’: “And they rose up betimes in the morning” (KJV). In the following line from Shakespeare’s *Merchant of Venice* we have the meaning ‘immediately’ or ‘speedily’: “Let me say ‘Amen’ betimes, lest the Devil cross my prayer.”⁷ Finally, in Nathaniel Hawthorne’s *Marble Faun* (published in 1860), we have the meaning ‘in good time’ or ‘before it is too late’: “It is wise, therefore, to come back betimes, or never.”⁸ But today hardly anyone knows the word *betimes*, thus readers readily misread D&C 121:43. Given the context of this verse, it seems best to interpret *betimes* as meaning ‘promptly’.

CHANGES IN MEANING

I would now like to consider some passages in which the confusion may be more serious. Very often a word will change in meaning, with the result that the ordinary reader, unless warned, will almost always interpret the word according to its current meaning and thus make serious errors in interpretation.

Consider, for instance, the word *virtue* in Mark 5:30 (or Luke 8:46): “And Jesus, immediately knowing in himself that virtue had gone

out of him, turned him about in the press, and said, Who touched my clothes?" (KJV). The modern reader tends to be quite confused by this passage—did Jesus lose some of his moral goodness when the woman touched his clothes in order to be healed? In Greek the word corresponding to *virtue* is *dynamis*, which means 'power' or 'strength'—in fact, the same word serves as the basis for the technical terms *dynamo* and *dynamite*. In the early 1600s, when the King James Version of the Bible was published, *virtue* also had this meaning. Originally, the word came from the Latin *virtus*, meaning 'manliness' or 'valor', and was based on the Latin root *vir* 'man'. Over time the meaning of *virtue* has greatly varied, changing from 'manliness' to 'warlike power', to 'strength', to 'any noble quality', and finally to 'any moral quality', in particular, 'chastity'.⁹ Thus today we can speak of a woman's virtue, an etymological impossibility.

Fortunately for Latter-day Saint readers, there is a footnote in the recent LDS publication of the King James Version that explains the meaning of *virtue* in this verse. In addition, I would like to draw your attention to an interesting comment Joseph Smith made in 1843 on the meaning of this word:

Elder Jedediah M. Grant enquired of me the cause of my turning pale and losing strength last night while blessing children. I told him that I saw that Lucifer would exert his influence to destroy the children that I was blessing, and I strove with all the faith and spirit that I had to seal upon them a blessing that would secure their lives upon the earth; and so much virtue went out of me into the children, that I became weak, from which I have not yet recovered; and I referred to the case of the woman touching the hem of the garment of Jesus. The virtue here referred to is the spirit of life; and a man who exercises great faith in administering to the sick, blessing little children, or confirming, is liable to become weakened.¹⁰

Another example involving semantic change is the word *closet*: "But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret" (Matt. 6:6, KJV). The modern reader readily interprets *closet* as meaning a walk-in enclosure for storing clothes and unsightly items, yet no one seriously thinks (I hope) that prayers must be offered in the closet and with the door shut. The Greek word here for *closet* is *tameion* and refers to an inner or private room in a house. In fact, this was the normal meaning of *closet* during the early 1600s as well,¹¹ but today the meaning of the word has been greatly restricted. The intended emphasis in this passage is on private prayer, in contrast to the public prayers of others (compare the preceding verse, Matt. 6:5).

In John 14:2 we find the well-known statement, "In my Father's house are many mansions" (KJV). To the modern reader it is somewhat

strange for a house to contain even one mansion. Moreover, the word *mansion* implies a large imposing residence, an obvious reward for righteous living. Yet in the original Greek there is no sense of magnificence; the Greek word *monē* simply means 'a place to reside or stay', without the implication of extravagance. In fact, at the time the King James Version was translated, the common meaning of *mansion* was simply a dwelling place. In particular, *mansion* was used to refer to separate apartments or lodgings in a large house.¹² Thus many have translated this passage as: "In my Father's house are many rooms."

One final example of misleading words in the King James Version is the word *meat*, as in Paul's first letter to Timothy (4:1–3): "In the latter times some shall depart from the faith, . . . forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats" (KJV). Now this is not a reference to meat (that is, the flesh of animals), but instead is a more general reference to different kinds of food. (The original Greek here is a plural form of *brōma*, which means 'food'.) To readers of the seventeenth century, *meat* of course meant 'food' and *flesh* was used to refer to beef, pork, and sometimes poultry (but not fish).¹³ Similarly, Paul's use of this word *brōma* in 1 Corinthians 3:2 can also mislead the modern reader: "I have fed you with milk, and not with meat" (KJV). Here Paul is comparing the new members of the Church with their limited gospel understanding to infants who have not yet matured enough to eat solid food and can therefore only be fed milk.

Now let us turn to a couple of examples from the Doctrine and Covenants. First, consider the use of the word *only* in that part of the Word of Wisdom that deals with eating meat: "Yea, flesh also of beasts and of the fowls of the air, I, the Lord, have ordained for the use of man with thanksgiving; nevertheless they are to be used sparingly; and it is pleasing unto me that they should not be used, only in times of winter, or of cold, or famine" (D&C 89:12–13, 1921 and 1981 editions). In editions prior to 1921, the comma before *only* was missing: "And it is pleasing unto me that they should not be used only in times of winter, or of cold, or famine" (1879 edition). A reader might interpret this as meaning that meat could be used at any time, not only in times of winter, cold, or famine.

Of course, the real problem here is in the meaning of *only*. In the last century the word *only* very often had the meaning 'except'. For example, the Oxford English Dictionary quotes a use of *only* that undoubtedly means 'except': "For many years the following notice was painted up at Bolton railway station: 'Do not cross the line only by the bridge.'"¹⁴ Clearly, this is the appropriate sense of *only* in this verse from section 89. James E. Talmage put the comma in the 1921

edition, but not in order to change the meaning of *only*. Instead, the meaning of *only* had changed and the comma was put in so that the modern reader could read the verse and still get out its original meaning. A similar difficulty with *only* occurs in my patriarchal blessing, given by William R. Sloan in 1957: "Counsel with your dear parents, and they shall never direct you only in paths of righteousness and truth" —and without a comma! As a youth I thought the word *never* was a mistake, and I was tempted to cross it out. But I was wrong. Now when I read my blessing, I mentally replace *only* with *except*.

Another example that leads to a misunderstanding in our scriptures is the word *translate*, as in the eighth Article of Faith: "We believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly." The ordinary reader tends to interpret this as meaning that the only errors in the text of the Bible are the result of trying to translate the original languages into another language. Of course, there are many other errors besides translation errors in the biblical text. We can, however, make better sense of the word *translate* in this Article of Faith when we consider Joseph Smith's use of this word. We should first note that the word *translate* is ultimately derived from the Latin *transfere* and literally means 'to carry across'.¹⁵ Language translation was originally viewed as a "carrying across" since in older manuscript practice the original language was often put in one column and the translation was put beside it in a parallel column.¹⁶ In addition, there are other meanings of the word *translate* that show its older meaning of 'to carry across'; for instance, we talk about the city of Enoch or various prophets being translated.

In fact, Joseph Smith's use of the word *translate* seems to agree with the original, more general meaning of this word. In referring to the translation of a text, Joseph Smith very often seemed to be referring to how it had been carried down through time. For instance, the Joseph Smith Translation (more commonly known as the Inspired Version) was not really a translation in our present-day sense of the word, but instead was an attempt to restore through inspiration the original meaning of the biblical text. In fact, Robert J. Matthews has argued that "by using the word *translated* [Joseph Smith] apparently meant to convey the meaning that is generally assigned to the term *transmitted*, for, as the Prophet's own statements on the matter show, there was more involved in the history of the Bible than mere *translation* of languages."¹⁷ So the intended sense of the eighth Article of Faith, given Joseph Smith's usage, is probably, "We believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it has come down to us correctly."

A MISPRINT

We now turn to a different sort of error. In the King James Version we read: “Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel” (Matt. 23:24). The ordinary reader must undoubtedly struggle trying to figure out what it means to “strain at a gnat.” One might even guess that it means to strain one’s eyes while looking at a gnat. The problem here, though, is not the word *strain*, but the little word *at*. This is a printing error that has persisted since the original 1611 publication of the King James Version. The translators intended this passage to read as follows: “Ye blind guides, which strain out a gnat, and swallow a camel.”¹⁸ The Greek word here is *diylizō*, which means ‘to filter out’. Figuratively speaking, the scribes and Pharisees could never tolerate a little gnat in their (or anybody else’s) drink, but a camel could be swallowed whole. Jesus, of course, is referring to the strictness with which these legalistic Jews had interpreted the law, yet their concern for detail did not prevent them from violating the most important commandments in the law.

TRADITIONAL MISINTERPRETATIONS

Now let us consider a couple of passages that readers have traditionally misinterpreted. The first one comes from Cain’s answer to the Lord’s question of where his brother Abel was: “I know not: Am I my brother’s keeper?” (Gen. 4:9, KJV). It is easy to assume that Cain should have been his brother’s keeper instead of murdering him. But this interpretation misses the snottiness in Cain’s reply: Couldn’t Abel take care of himself? Did he have to have someone look after him? The Hebrew word for *keeper*, *shomer*, refers to a watchman, a guard, or anyone who has charge, care, or oversight of something. Typically, we have keepers of sheep, baggage, wardrobes, altars, doors, houses, gates, city walls; forests, fields, and the king’s women.¹⁹ Although *shomer* does not apply to children,²⁰ the modern reader might get a better feel for Cain’s answer if we paraphrased it as: “How should I know? Am I my brother’s baby-sitter?”

Another problem verse is in the Sermon on the Mount; the first beatitude reads: “Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 5:3, KJV). The phrase “the poor in spirit” is a very literal translation of the Greek *hoi ptōkhoi tōi pneumati*. The English reader tends to interpret “poor in spirit” in terms of the phrase “in poor spirits” —in other words, “blessed are the depressed.” Yet if depression were enough to make the kingdom

of heaven, we would have all probably qualified at some time or other. Originally the word *ptōkhos* 'poor' came from the Greek verb *ptōssō*, which means 'to crouch or cringe'. Since this is a characteristic pose of beggars, the noun form *ptōkhos* means 'beggar'²¹ and the corresponding adjective has the meaning 'reduced to beggary' and by extension 'extremely poor or destitute'. Normally beggars beg for physical necessities, so the phrase *tōi pneumati* 'in spirit' is added to distinguish these spiritual beggars from normal ones. Thus those who beg for spiritual necessities will be rewarded with the kingdom of heaven, a spiritual reward.

ALTERNATIVE TRANSLATIONS

I would next like to consider an example where an alternative translation is possible. In Revelation, chapters 1 through 3, the Lord tells John to write various messages to the "angels" of seven churches in Asia Minor. For example, at the beginning of chapter 2, the Lord tells John to write to "the angel of the church of Ephesus" (v. 1, KJV). In Greek the word *angelos* means 'a messenger' and is used in several different ways in the New Testament. It can refer to a human messenger, sent by God or man; a supernatural messenger from God; a guardian angel; or an evil spirit (that is, one of Satan's angels):

Behold, I send *my messenger* [*ton angelon mou*] before thy face.
(Mark 1:2, KJV)

And when *the messengers* [*tōn angelōn*] of John were departed . . .
(Luke 7:24, KJV)

And the angel answering said unto [Zacharias], I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God. (Luke 1:19, KJV)

Then said they, It is [Peter's] angel. (Acts 12:15, KJV)

Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. (Matt. 25:41, KJV)

Now in the first three chapters of Revelation, two possibilities exist. Either the seven angels are envoys from the seven churches or they are angels of God. There has been a lot of discussion on this subject,²² and most translate *angelos* in these chapters as "angel." Nonetheless, it seems very reasonable that the seven angels could be human messengers representing the seven churches, sent to bring back a message from the last surviving Apostle. In fact, it is worth noting that in these passages Joseph Smith (in the Inspired Version) changed "angel" to "servant," indicating his belief that the "angels" were actually Church members.

MISTRANSLATIONS

In the final section of this paper, let us consider examples where the King James Version gives an incorrect translation. Consider, first, the decision of the King James translators to use “sit (at meat)” in those places where the Greek verb means “recline (at meal).” For example, in John 13:12 we have: “So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them . . . ” (KJV). This passage gives the reader the impression that at the Last Supper Jesus and his Apostles were sitting, but the custom at the time of the Savior was to recline while eating. For instance, Gardner and Jevons describe the Greek dinner party from classical times as follows:

As soon as [the guests] arrived the attendants removed their shoes and washed their feet, and they took their places on the couches in accordance with the directions of their host. In historic times the position at meals was a reclining one, though sitting had been usual in the heroic ages. It was customary to lie on the left side, and to support the left elbow with a cushion: thus the right hand remained free to deal with the food.²³

Gardner and Jevons also add that “two persons on each couch seems to have been the usual number.”²⁴

There is a theory of translation that insists that not only words, but also cultural practices should be translated for the reader. Since we no longer recline while eating, this approach requires us to translate “recline” as “sitting down to eat.” But such a translation can lead to ridiculous consequences. Consider, for example, what happens later on in chapter 13 of John: “Now there was leaning *on Jesus’ bosom* [*en tōi kolpōi tou Iēsou*] one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved” (v. 23, KJV, italics added), and, “He then lying *on Jesus’ breast* [*epi to stēthos tou Iēsou*] saith unto him, Lord, who is it?” (v. 25, KJV, italics added). Now if Jesus is sitting, it will be quite difficult and extremely awkward for John the Beloved to lay his head on Jesus’ chest. So if the translator insists on translating “recline” as “sit,” then the translator should probably have John lay his head on Jesus’ shoulder (even though John uses *kolpos* ‘bosom, breast, or chest’ and *stēthos* ‘chest or breast’ to describe where he laid his head, but never *ōmos* ‘shoulder’).

An even more difficult situation occurs in Luke chapter 7 when Jesus’ feet were anointed: “And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee’s house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, and stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment” (vv. 37–38, KJV). This would be

especially ridiculous if Jesus is sitting in a chair and the woman is standing behind him—she'd have to bend down and crawl under the chair to anoint his feet. We could have him sitting in a kneeling position so that she might stand behind him and anoint the soles of his feet. But all this is unnecessary. If Jesus is lying on his side, according to the custom of his time, then she can readily approach him from behind and anoint his feet.

The next example of a mistranslation occurs in Matthew's account of the Resurrection: "In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre" (Matt. 28:1, KJV). The problem with this verse is the translation of the initial phrase *opse de sabbatōn*. Originally, the Greek word *opse* meant 'late'. This led the King James translators to translate this phrase as "in the end of the sabbath." The problem with this translation is that for the Jews the new day began at sunset, not at dawn. (This is implied, for example, in John 19:31, 42.) We now know from later Greek manuscripts that *opse*, by extension, came to also mean 'after'.²⁵ In other words, Matthew is simply stating that the women came early in the morning, on the day after the Sabbath. It is of some help that the new LDS printing of the King James Bible has a footnote explaining that the Greek here means "after the Sabbath."

This passage has, however, led to another sort of confusion. In the Greek text of this verse there are actually two occurrences of the word *sabbaton*. The first occurrence is translated as 'sabbath', but the second is translated as 'week':

<i>opse de</i>	<i>sabbatōn</i>	<i>tēi epiphōskousēi</i>	<i>eis</i>
but after	the sabbath	as it was dawning	toward
<i>mian</i>	<i>sabbatōn</i>		
the first (day)	of the week		

Some have objected that the second use of *sabbaton* is incorrectly translated—that *sabbaton* means 'the Sabbath' and should always be translated as such. For instance, in *A Marvelous Work and a Wonder*, LeGrand Richards writes:

This conclusion [that the Christian sabbath was on Sunday] is further sustained by the fact that the first day of the week (Sunday) is called a sabbath eight times in the original Greek Bible. Had the Bible, therefore, been correctly translated, much of the present confusion in this matter would have been eliminated. Why would the first day of the week (Sunday) be called a sabbath in the Bible if it were not a sabbath?²⁶

First of all, it should be noted that this explanation incorrectly assumes that the second use of *sabbaton* corresponds to "the first day

of the week.’’ Actually, there is a separate word in the Greek text for ‘‘the first,’’ namely *mian*. And the word *day* is inferred from the context.

But there is a more serious objection to this argument over the meaning of *sabbaton*: namely, the incorrect assumption that every use of a word must have the same meaning. There is plenty of evidence that the Greek *sabbaton* was used to refer to a period of seven days as well as the Jewish day of rest. One very clear example of the meaning ‘week’ for *sabbaton* is in Luke 18:12: *nēsteuo dis tou sabbatou* ‘‘I fast twice in the week’’ (KJV). It doesn’t sound like much of a fast if we translate this as ‘‘I fast two times on the Sabbath.’’²⁷

Moreover, there is a very good reason for why the Greeks would borrow not only the word *sabbaton* from the Hebrew word *shabbat*, but also the idea of a seven-day period of time: namely, ‘‘weeks are not part of the Graeco-Roman calendaric tradition. They are not attested until quite late in Greek or Latin sources.’’²⁸ Nor should it seem strange that *sabbaton* could be extended to refer to a period of seven days. We ourselves use the word *Sunday* to refer to a week, as in the phrase ‘‘three Sundays ago.’’ Moreover, there is some evidence (if the traditional text is correct) that the Hebrews themselves used the Hebrew word *shabbat* in this same extended way.²⁹

We should also note that the early Christians clearly distinguished between the Jewish sabbath and the first day of the week. The early Christians referred to Sunday as the Lord’s day (*kyriakē hēmera*, as in Rev. 1:10) since this was the day the Savior was resurrected. ‘‘For the earliest Christians [the Lord’s day] was not a substitute for the Sabbath nor a day of rest nor related in any way to the fourth commandment.’’³⁰ In fact, only after several centuries did the Christians begin to consider Sunday as a Christian sabbath.³¹

So in this instance the King James Version correctly translates the phrase *mian sabbatōn* as ‘‘the first day of the week.’’ As far as I know, every other translation of the New Testament translates this phrase in the same way or as simply ‘‘Sunday.’’

Now we turn to a mistranslation that has caused a good deal of confusion. According to the Gospel of John, the first person to see the resurrected Savior was Mary Magdalene. When she finally recognizes him, Jesus says to her, according to the King James Version: ‘‘Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father’’ (John 20:17). Now the problem here is twofold: (1) why didn’t Jesus want Mary Magdalene to touch him? and (2) why does Matthew’s account of the Resurrection say Mary Magdalene and the other Mary ‘‘came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him’’ (Matt. 28:9, KJV)?

In *Jesus the Christ* James E. Talmage attempts to deal with these potential contradictions by assuming (without any independent

evidence) that Jesus had to first present himself to his father before any mortal could touch him:

One may wonder why Jesus had forbidden Mary Magdalene to touch Him, and then, so soon after, had permitted other women [?] to hold Him by the feet as they bowed in reverence. . . . To Mary Magdalene Christ had said: "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father." If the second clause was spoken in explanation of the first, we have to infer that no human hand was to be permitted to touch the Lord's resurrected and immortalized body until after He had presented Himself to the Father. It appears reasonable and probable that between Mary's impulsive attempt to touch the Lord, and the action of the other women [?] who held Him by the feet as they bowed in worshipful reverence, Christ did ascend to the Father, and that later He returned to earth to continue His ministry in the resurrected state.³²

But all of this attempt to reconcile two differing accounts of the Resurrection is unnecessary. The problem here is the phrase "touch me not." The Greek form of this command is *mē mou haptou*, and the correct translation should be "do not keep on holding me"³³ or "stop touching me"³⁴ or even "stop clinging to me."³⁵ In the Greek verbal system there is a distinction between single or instantaneous actions and repetitive or continual actions. In this case the prohibition of the abrupt action is represented by the aorist subjunctive (*mē mou hapsēi* 'don't touch me'), the prohibition of the continual action by the present imperative (*mē mou haptou*). Since the Greek here uses the present tense form, Jesus was telling Mary Magdalene to let go of him. In fact, we might be able to detect a bit of humor in Jesus' response to Mary's embrace—she can't keep holding on to him; he must go see his father.

Interestingly, in the Inspired Version Joseph Smith changed "touch me not" to read "hold me not," thus improving the agreement between John's and Matthew's accounts of the Resurrection.³⁶

The next example of a mistranslation comes from Matthew 18:21–22: "Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven" (KJV). We should first note that Jesus' answer essentially means that there is no limit to the number of times we should forgive. But given that, we may ask: What number did Jesus actually say? The phrase "seventy times seven" seems to imply 490 (that is, seventy multiplied by seven). The other possibility is that the number is seventy-seven times and that the King James translators put the *times* in the wrong place.

In order to answer this question, let us first consider how Greek mathematicians expressed multiplication. Normally, multiplication is represented by using the verb *pollaplasiazō* 'to multiply'.³⁷ It often

appears with the preposition *epi* 'by', as in *pollaplasiasōmen epi ta* [y] 'we multiply by y.'³⁸ Sometimes the common verb *poieō* 'to do or make' is used with *epi*: *poiēson ta* [x] *epi ta* [y] 'multiply x by y.'³⁹ And occasionally this is simplified to [x] *epi* [y] 'x by y.'⁴⁰ If we want to say that some object is x times bigger than another object, then we add the adjectival suffix *-plasios* '-fold' to the number x; for example, *tetraplasios tou megistou kyklou* 'four times the greatest circle'.⁴¹

On the other hand, the adverbial suffix *-kis* (or *-ki*) is used whenever some action is to be performed a certain number of times. For instance, consider the following mathematical statement from Theon of Alexandria (flourished A.D. 379–95):

<i>epeita</i> then	<i>palin</i> again	<i>apheilomen</i> we subtract	<i>ta</i>	[12] twelve
<i>prōta heksēkosta</i> minutes (literally, 'first sixtieths')	<i>triakontaki</i> thirty times	<i>kai</i> and	<i>tris</i> three	

In other words, "next we subtract twelve minutes thirty-three times."⁴²

Note first of all how "thirty-three times" is represented: the adverbial suffix *-ki*, meaning 'times', is added after the first number (thirty), then after the intervening "and" the second number (three) follows, but without the suffix *-ki*. Also note that the adverbial phrase comes at the end of the clause. It tells us how many times to subtract twelve minutes. In fact, this kind of adverbial use of *times* is the origin of the *times* phrase in English as well as in Greek. From a historical point of view, when we say "subtract three times five," we really mean "subtract five three times." In English, as in Greek, the adverbial *times* phrase can also stand right after the verb. In such a case, the expression "subtract three times five" is readily interpreted as the verb "subtract" followed by the direct object "three times five." From this stage it is easy to use the noun phrase "three times five" in subject position, as in the expression "three times five equals fifteen."⁴³

Now let us look at the Greek text underlying Matthew 18:22:

<i>ou</i> not	<i>legō</i> I say	<i>soi</i> to you	<i>heōs</i> until	<i>heptakis</i> seven times	<i>alla</i> but
<i>heōs</i> until	<i>hebdomēkontakis</i> seventy times	<i>hepta</i> seven			

The form *hebdomēkontakis hepta* is precisely how to represent seventy-seven times in Greek. It is true that the Greek mathematicians would have normally inserted the conjunction *kai* 'and' between the

two numbers (*hebdomēkontakis kai hepta*), but this would not be necessary. Nor is such variation surprising: in English, for example, we can say “one hundred thirty” or “one hundred and thirty.” Most of the time New Testament writers do not insert *kai* between compound numbers.⁴⁴ So it is not surprising that Matthew has *hebdomēkontakis hepta* without *kai*.

Moreover, if Jesus had actually meant to say 490 times, then the Greek would have to be changed to read “seventy times seven times” (that is, *hebdomēkontakis heptakis*). This would mean something like “seventy is the number of times you should forgive your brother seven times,” a very strange expression. There is one—but only one—Greek manuscript that actually has this construction; namely, Theodore Beza’s Codex D—and only the original hand.⁴⁵ This manuscript is notorious for its idiosyncratic and extensive alteration of the gospel text,⁴⁶ and when its reading stands alone, as here, this manuscript is nearly always unreliable. It appears that this manuscript represents an attempt to force the reading 490 times and thus the second *-kis* was added. In any event, the rest of the Greek manuscript evidence uniformly supports the reading “seventy-seven times.”

In addition to the linguistic evidence, there is also a clear biblical allusion that favors the reading “seventy-seven times.” In Genesis 4:15 the Lord says: “Whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold” (KJV). Later on in the chapter, when Lamech kills Irad for having revealed their secret combination (see Moses 5:49–50), Lamech says: “If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, truly Lamech seventy and sevenfold” (Gen. 4:24, KJV). Now the story of Cain and Lamech is one of revenge—if Cain’s vengeance was only seven times, then Lamech’s will be that much worse, seventy-seven times. Jesus thus draws upon this comparison from the Old Testament, but applies it to forgiveness, the opposite of revenge.⁴⁷

Moreover, the Hebrew text of Genesis 4:24 must be translated as seventy-seven times. In the Hebrew phrase *shiv'im wəshiv'a* ‘seventy-seven’ (literally, “seventy and seven”), there is no corresponding word for *times* (or *-fold*) that could be used to get out 490. And in the Septuagint this phrase is translated as *hebdomēkontakis hepta*, the exact same way as it is in Matthew 18:22.

When multiplication is used in the Hebrew Old Testament, it is expressed adverbially by using the Hebrew word *pə'amim* ‘times’.⁴⁸ In Leviticus 25:8 we have a definite case of multiplication: “And thou shalt number seven sabbaths of years unto thee, *seven times seven years*; and the space of the seven sabbaths of years shall be unto thee forty and nine years” (KJV). But the word

order for the phrase “seven times seven years” is different in the Hebrew text:

<i>sheva'</i>	<i>shanim</i>	<i>sheva'</i>	<i>pə'amim</i>
seven	years	seven	times

The Hebrew word order clearly shows the adverbial use of “seven times.” Moreover, the Septuagint has the exact same word order for this phrase:

<i>hepta</i>	<i>etē</i>	<i>heptakis</i>
seven	years	seven times

Finally, if one must translate *hebdomēkontakis hepta* as 490, then why not translate 2 Corinthians 11:24 in the same way: “Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one” (KJV). In the Greek the word order for the numerical expression in this verse is precisely the same as in Matthew 18:22:

<i>hypo</i>	<i>Ioudaiōn</i>	<i>pentakis</i>	<i>tesserakonta</i>
from	the Jews	five times	forty (stripes)
<i>para</i>	<i>mian</i>	<i>elabon</i>	
less	one	I received	

Did Paul receive thirty-nine stripes on five different occasions or did he get 199 lashes all at once? On independent grounds, we know that the Jews were forbidden to give more than forty lashes (Deut. 25:1–3). Moreover, the custom was to give thirty-nine lashes to avoid exceeding the limit.⁴⁹

The evidence then is overwhelmingly in favor of translating Jesus’ answer as “seventy-seven times.” What is surprising is how most recent translators continue to translate this phrase as “seventy times seven” when it doesn’t even deserve a marginal reading. It seems as if most translators keep looking over each other’s shoulders.

My last example comes from John 5:39–40: “Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life” (KJV). In the Greek text the word corresponding to “search” is *eraunate*. Taken by itself this form can be either the present imperative (“search!”) or the present indicative (“you search”). Older translations characteristically chose the imperative sense for this form, probably because the imperative makes such a handy admonition for scripture reading. Yet the imperative causes problems. First of all, it makes the reader think that the following clause explains why we should read the scriptures—namely, in the scriptures there is eternal life. But if this is right, then why did Jesus add the phrase “ye think” if he only meant to say, “Search the scriptures, for

in them ye have eternal life.’’ In fact, the Greek word for ‘‘ye think,’’ *dokeite*, implies that their belief may be wrong. Very often the verb *dokeō* is used in the sense of ‘to suppose incorrectly’, as in Luke 24:36–37: ‘‘And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. But they were terrified and affrighted, and *supposed* [*edokoun*] that they had seen a spirit’’ (KJV, italics added). Another problem with the imperative choice is that it would have made no sense to tell the learned Jews to read the scriptures; they read them night and day.

But if we choose the present indicative for *eraunate*, everything makes sense. Essentially, Jesus told them: ‘‘You read the scriptures (continually), for you suppose that in them you have eternal life, yet the scriptures testify concerning me, but you do not want to come to me to have life.’’ In other words, eternal life is in Jesus Christ and nowhere else. If these Jews would read the scriptures with an open heart, they would be led to Christ. They read the scriptures, yet they were blind. Consider Jesus’ final words to them at the end of the same chapter: ‘‘Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust. For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?’’ (John 5:45–47, KJV). The scriptures should bring us to Christ, not keep us away. But the scriptures themselves do not guarantee salvation—only when we read them in the right spirit will they lead us to Christ.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this paper has been to show the advantages of a linguistic study of the scriptures. In reading the scriptures we seek to understand the text in its original setting. We attempt to interpret the words according to the meanings they had when the scriptures were originally written or translated. Of course, such an approach is not a panacea—some scriptures will never be understood through human effort alone. An inspired reading always helps. Nevertheless, a linguistic approach can often help us understand difficult passages. Most importantly, it may make us more cautious about our initial interpretations of scripture. Ultimately, an approach based on inspiration and knowledge will increase our love of the scriptures, for they will make better sense.

Yet we will never obtain a perfect knowledge of the scriptures in this life. But we do have Paul’s promise that someday we will understand all:

For we know in part
 and we prophesy in part,
 but when perfection comes,
 then imperfection will cease.
 For now we see but a dim reflection,
 but then we shall see him face to face.
 Now I know in part,
 but then I shall know in full,
 even as I now am known by him.
 (1 Cor. 13:9–10, 12, author's translation)

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NOTES

¹James L. Barker, *Apostasy from the Divine Church* (1960; reprint, Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1984).

²I wish to thank Thomas MacKay and Stephen Ricks for earlier readings of this paper and, in particular, for their comments on the Greek and Hebrew examples.

³*Oxford English Dictionary*, compact ed. (hereafter cited as OED), s.v. "mete."

⁴Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, *A Lexicon Abridged from Liddell and Scott's Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1871), 536, 752.

⁵Walter Bauer et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 2d ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 854.

⁶OED, s.v. "betimes."

⁷William Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*, act 3, sc. 1, line 22.

⁸Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Marble Faun or the Romance of Monte Beni*, pt. 2, chap. 25, in *Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne*, 10 vols. (New York: Bigelow, Brown, and Co., 1923), 9:456.

⁹OED, s.v. "virtue."

¹⁰Joseph Smith, Jr., *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 2d ed. rev., 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1946–50), 5:303.

¹¹OED, s.v. "closet."

¹²OED, s.v. "mansion."

¹³OED, s.v. "flesh" and "meat."

¹⁴OED, s.v. "only."

¹⁵OED, s.v. "translate."

¹⁶For an example, see Bruce M. Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*, 2d ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), 49 and plate 5.

¹⁷Robert J. Matthews, *Joseph Smith's Translation of the Bible: A History and Commentary* (Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 1975), 7; also see 233–37.

¹⁸Edgar J. Goodspeed, *Problems of New Testament Translation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1945), 38–39.

¹⁹See *shamar* in George Wigram, *The Englishman's Hebrew and Chaldee Concordance of the Old Testament*, 5th ed., 2 vols. (London: Samuel Bagster and Sons, 1890), 1300–1302.

²⁰Keepers of children are “nurses”: either the root *y-n-q* ‘to suck’ or the root ‘*-m-n*’ ‘to bring up or nurture’ is used—see 2 Kgs. 11:2 and 2 Sam. 4:4.

²¹Liddell and Scott, *A Lexicon*, 616.

²²Homer Hailey, *Revelation: An Introduction and Commentary* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1979), 115–16.

²³Percy Gardner and Frank Byron Jevons, *A Manual of Greek Antiquities*, 2d ed. (London: Charles Griffin, 1898), 329–30.

²⁴*Ibid.*, 330.

²⁵Goodspeed, *Problems*, 43–45; Bauer et al., *Greek-English Lexicon*, 601.

²⁶LeGrand Richards, *A Marvelous Work and a Wonder*, rev. and enl. ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1976), 336.

²⁷For additional discussion concerning this verse, see Alfred Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to S. Luke* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1896), 417–18.

²⁸Alan E. Samuel, *Greek and Roman Chronology: Calendars and Years in Classical Antiquity* (Munich: C. H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1972), 18.

²⁹See Lev. 23:15; Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952), 992.

³⁰Richard J. Bauckham, “The Lord's Day,” in *From Sabbath to Lord's Day: A Biblical, Historical, and Theological Investigation*, ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1982), 240.

³¹Richard J. Bauckham, “Sabbath and Sunday in the Post-Apostolic Church,” in *From Sabbath to Lord's Day: A Biblical, Historical, and Theological Investigation*, ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1982), 284–85.

³²James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1962), 682.

³³Jack P. Lewis, *The English Bible from KJV to NIV: A History and Evaluation* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1982), 46.

³⁴Nigel Turner, *Syntax*, vol. 3 of *A Grammar of New Testament Greek* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1963), 76.

³⁵Bauer et al., *Greek-English Lexicon*, 102.

³⁶Robert J. Matthews, on the other hand, suggests other reasons for why Joseph Smith changed this phrase to “hold me not”: “[There is] a question as to what is actually meant by the passage—whether it is saying, ‘Do not embrace me,’ or ‘Do not detain me.’ The context suggests the former, for Mary was overjoyed to see her dead Master raised to life again and was apparently about to throw her arms around him. Therefore the words *Hold me not* are preferable, because *touch* would not be expressive enough for the intensity of the occasion” (Matthews, *Joseph Smith's Translation*, 186–87).

³⁷Ivor Thomas, *Selections Illustrating the History of Greek Mathematics*, 2 vols. (London: William Heinemann, 1951), 1:70–71.

³⁸*Ibid.* 1:52–53.

³⁹*Ibid.* 1:62–63.

⁴⁰*Ibid.* 1:47–48.

⁴¹*Ibid.* 2:112–13.

⁴²*Ibid.* 1:49, 52–53.

⁴³For Greek examples of this last usage, see *ibid.* 1:115–19.

⁴⁴James Hope Moulton and Wilbert Francis Howard, *Accidence and Word-Formation*, vol. 2 of *A Grammar of New Testament Greek* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1956), 172.

⁴⁵Turner, *Syntax*, 187–88.

⁴⁶Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, 49–51.

⁴⁷James Hope Moulton, *Prolegomena*, vol. 1 of *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, 3d ed. (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1908), 98.

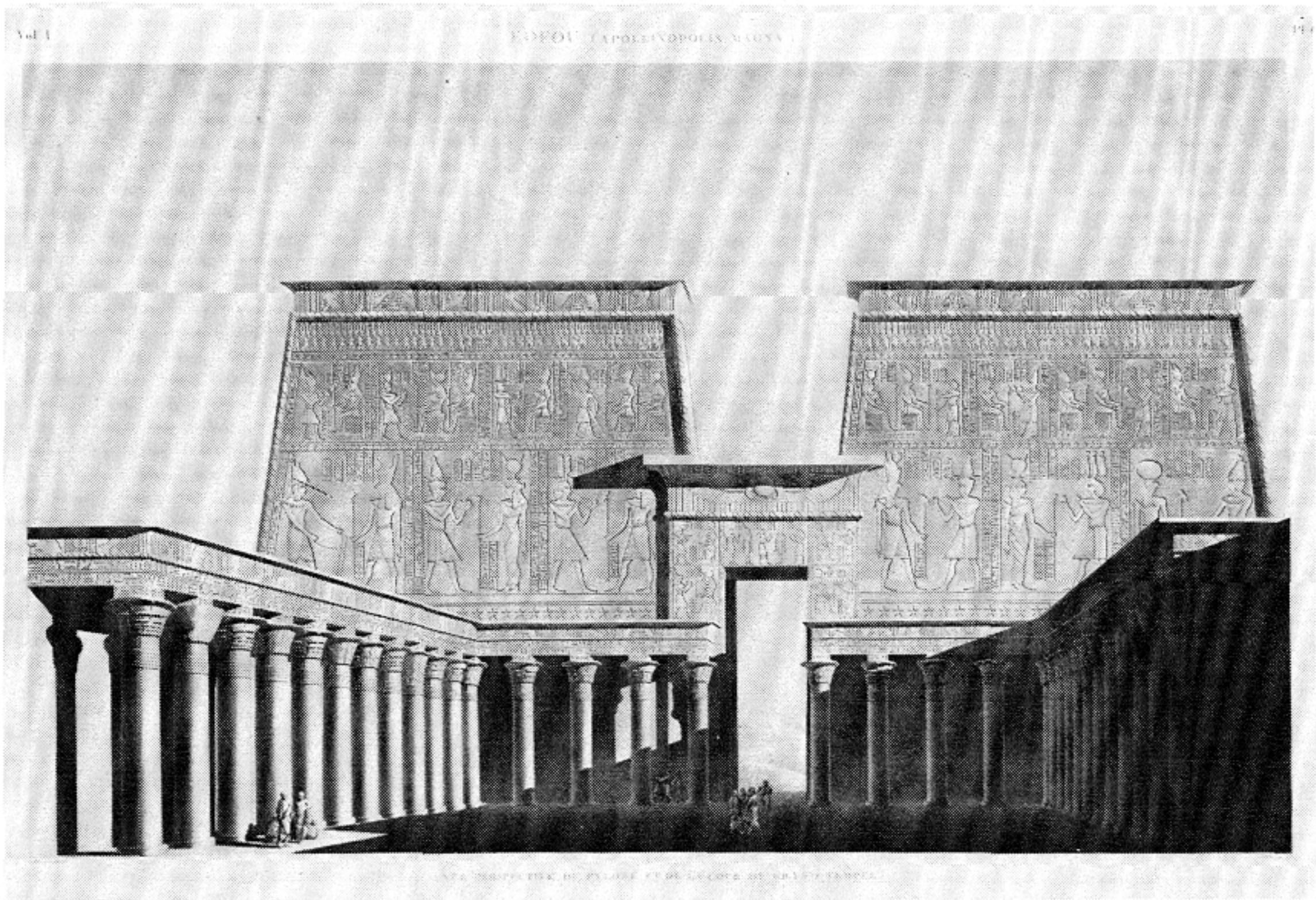
⁴⁸The literal meaning of *pā'amin* is ‘strokes’ or ‘beats’.

⁴⁹Flavius Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*, trans. H. St. J. Thackeray, 4 bks. (London: William Heinemann, 1930), bk. 4, vv. 238, 248; Makkoth 3:10, in vol. 4 of *Mishnayoth*, ed. Philip Blackman, 7 vols. (London: Mishna Press, 1951–56).

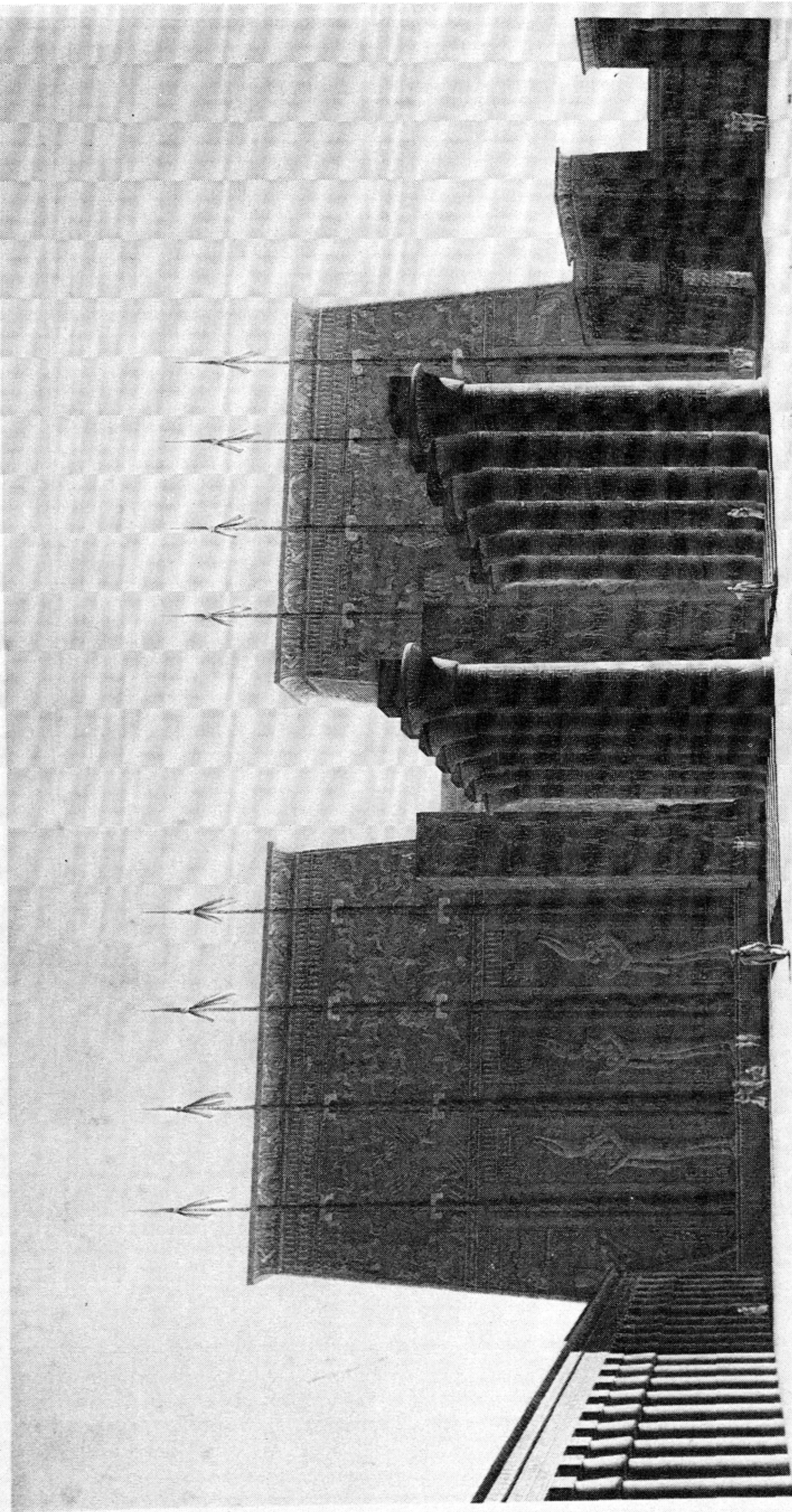
The Egyptian Poems

Clinton F. Larson

All the kings of the nations, even all of them, lie in glory,
every one in his own house. (Isa. 14:18)



Clinton F. Larson is a professor emeritus of English at Brigham Young University. The engravings printed with Dr. Larson's poems are from the twenty-three volume *Description de L'Egypte*, published in Paris from 1809–28, the result of the work of the 170 scientists and scholars who accompanied Napoleon Bonaparte when he invaded Egypt in 1798 and the first scientific attempt to describe fully and systematically an entire nation. The Harold B. Lee library at Brigham Young University owns a complete set of the *Description de L'Egypte*, and the engravings from it were printed with the cooperation and assistance of Chad J. Flake, Curator of Special Collections; Robert J. Espinoza, Library Conservator; and Glen Leon Anderson, Photo Supervisor and Assistant Manager of Instructional Graphics; this project was partially funded by a grant from the College of Fine Arts and Communications, James A. Mason, Dean.



THE TEMPLE OF AMENHOTEP III. IN THE GREAT COURT OF KARNAK.

The Glory of Egypt

The inner mind is a veil one sees
But does not see. It is a chemistry,
Arranged and taught at the knees
Of Orion to enfold a glistening tree.

The tree was once a burning bush
That became the vision of Seraphim,
Who kept a mountain in the hush
Of nightshade and Anubis, trim

In the hieroglyphic, when Ramses
Came to carve his chariot in stone.
What in that stone might seize
The stars in their going to atone

For forgetfulness? It is not Amun
Who craved them for the sands of Paradise,
But the rising sands themselves, undone
In the winds, fleet sand to entice

The stars to fall among the tombs
That are stone. The stone will thin
In the winds and disappear in rooms
Of the heavens that are tombs. They win

The echoes of the dynasties that murmur
Like heavenly sails that fold serrations
Of light. See the Pharaoh of summer
Honor the sun and kings of the nations

That Isaiah brought to him in scrolls
Of the azure! Sun at noon is the king,
And heat must rise as a stone rolls
Away. The Pharaoh emerges to bring

His people from darkness. See their hands
That like reeds seem to bend! They follow
And come until they are the sands
That glisten in the high-borne hollows

And caverns of heaven, where light
Is a flicker and the wind a whisper
Down a long hall, where in our sight
The solemn halls are many and mystery

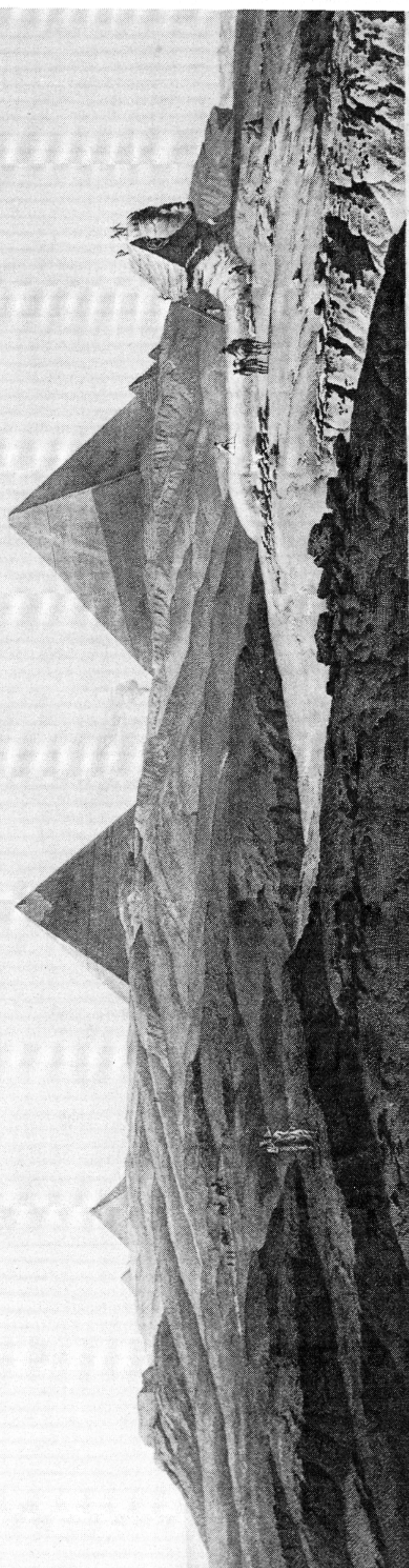
Is joy. The kings reside in the height
Of the glistening. They are as stars, supreme
As the falcon rides to his aerie, bright
In their raiment of colors, who will dream

While the sun is away. See their stone.
Their figures remain high in their graves.
Abu Simbel is there, and the zone
Of their majesty before Amun laves

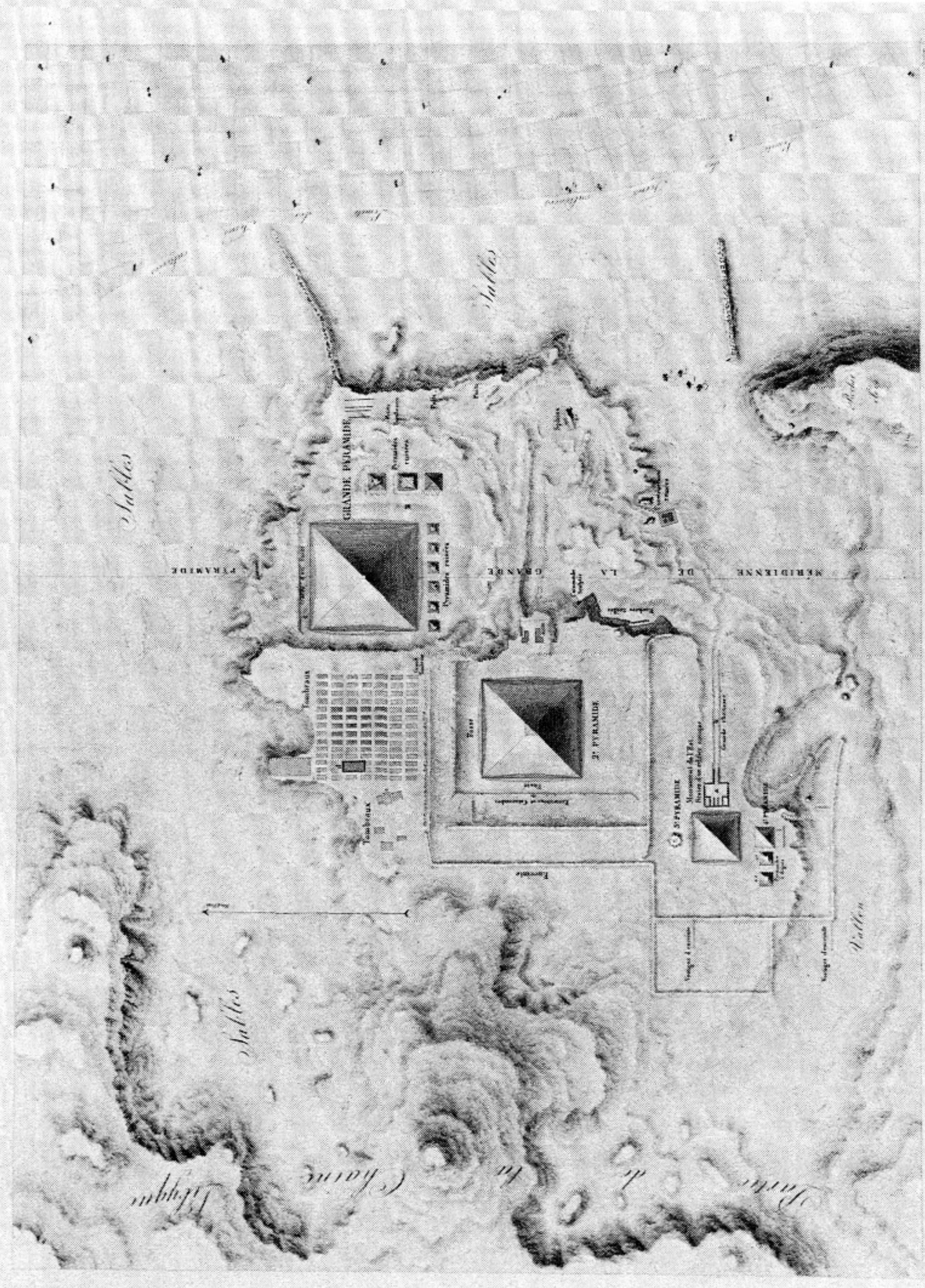
Them anew, when the morning of Egypt arrives.
Again the sands are bright, and the Pharaoh
Is there. He sees the blue Nile and skives
A sliver of light in gold as the marrow

Of glory.

PYRAMIDES DE MEMPHIS.



VUE GÉNÉRALE DES PYRAMIDES ET DU SPHINX, PRISE AU SOLEIL COUCHANT.



PLAN TOPOGRAPHIQUE DES PYRAMIDES ET DES ENVIRONS.

The Pyramids of Egypt

Each from its apex suspends the light of Ra
Down into sand that spreads it, each to draw
The gaze aloft into the clerestories of cloud
Brazen with dusk, as if their planes might flaw

The truth with their variety. Each follows
The light from silver to amber to blue in shallows
Of sky overhead as we, envisioning the eternities
Of their geometry, follow the edging hallows

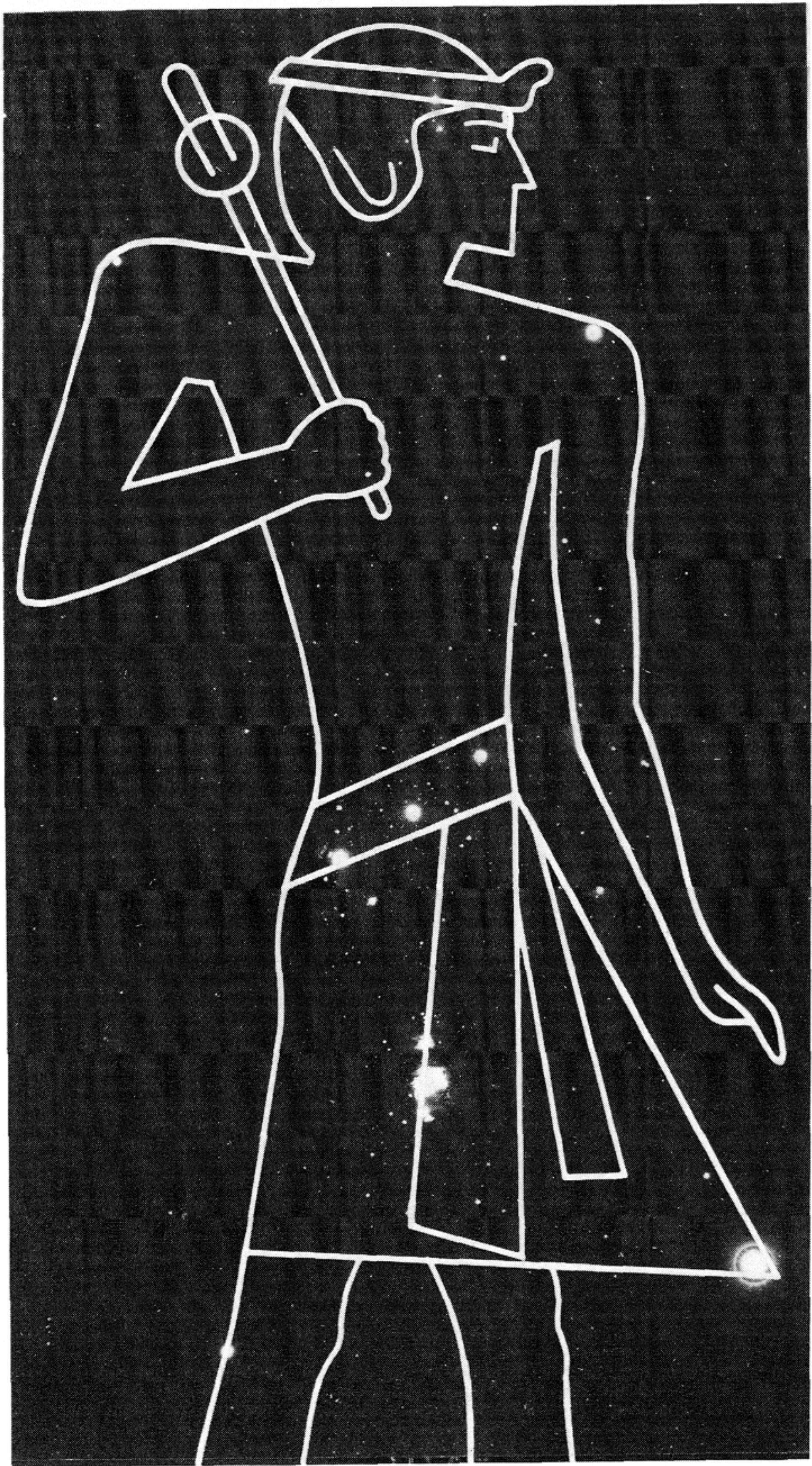
Of sequestering each pharaoh who lives and lives
To rise from a mummy's steady, gazing eyes
Deep in a tomb. The dynasties were hives
Of the Geometer who offers the spiritus and skives

The light into foil that curls into a gathering skiff
Of cloud to shade the linen across a throne like a massif
For a falcon gliding to an ever higher aerie.
There, in the thinning air, are prisms stiff

With the tectonic discipline that rests as trinity,
The fathering lord, the lordly father of eternity,
And the ghost that slips between as one moves
Before and near and then around in the intensity

Of every light, even in the oceanic blue
That wavers with white to anneal the quiver
Of silver into deeper blue. And then, anew,
The pyramids dream their souls aloft to sue

God Amun for his synchrony with Christendom.



Dr. Larson writes: "I believe that Ramses II instructed his artists to use the configuration of the constellation Orion in portraying him at Abu Simbel. The pharaoh wished to show his eminence, and therefore that of Egypt, in the great quest for assured immortality. The hieroglyph matches the constellation with remarkable accuracy, as can be seen by superimposing a transparency of it over a photograph of the constellation.

The ancient Egyptians believed that the afterlife was a mirror image of this life. Therefore, the hieroglyph is a reversal of the image of Orion, with Rigel appearing at the point of the extended skirt. Ramses II faces left in the hieroglyph, and Orion right in the heavens. The sketch has been turned over and superimposed to show the matching of form and spirit that Ramses believed was faithful to the finest insights of his religion."

To the Pharaoh-Hunter K Orion

Supernal hieroglyph of the hunter-warrior,
O Ramses, evocative constellation in your sway
Over these stars, you came as a venerable courier

Of Ra at night to stand forth as if at day
Against the underworld. You move as on a spindle,
Passing overhead, autumn to autumn, in the play

Of the oversoul. That dark Anubis must dwindle
And not stay. But your Bellatrix, Betelgeuse,
And Rigel stay starry full over the brindle

Sand of starpoint pyramids in the ruse
Of immortality, brandishing forward blue-white
Gemstones in that setting. What is there to lose

But glory, to think of the wash of satin in the flight
Of river-wings of falcons rising softly into mist
And corona of the moon? O Egypt, in the sleight

Of living that favors immortality, the far bell
Of windsong arrives among the columns of Abu Simbel
To touch the fleeting spirit with its fleeting knell.

There is no pain. Wrought gold lies over the fell
Visage that is decay. The voice of artifice will tell
Of your dynasty with eloquence as in a dell

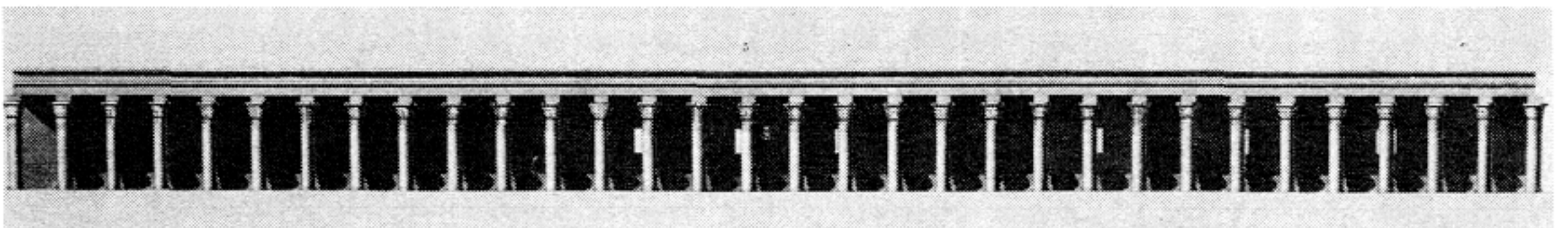
Where the golden visage is sure, whose eyes clear
Where the empire of darkness yields the weir
And net of stars to the Fisherking. He sheds a tear

For you, who strode before him as the mighty seer
Of Ra, who saw his coming in the hieroglyphic mere
That is the heavens, there and there in the sheer

Darkness over us. It will shimmer and appear
Above the sands of Egypt, eternally without loss,
In another vision, within the Southern Cross.

The Ramesside Sensibility

Peaks and vales demark the isochores of history.
How may I survive dissolution or a decline
Into the commonplace of time and the tempera shine
Of mediocrity to keep the lapis lazuli? A clerestory
Admits light as a green flame in the consistory
Of Osiris, whose eyes reveal and then define
His power like the oblique faces of a pyramid
That rests forever in the sands of the mounding earth.
This is the Ramesside glory, not the dearth
Of long forgetfulness. It exists amid
The tall columns in the vision of existence
Kept high and hieroglyphic in my penitence
Before Amun and the asphodel transliterated
Sublime from windstone ergo propter ego
Translated instantly bright and ergodic Ra Ra Ra
Anagogically agog for him.



Ramses II of Egypt

Before me is the length of the Nile and two lands
Inviting the reign of Amun Ra in his pharaoh
Of the sun and the lapis lazuli of the sands

Of Egypt. So I take up the sceptre to harrow
The lands as one, my insight and uraeus
Forward, quick as the quickest eyelet, narrow

To see the will of Amun from golden Sirius,
Star of the endless dynasty. The sparrow
Is not the falcon, and the falcon, curious

In flight, will find the widest domain. Char
And ruins of the past lie against a hill,
And in that repose allow the brightest star

New access to god Amun's brightest will
In the temple's languor of eternal peace
Near the Nile. The star will rise and spill

The brilliance of the golden mien to release
The gold of our desire across the hieroglyph
And flow through it until a hand will crease

Death's linen into darkness even as the sylph
Of light reaches its cloudy height. What is nearer
Than darkest water? There, among the stars, a skiff

Of light will rise and touch the brightening mirror
Overbending us. Great Egypt is the golden land
From which the vision falls away, still clearer

Here as the golden dream and the fire of sand,
The three to five proportion of all experience.
This is the meaning and the image that will stand

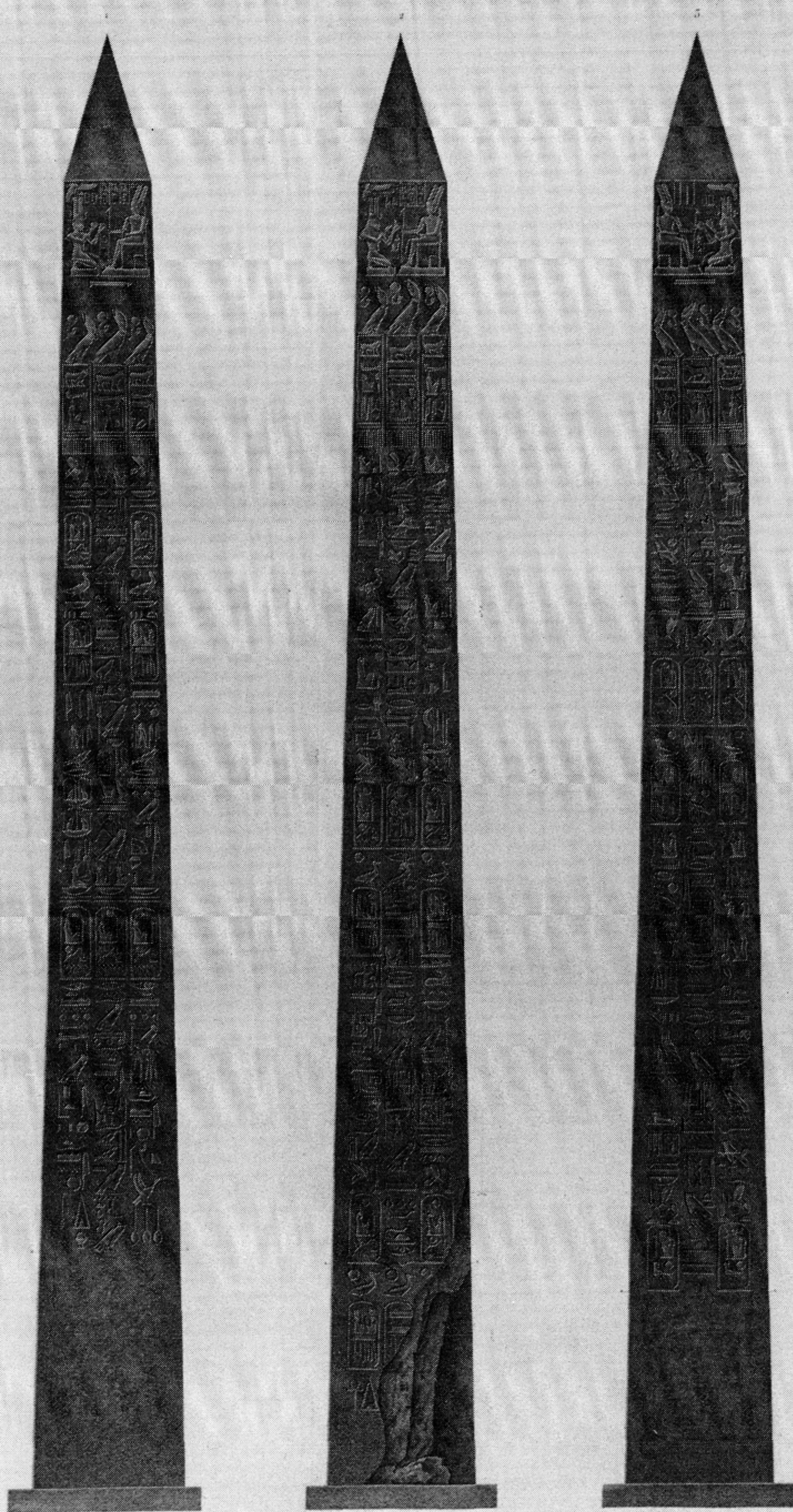
The wear of time as it dusts against the prurience
Of death. Know the azimuth, the azure span
Of light, the aureole, and the prescience

Of Amun Ra. I take my sceptre and lift
Its lustre over Africa. I announce the mean
At Abu Simbel in my very image and sift

The winds to come. I keep the lands in the sway
Of record. I am of these people, the mien
Of their desire, the fire of sand, the array

Of light from Amun Ra. I touch the rift
Of sound. I hear god Amun come. I will not stray.
I whisper what I know in silence. The drift

Of time sustains me in my tomb. Death stings
In dark Amenti, but within the falcon's wings
I am Osiris of the lapis lazuli.



DÉTAILS DE TROIS FACES DE L'OBELISQUE ORIENTAL DU PALAIS.



ELEVATION DÉTAILLÉE DE LA PARTIE POSTÉRIEURE DU GRAND TEMPLE.

The Handmaiden of Nefertari

I will go with you and care for you.
Wings may flutter, but the sound
Will shimmer in a nearby pond,
Then soften, though our days are few.

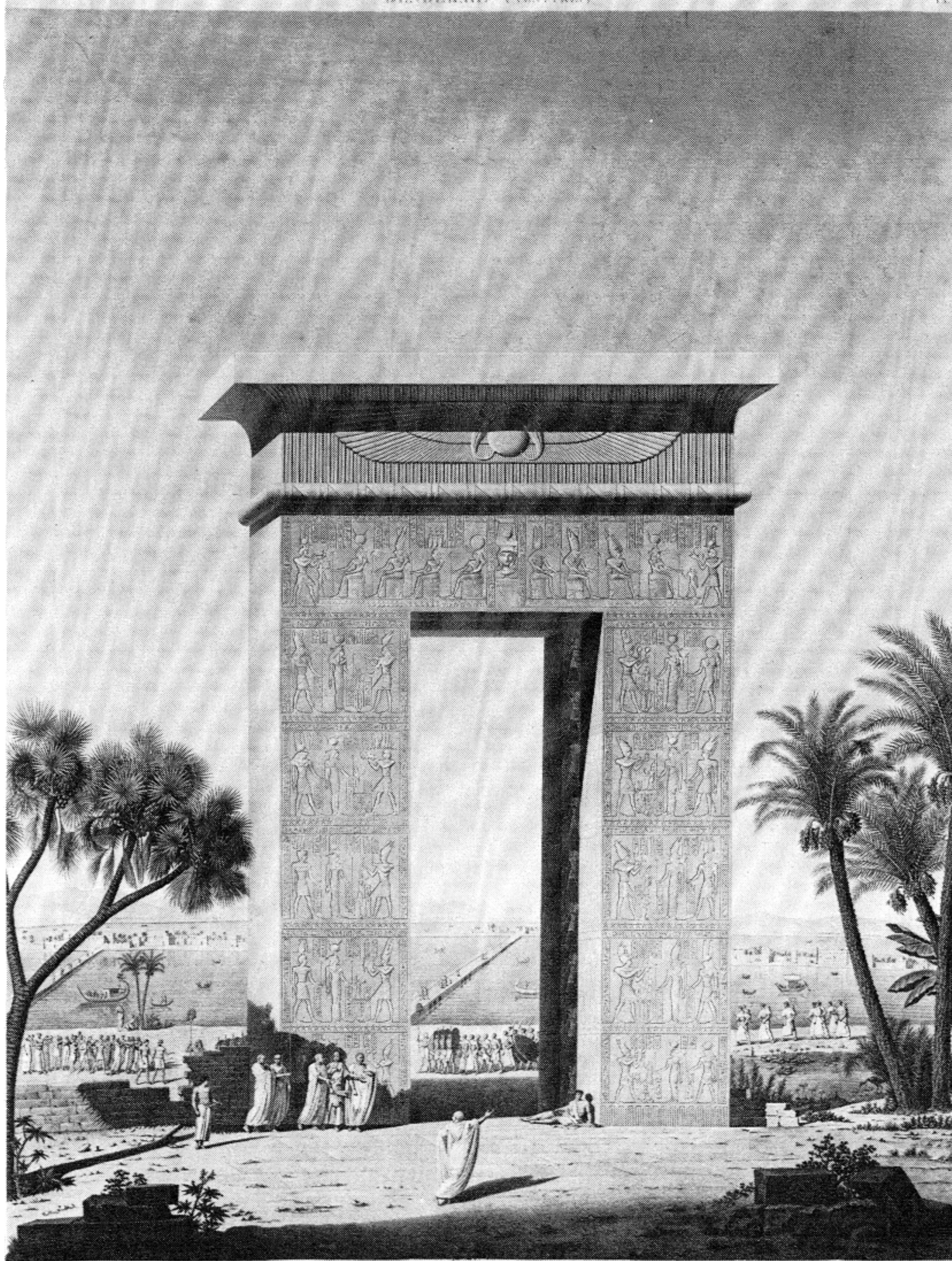
O Queen, I know your quiet gaze
Through shadows where the evening
Runs like wavelets against seeming
Islands beyond the darkening haze

Of the listing sun. I know that hue
Against your indigo, swanlight
Under the azimuth of blue-white
Stars that sink away like rue

That dies in our hands from being taken
Too quickly in the sun. Long in the sieve
Of woven gold you remained to live
Till now, and then beyond, unforsaken

Then in Ra. Steady in my gaze
You shall be still, curved and even
In a hieroglyph and the seven
Circlets of grace in eternal days

Of beauty for our Pharaoh, whose sway
Is blue-dark night or golden day
Whether we go with him, or stay.



ELEVATION PERSPECTIVE DE LA PORTE DU NORD.

May: The Architect of Ramses II

The eye is the aperture of the very sun;
So concentric rings of circlet stone
Will bring the sun into the cave of bone
As the mummy sees, in the dark unknown,
The obelisk rise where great god Amun

Rides the golden blue of the upper rooms
Of sky. The veiling light hangs here
From his azimuth, transcribing the mere
Of sunset red and gold. Later, I peer
Above to see the stars from tombs

In the Valley of the Kings in darkling day!
Sun so warm and full will surely dim
The light of the architect but limn
The angles that here will fall and skim
The mind with variant lines that stay

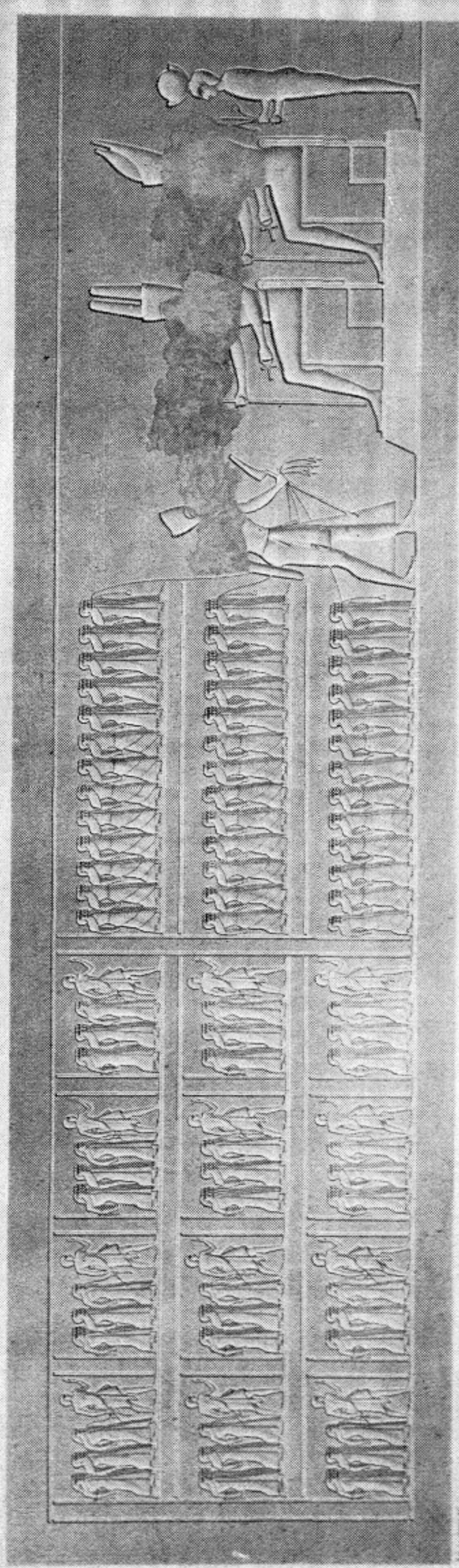
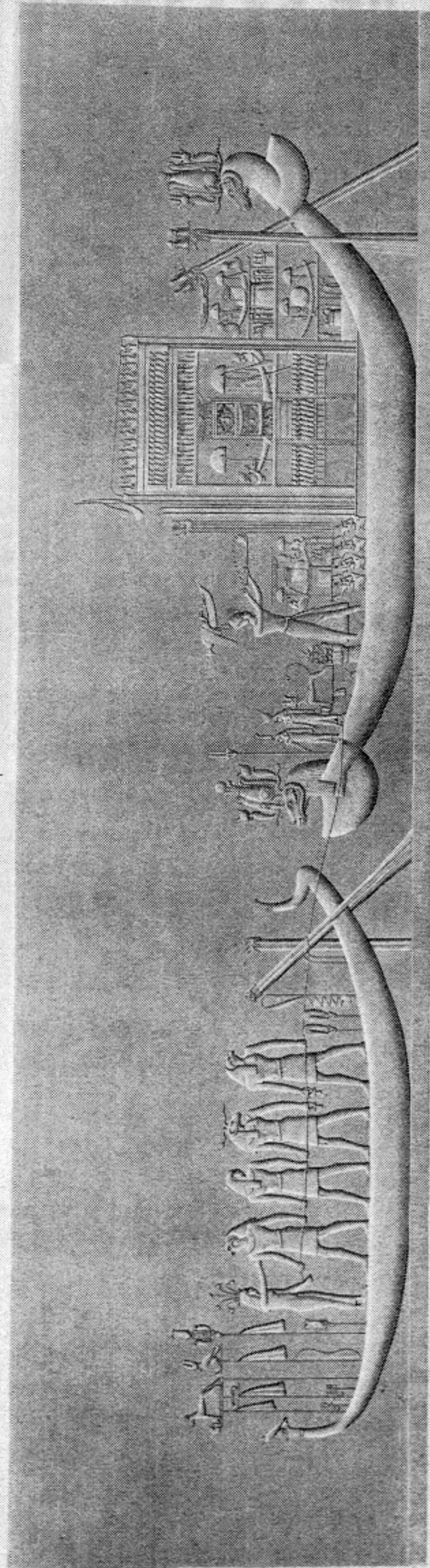
The compassing. Still, I draw the edge
And threshold of a tomb to meet
The light that touches Ramses to delete
All death. The dead for whom we entreat
Osiris arise in hieroglyphs as from a ledge

I make a place for them for Amun Ra,
Who will keep them as the king was kept
From day to day. I bowed and wept
As Ramses lay unmoving and slept
In prayer to envision what he saw,

Dreaming geometric lines that render
Endless curves, as the Nile bends
Across the plain of wheat. Starlight wends
There brighter still, where Ra suspends
Night's sudden vision. See the king as lender

Of Amun's glory! Death is as the caret stone,
The pyramid, the gleam, the valley's rim
Across the mounds where the dark will brim
Into the sky. Amun comes for him
As our geometer where light is sown

And rapt in linen as we pray.



BARQUES SYMBOLIQUES FAISANT PARTIE DE LA DÉCORATION DE LA SALLE HYPOSTYLE ET SUJETS GUERRIERS SCULPTÉS SUR LES MURS EXTÉRIEURS DU PALAIS.

Ramses II on the Delta

The wash of sand where firelights skim
The shallows, and the sand must gleam the shades
Of pearling images where the twilight fades
Into recesses of the sun. The pools are but a whim
Of the foundling breeze that shelters the dim
Overlords of night and yet, slipping forward, abrades
The silences. For I am here, where land
And water come together imperishably, one shimmer near
The other like the Pleiades upon the trades
Of gravity. They hold there, softly prim
To be together, reticent and sparing, and here,
Where their reflections were and are to be.

The Death of Ramses II

Like droplets from a clock, or rain,
Time comes descending over me.
Drafts of light pass over the sea
To reside in a tomb and in the pain

Of memory. They pass and are gone,
But shelter still another day. O sun,
Your rays enfold and fade in dun
Sand, but make it gold. Upon

My sepulchre so shine to be
Remembered so in me. Circle
My life with gold, before death's sickle,
As if with wheat, and over the sea

Of sky where then I may embark
With remembrances in the hush of time.
I keep these artifacts like thyme
In my devotion. Not on the stark

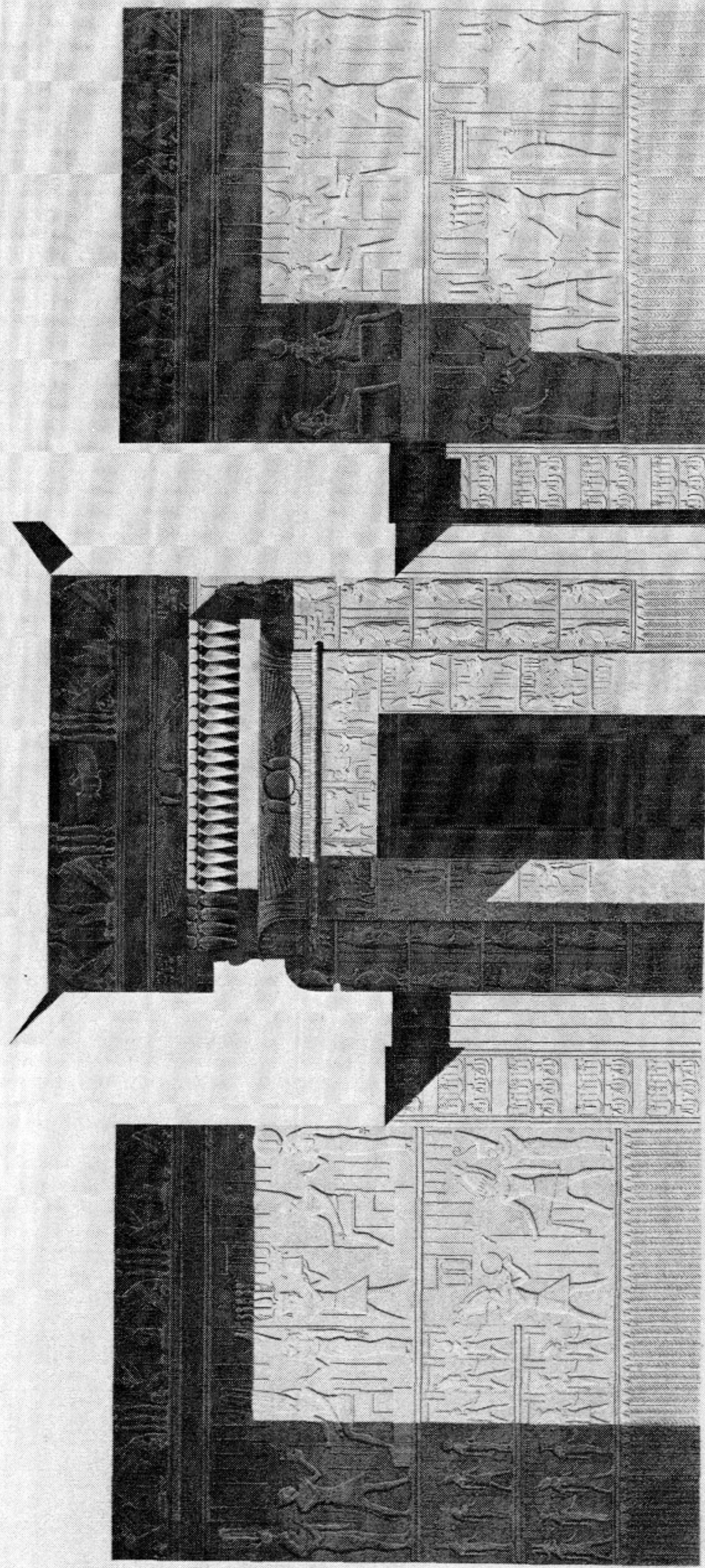
Night river may I pass, but on the golden
Shimmer I see like the molten
Sun that blesses me. Distant, unspoken,
And unspeaking Thou in the fold

Of your eternal day. I keep
My cartouche near unto the height
Of heaven in the haven of your might.
Transform my Egypt, and me, before I weep

To feel my passing into the silent tomb.

The Cartouche of Ramses II

The senses are the holy seven, as I proclaim:
Sight and sound and hearing and touch and taste
And exopraxis, and infolding time in which I waste
The loss of heavenly Amun, caressing my name
Into stone. The river bends and flows the same,
Whether future or past, into the godly green
Of Osiris, who receives us in the haste
Of our dynasty. Now is the green curve's frame
Of the parallax which I shall bend to follow
The depths of diamonding. Space is the hollow
Of the mind as it floats in the diaphane of tile,
In the myriad and range of color in the Nile
Of hieroglyphs. Time is the line of tallow
Aflame in holy linen that wafts in the timbrel
Gold lifting in folds of stone into the windswell
Over the flooding Nile beyond Abu Simbel and the wings
Of the Falcon as it rises in the valley of the celebrant kings.



COUPE TRANSVERSALE DU PETIT TEMPLE DU SUD.

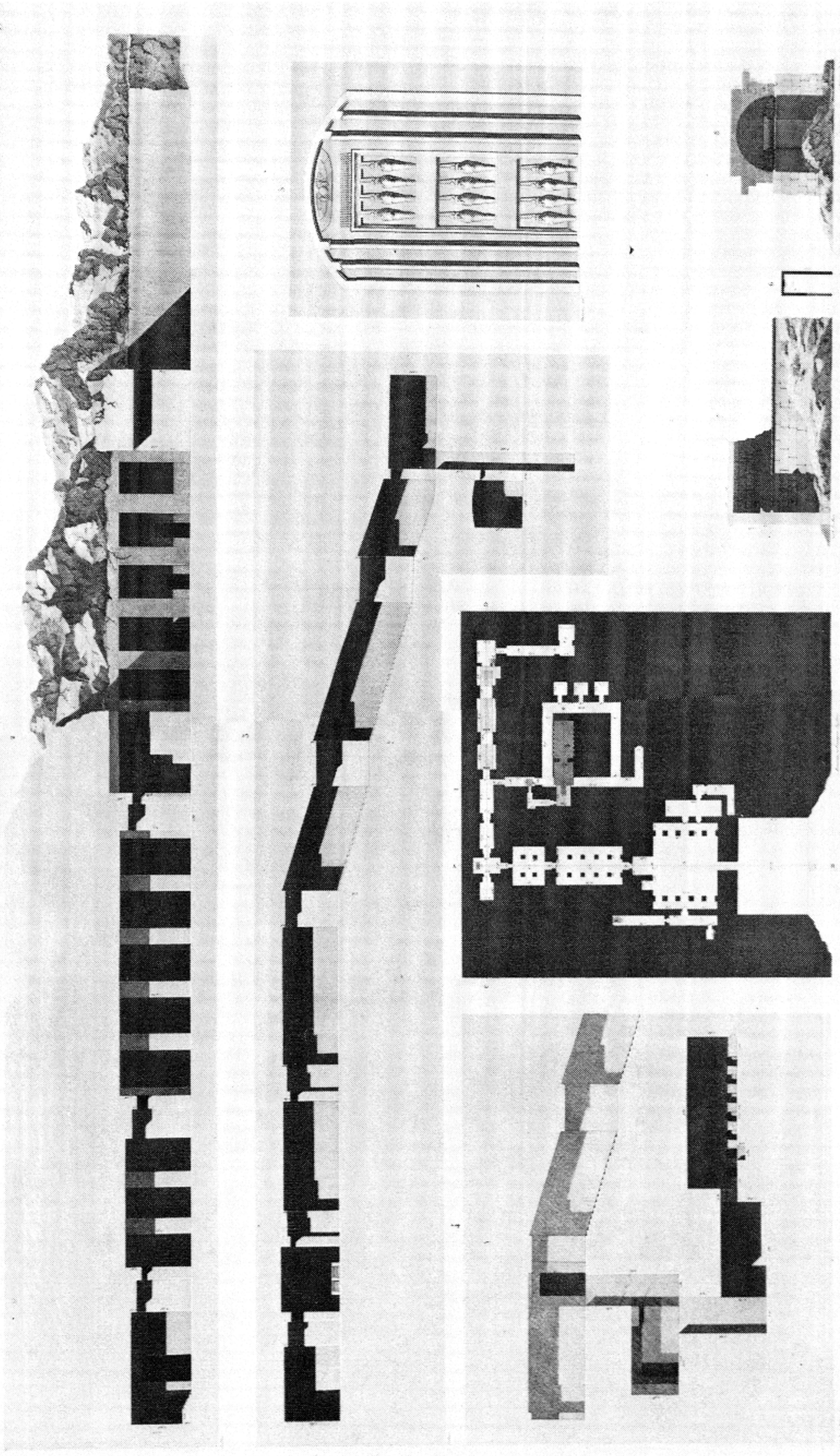
Temple of the Dead

Soul of antiquity, you arrest time
To gather it once again in glyph
Or plaque to specify an eminence.

When did Ramses settle his hand
Upon his crypt to evoke from you
Celestial air that he might

Breathe as a dry reed fluting
Thin tones in the wind—even in
The rustling wind that might wisp

Into his tomb?



1254 PLAN ET COUPPE D'UN GRAND HYPOGÉE OU STÈGE. 3 DÉTAIL DE SCULPTURE D'UN AUTRE HYPOGÉE. 6-8 PLAN ET COUPPE D'UN ÉDIFICE AVALANT UN PLAFOND EN FORME DE VOUTE.

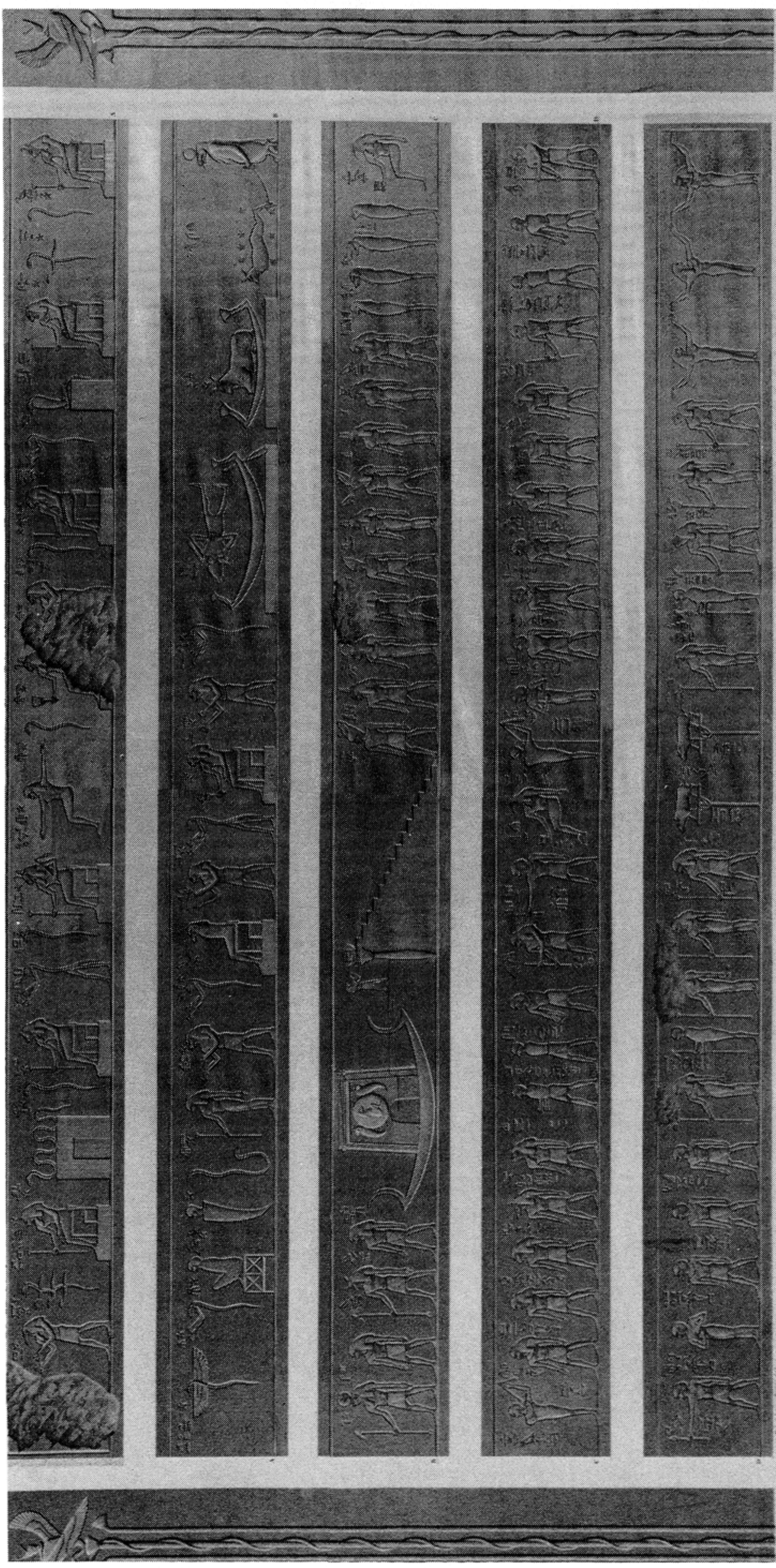
The Tomb of Ramses II

Look down. One's sorrow is a tear
That vanishes in the quiet air,
And Egypt's power's image is the pear-
Shaped headdress in the Pharaoh's bier.

The painted wood has been the lid
Of that patron of the golden sun,
And his seven necklaces may so stun
With glory and array that one might bid

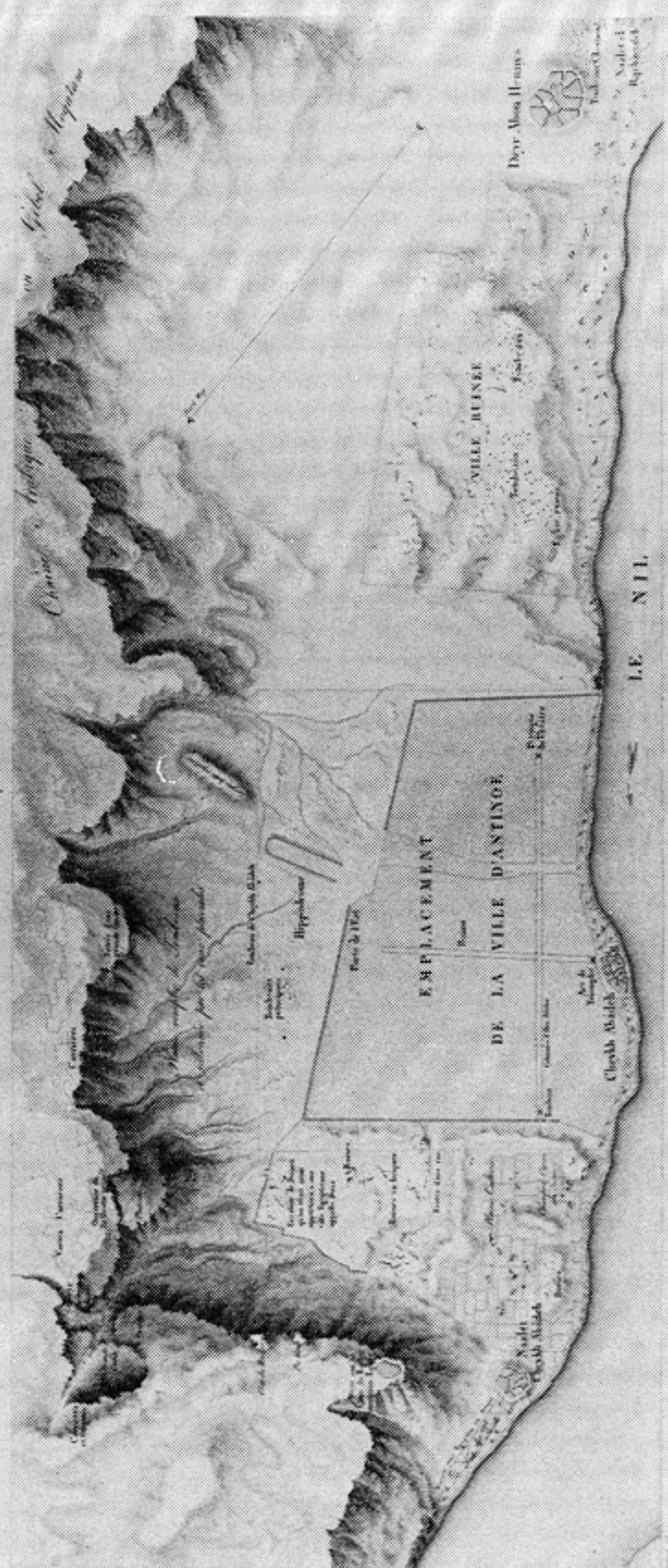
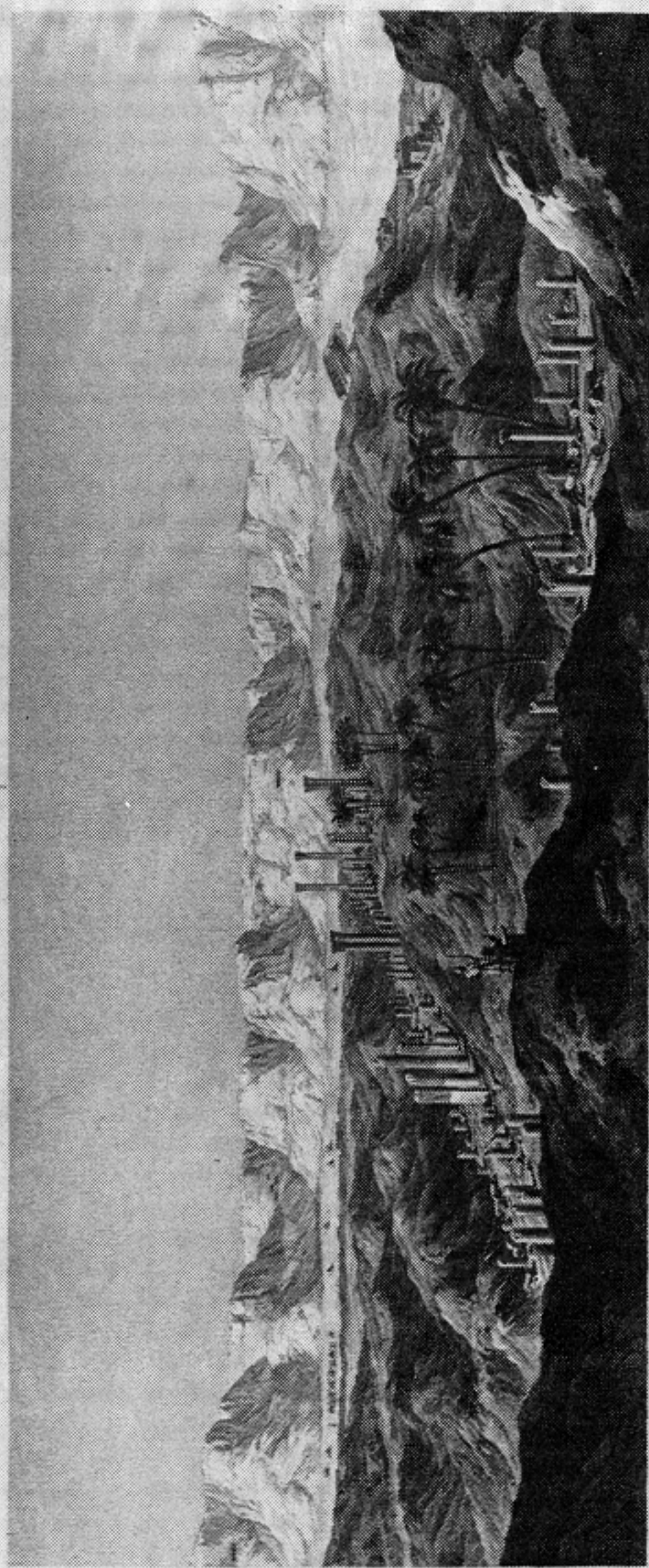
For a place amid his still antiquity.
See the cartouche, the Scarabaeidae.
See the lotus flower in eternity.
And see them each in their ubiquity.

The Pharaoh aimed his straightest arrow
As the Falcon drew him and his kin
Through time victoriously, not like Saladin,
Who came and vanished like a sparrow.



Images of God

To the Newtonian of consequence, the Word follows
The sinuous vine. It grows in nook and cranny,
As Tennyson saith. Where is the tendril, uncanny
With its bloom? It touches the very mallows
Of light, ochre in brown and turquoise as hallows
Of gold supervene. The gorgeous dawn, homey
With green, yields la vie enrose, with tallows
Of gold in its reprise. Who might instruct Adonoi
In this, with reason? Reason is what one makes of it,
With spirit, if you will, or variegations of wit,
Hot with emplaning Germanic prose, but for the roi
Who is sun, affecting the sun. Even sovereign
Louis of France had it right, right as serene
Of the sun at dawn to bless and be blessed, contrite,
Not contrarily, but like great Ramses of the chariot.

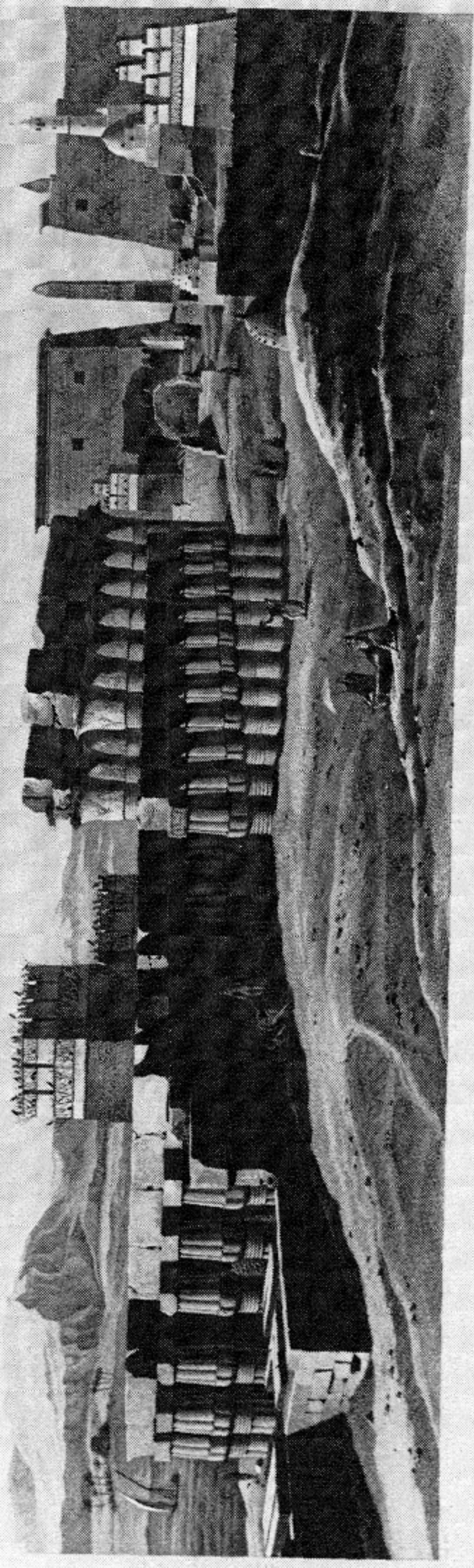


PLAN GÉNÉRAL DES ENVIRONS 2 VUE DES RUINES DE LA VILLE, PRISE DE CÔTÉ DU SUD-OUEST.

Intimations of Sun

Along the Nile, the tares
Must vanish, and the dynasty of astronomy
Must keep the king and the glory of autonomy
In him and each Egyptian that he would save
In stone and hieroglyph. In the timeless nave
Of origin Egypt basks, held in the flare
Of glory. Its many epithets remain to keep
The sun: palette for writing red and black, papyri
In grandeur and in pause, faience of lotus to repeat
Itself variously, alabaster luminescently pale,
Gold basin for pouring, water clock, and wheat
Of harvest as an offering. In an adoration at Qantir,
Ramses stills a veil. See the swan-like stir
Of light along the Nile, and the mirror gold
To reflect images of kingdoms that must not fail
The memory. Just a touch of knowing in the rift
Of time will serve. Rise and take the hand
That emerges from the dark river or from the sand
That flows from its repose.

Ramses of the sun
That brims with gold, the centuries are old
That house you. Open them and with a sail
Catch the winds, and on a swell of water
Or light, come. The savior touches you.



VUE PARTIELLE DU PALAIS PRÈS DE SUT

The Artifacts of Ramses II

The rise of the leagues beyond the temples of Ur
Are of the desert still: this is Egypt, and the heat
Shimmers at morning. Ra in the east and the blue

Of the sky illumine to bring us here to the seat
I have raised against Amenti for the sun and king
In me, wavering into the vision of noon, when the fleet

Images change, transform as if a flare of spiriting
Sun were here for the moment of day. The very land
Is a mission, not of the night and its investing

Silence, but of the reality and shimmer that expand
The noon of majesty, or of the Nile of light wending
And turning to brighten the heavens and the wand

Of its fire. Steady now, in the stone of the rending
Will, we will limn and carve the supernal order
Of sun in this earth. We invoke and hold the bending

Will to sustain a record afar, across the border
Of memory. Some hint of salver, circlet, tending
To speak as an orifice, will be. Some intent gaze

Will fall to us, though sands will sift and cover
And the marauder find. We will speak though the phase
Of the stars may wane in the shadow. In the hover

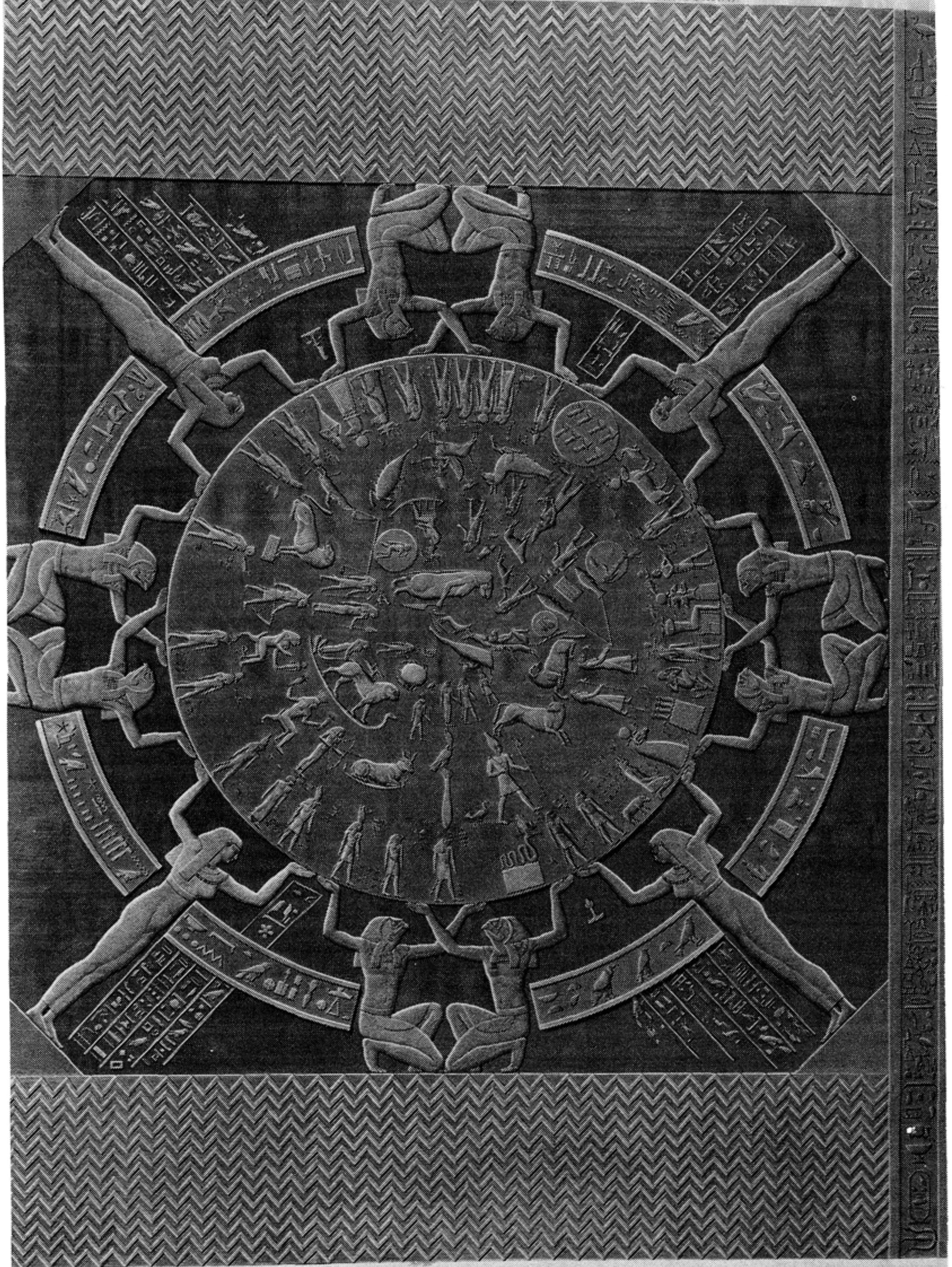
Of light we remain before you. We speak though we hover
As memory. Artifacts themselves keep the replicate
Spirit. We stay in the artifact, in the server

Of the pronomen or word. And these will vindicate
Our claret of day and our vantage at night in the flow
And the caste of the sepulchre. Our wavering will sate

Poseidon in the basin of land, north, and the fiery Apollo,
Who may withhold the superlative will of the King
Of the Sacrament. We thirst for the waters that follow

Conversion. We mounted the stone and shaped it to bring
Amun into being here. The shape of sand is our mission
Of soul, and it will slowly lift like a veil to fling

The wind away.



ZODIAQUE SCULPTÉ AU PLAFOND DE L'UNE DES SALLES SUPÉRIEURES DU GRAND TEMPLE.

In his poem "The Unified Field," Clinton F. Larson writes:

An endless line cast to a curve in the pearling dark
Allows the universal light. They, wending together,
Found and are divinity.

1 And 2 Nephi: An Inspiring Whole

Frederick W. Axelgard

How inspired do we believe the scriptures to be? Do we justifiably confine ourselves to a verse-by-verse study of their doctrinal or didactic content? Are we missing much of the intended impact if we do not believe that entire sections, chapters, or books were organized under inspiration? In spiritual no less than literary terms, could not the “whole” of a scriptural text amount to more than the sum of its “parts”? These questions suggest an approach to scripture study which seeks to integrate rather than fragment the meaning of scriptural passages. The spirit of this approach pervades the following observation, which comments on those sections of the Doctrine and Covenants revealed in 1831:

As we follow the development from Section to Section, we perceive that there is a plan so grand, so beautiful, and so well adapted to human needs, as to leave no room for doubt concerning its divine origin. Each Revelation, considered by itself, though full of beauty, may be but a stone detached from the building to which it belongs, but seen as a part of the entire structure, it speaks with convincing eloquence of the wisdom, power, and love of the Divine Builder of the Church, our Lord Jesus Christ.¹

The thrust of this observation, and of the study presented here, is that a deeper appreciation and conviction of scriptural truth can be gained by considering how the passages of a given scriptural text fit together as a whole. Like the Doctrine and Covenants, Nephi’s writings are well suited to such an inquiry because they constitute a discrete, self-contained segment of scripture of considerable size.² We are told that 1 and 2 Nephi come from the small plates of Nephi which Mormon did not edit. These books therefore make up the largest *original* contribution of any single author in the Book of Mormon, amounting to roughly one-fifth of its total text.

Relying on these variables, we undertake in the following pages a holistic analysis of Nephi’s writings. The study begins with an examination of the evidence that Nephi had a basic two-part outline

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in mind when he made his inscriptions on the small plates. We then briefly discuss the possible correlations between the identifiable segments of Nephi's books and the stages of his life in which they were apparently written. This is followed by an extensive analysis of two unifying leitmotifs in Nephi's writing: a pervasive emphasis on record-keeping and a constant association of Nephite events and endeavors with precedents set by ancient scriptural heroes.

As a conclusion, this study argues that there is more to Nephi's writings than meets the eye, that they are characterized decisively and unambiguously by structural and thematic coherence. They possess a pattern of unity and self-consistency which penetrates well below the content of the separate verses which make up 1 and 2 Nephi. Moreover, the sense of the ever-present hand of Nephi which an integrative reading reveals is strong, and at times almost intimate. The overall result is to identify 1 and 2 Nephi as unique and uniquely Nephi's.

NEPHI'S OUTLINE

The search for an overarching framework in Nephi's writing produces three fundamental findings. First, they contain two primary divisions, one heavily historical and the other exclusively spiritual in content. Secondly, Nephi's historical section (1 Ne. 1–2 Ne. 5) appears to have two subsections. A major portion of Nephi's family history is contained in 1 Nephi 1–18. In 1 Nephi 19–2 Nephi 5, Nephi brings in other prophets' writings (Isaiah, Zenock, Zenos, Neum, and Joseph) and focuses on spiritual matters with an intensity that suggests a transitional lead-in to his final, completely spiritual–prophetic segment. Third, Nephi's final section (2 Ne. 6–33) functions as a genuine conclusion. It is devoid of temporal references, contains a major review of Nephi's earlier prophecies, and ends with an outpouring of personal concern and doctrinal climax.

That Nephi's record is made up of two basic parts can be seen first from its historical content. Everything Nephi has to offer in the way of historical information is presented between 1 Nephi 1 and 2 Nephi 5: his family's travels from Jerusalem to the promised land, the conflicts between Nephi and his brothers, their division into separate colonies of Lamanites and Nephites, and so on. Abruptly and without explanation, Nephi's remaining chapters move on to a sermon by Jacob (2 Ne. 6–10), quotations from Isaiah (2 Ne. 12–24), and Nephi's final prophecies and teachings (2 Ne. 11, 25–33). These passages are all free of temporal references to Nephi's life. Only when he bids farewell at the end of 2 Nephi 33 does one sense that any time has passed since the end of 2 Nephi 5.

Echoes of this “historical versus spiritual” division also occur in certain summaries Nephi makes near the end of his account. In one such passage he declares that because of his record, his descendants would know that their forefathers “came out from Jerusalem” and would have “the gospel of Jesus Christ . . . declared among them” (2 Ne. 30:4–5). Later Nephi again says that his record “maketh known unto [my people] of their fathers; and it speaketh of Jesus, and persuadeth them to believe in him, and to endure to the end, which is life eternal” (2 Ne. 33:4). These passages thus give two main purposes for Nephi’s record: one historical, to inform his descendants of their Israelite heritage; and one spiritual, to give them the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The decisive evidence for breaking Nephi’s record into two parts, divided at the end of 2 Nephi 5, is more precise. Nephi gives the definitive clue in a passage in 1 Nephi 19. The following excerpt is taken from his discussion of the small plates:

And an account of my making these plates shall be given hereafter; and then, behold, I proceed according to that which I have spoken; and this I do that the more sacred things may be kept for the knowledge of my people. (1 Ne. 19:5)

In this rare glimpse into his organizational thoughts, Nephi promises to give us later an account of his making the small plates. Furthermore, he marks that account as a threshold he will cross before he conveys “more sacred things.” As promised, Nephi describes the creation of the small plates near the end of 2 Nephi 5. This juncture is thus an unmistakable turning point, the gateway to what Nephi calls “the more sacred things [to] be kept for the knowledge of my people.”

Nephi’s History

Let us now focus briefly on Nephi’s first division (1 Ne. 1–2 Ne. 5) and on the thesis that it can be further subdivided. Note first that the historical information contained in these twenty-seven chapters is unevenly distributed. The first eighteen chapters are richly packed with historical detail and have a chronological scope of about ten years. The next nine chapters, however, give little historical data although they cover a longer time period of about twenty years.³

It would seem, then, that 1 Nephi 1–18 contains the most important historical information Nephi wants to convey, namely the Jerusalem origins of his family and their migration to the promised land. On the other hand, the intense prophetic aspect of 1 Nephi 19 to 2 Nephi 5 (with its citations of Isaiah, Zenock, Zenos, Neum, Lehi, and Joseph) suggests it might be a transitional subsection, where

Nephi begins to break away from historical material and move toward spiritual instruction, which soon becomes his only concern.

"More Sacred Things"

Having prepared his readers for an important departure, Nephi did not disappoint them in 2 Nephi 6–33. Here he builds a sense of climax and conclusion in several ways, one of which is to conclude several stylistic and structural patterns he introduces earlier in his work. The best example of this comes, as noted earlier, when he completes the changeover into purely spiritual writing. Another example appears when Nephi, in abridging Jacob's sermon, carefully achieves perfect continuity with earlier citations of Isaiah. That is, the Isaiah passages in 2 Nephi 7–8 (corresponding to Isa. 50–51) follow directly after those cited in 1 Nephi 20–21 (corresponding to Isa. 48–49). It would appear to be more than mere coincidence that Nephi connects these two important discourses. Nephi's earlier use of Isaiah's words to teach and humble his brothers (1 Ne. 15:20; 19–22) and the extraordinary length of his later Isaiah citation (2 Ne. 12–24) leave no doubt that Isaiah plays a dominant role in Nephi's purposes. This continuum between 1 Nephi 20–21 and 2 Nephi 7–8 skillfully cements portions of Nephi's record together and helps establish his regard for Isaiah as a dominant feature of his writing.

A desire for spiritual climax also appears to influence Nephi's decision to blend two other voices—Jacob's and Isaiah's—with his own at the end of his record. To put Nephi's selectivity in perspective, one should recall that just a few chapters earlier he quotes no less than six other prophets. With such a wide range of inspired sources to choose from, how does Nephi decide whom to include in the final, "more sacred" portion of his writing? He offers the following explanation:

For he [Isaiah] verily saw my Redeemer, even as I have seen him. And my brother, Jacob, also has seen him as I have seen him; wherefore, I will send their words forth unto my children to prove unto them that my words are true. (2 Ne. 11:2–3)

It appears, then, that Nephi's desire to impart "more sacred things" compelled him to close out his account with the testimonies of three eyewitnesses of Jesus Christ.

We should remember, however, that at the time of Nephi's writing, Jacob's and Isaiah's words were already part of the historical record. They had been delivered to earlier audiences. Since Nephi's words in 2 Nephi 11 and 25–33 were presumably written explicitly for the small plates, we should look there for the best revelation of the climactic thrust of his record.

Nephi divides his concluding chapters into two parts, his prophecies and his teachings on the doctrine of Christ (see 2 Ne. 25:4, 31:1–2). Strikingly, Nephi's final prophecies repeat, in sequence and often in significant detail, the prophecies contained in his earlier tree of life vision (1 Ne. 11–14). Table 1 outlines this pattern of repetition. Why would Nephi engage in such large-scale duplication on his precious small plates? Most likely because, to him, these prophecies are overwhelmingly important and to review them also suits his apparent desire to write a cohesive record.

Another stirring feature that appears in both sections of Nephi's closing chapters is a strong personal appeal to his readers. In his earlier writings (1 Ne. 1–2 Ne. 5), he rarely refers to any audience he might have in mind. In these later chapters, however, he makes frequent, direct appeals to “my beloved brethren,” “my people,” “my brethren,” and “my children.” In this fashion Nephi seems to strive to narrow the distance between himself and his readers, though he clearly realizes they are far in his future (see 2 Ne. 25:20, 28; 26:1, 23; 28:1; 33:10, 13).

The climax of Nephi's record comes in 2 Nephi 31–33, where we find his most intense personal appeals coinciding with his teachings on the “doctrine of Christ.” Here he makes noticeably more frequent use of the phrase “my beloved brethren.” In addition, he moves away from the universal, prophetic context of chapters 25–30 and focuses on individual spiritual commitment. His admonition to his readers is to repent, be baptized, receive the Holy Ghost, endure to the end, feast on the word of Christ, and pray—all in the spirit of following the example of Christ (2 Ne. 31–32). Then, in his last chapter, Nephi shifts the personalized focus to himself. He expresses his sense of weakness in writing, affirms his deep concern for his readers (“I pray continually for them by day, and mine eyes water my pillow by night, because of them”), and bids farewell (2 Ne. 33:1–3, 13–14).

Each of the three subsections in Nephi's second major division thus contributes to a rich sense of climax and conclusion. Each offers the testimony of an eyewitness of Christ, knowledge of whom it is here Nephi's main purpose to convey. Each plays an integrating role by harking back to and building upon earlier portions of Nephi's writing. And Nephi's own superlative conclusion provides a personalized appeal and focus on Christ which is truly worthy of his promise to impart “the more sacred things [to] be kept for the knowledge of my people” (1 Ne. 19:5). In short, Nephi effectively interweaves a profound message into a firmly cohesive outline, which inevitably strengthens the spiritual and literary merit of his account.

TABLE 1
A COMPARISON OF THE CONTENT AND ORDER OF NEPHI'S PROPHECIES
IN 1 NEPHI 11-14 AND 2 NEPHI 25-30

Summary of Prophecies	References in 1 Nephi 11-14	References in 2 Nephi 25-30
Future events in Palestine, including birth, ministry, and rejection of Messiah; warning to those who fight against the Messiah, his Apostles, and church	1 Ne. 11:8-36	2 Ne. 25:12-15
Future events in Nephite history, including: destruction after Messiah's death, Christ's visit, subsequent era of righteousness, Nephites' extinction, and decline of Lamanites	1 Ne. 12:1-23	2 Ne. 26:1-11
Gentiles' iniquity in last days, smiting of Lamanites by Gentiles, religious strife and many churches among Gentiles	1 Ne. 13:1-29	2 Ne. 26
Iniquity of Jews and Gentiles in last days and their frustration in fighting Zion, coming forth of the Book of Mormon, and the marvelous work and a wonder	1 Ne. 13:32-41 and 1 Ne. 14:7	2 Ne. 27
Contrasting of and conflict between numerous Gentile churches in last days and small number of Christ's true followers	1 Ne. 14:9-14	2 Ne. 28:1-15
Destruction of great and abominable church and fulfillment of God's covenant with the house of Israel	1 Ne. 14:15-17	2 Ne. 28:16-28 and 2 Ne. 29:1-2

Nephi's Life and the Development of His Record

With this overall picture of Nephi's record in mind, let us consider its parallels with the stages of Nephi's own life. For as they are described above, the segments of that record appear to reflect the circumstances under which Nephi indicates they were written. These circumstances, described mainly in 2 Nephi 5, were as follows. Nephi began the small plates at least thirty years after leaving Jerusalem, apparently shortly after the death of Lehi and the separation of his children into distinct camps of Nephites and Lamanites. The first 60 percent of the record, through 2 Nephi 5, was written during the following decade, when Nephi was busy establishing, building up, and defending the new Nephite colony. Nephi apparently completed the last 40 percent (the "more sacred" portion) of his record over the course of about fifteen years (2 Ne. 5:28–34; Jacob 1:1). This was a period, late in his life, when his temporal burdens were presumably lighter and he was at the height of his spiritual stature.

Now to the possible parallels between this history and the structure of Nephi's account. It is noteworthy that Nephi wrote the more incident-filled, historical segment of his record during a hectic and potentially distracting period of his life. The more spiritual portion of the record, with its carefully crafted elements of climax, is apparently the product of calmer circumstances, more conducive to a deliberate and intensely spiritual piece of work. Moreover, Nephi's first segment relies a good deal more on his personal writings, perhaps a result of unstable times when effective integration of others' writings would be difficult. Later, presumably under more relaxed circumstances, he quotes much more extensively from other prophetic writings.

Other possible parallels suggest themselves. At the beginning of his record Nephi devotes a great deal of attention to his father, Lehi. His opening verses of his book reflect this preoccupation, as does the fact that his first eight chapters appear to be an abridgment of a record kept by Lehi (see 1 Ne. 1:16–17, 9:1). This preoccupation may be in part a reflection of Nephi's grief at the then-recent death of Lehi. Furthermore, the repeated juxtaposition of the many parallel experiences Lehi and Nephi had (for example, their visions of the tree of life) might also reflect Nephi's sense of indebtedness to his father's example and the feeling of loss at his death. On the other hand, the Lehi–Nephi parallels might also imply that Nephi, experiencing challenges to his leadership during the difficult years of establishing the Nephite colony in its new wilderness home, wants to strengthen and legitimize his leadership by identifying himself with the past leader, Lehi.

“Do you read the scriptures, my brethren and sisters, as though you were writing them a thousand, two thousand, or five thousand years ago?” Brigham Young asked. “Do you read them as though you stood in the place of the men who wrote them? If you do not feel thus, it is your privilege to do so.”⁴ It is in the spirit of this challenge that we have tried to stand in Nephi’s shoes and consider how the circumstances of his life might have influenced the writing of his record. And while the observations made in this discussion are necessarily speculative and inconclusive, they tend to suggest that Nephi’s record is circumstantially self-consistent, in addition to being structurally and (as we will see below) thematically cohesive.

THE THEMATIC UNITY OF 1 AND 2 NEPHI

In addition to the structural aspects of unity in Nephi’s writings discussed so far, other meaningful thematic threads or leitmotifs can be seen to weave throughout and strengthen the cohesion of 1 and 2 Nephi. Two such patterns, a “records theme” and the use of archetypes, are elaborated below.

The Records Theme

If so inclined, one could interpret 1 and 2 Nephi as a nonstop commentary on the importance of records. An urgent emphasis on records infects the whole of Nephi’s writings. It is first demonstrated by Nephi’s commitment to obtaining the brass plates from Laban; it is sustained by his repeated descriptions of the important records to be revealed in the last days (1 Ne. 13:35–41, 2 Ne. 27); and it is confirmed by his reverent reliance on other prophets’ writing in piecing his own record together.

These explicit references, however, give only a partial picture of the “records theme” in Nephi’s writings. First, one should consider the passages where Nephi describes the role of records in his own personal development. At the outset, Nephi states that his “goodly” father taught him in all his learning. From this and other passages (1 Ne. 1:1, 16–17; 19:1), a strong impression emerges that Nephi’s education (both literary and spiritual) stems from Lehi and his record and that this precedent helps inspire Nephi to make a record of his own proceedings in his father’s language (1 Ne. 1:1–3). One finds repeatedly that reviewing or rehearsing the contents of sacred records leads Lehi and Nephi to great spiritual experiences. Lehi, after reading from the brass plates, is filled with the Spirit and led to great prophesying (1 Ne. 5:10–22). Similarly, Nephi is filled with the power of God after reciting the scriptural account of Moses and the Israelites in the wilderness (1 Ne. 17:23–55). Nephi further

experiences “workings in the spirit” following his recitation of the teachings of Zenock, Zenos, and Neum (1 Ne. 19:10–20).

Another valuable message about records is indirectly conveyed by the faith and devotion Nephi shows in the task of record keeping. We learn early on that these duties require Nephi to abridge Lehi’s record and keep not one but two records of his own (1 Ne. 1:16–17; 6:1; 9). We later discover that on his second record Nephi must laboriously rewrite much of what he has already written on his first record, notwithstanding the fact that he has only a vague idea of the second record’s purpose (1 Ne. 19:1–2; 9:5). Furthermore, Nephi compiles this heavily repetitive second record during the extremely busy years which follow his colony’s separation from the followers of Laman and Lemuel (2 Ne. 5:28–34).

Given Nephi’s busy schedule, the manual and literary difficulty of record keeping, and Nephi’s serious attitude about this work, one might well expect him to experience periodic and even poignant moments of frustration. Indeed, it appears that he did. Evidence of this is found in the middle of Nephi’s most extensive comparison of the large and small plates, shortly after he affirms that everything he has written thus far on the small plates has already been described in greater detail in his other record (1 Ne. 19:1–2). In other words, after years of painstaking work under stressful circumstances, Nephi is admitting that what he has written on the small plates is neither unique nor complete—and this appears to trouble him.

And an account of my making these plates shall be given hereafter; and then, behold, I proceed according to that which I have spoken; and this I do that the more sacred things may be kept for the knowledge of my people.

Nevertheless, I do not write anything upon plates save it be that I think it be sacred. And now, if I do err, even did they err of old.
(1 Ne. 19:5–6)

One perceives here an element of tension in Nephi’s saying that a later portion of his record will contain “more sacred things” while he also maintains that everything he has written on plates is sacred. This tension between “sacred” and “more sacred” things and between “these plates” and Nephi’s first record is evidently related to the fact that he is not fully aware of the precise purpose of the small plates (1 Ne. 9:5). A further indication that this is the source of some dissonance is that Nephi apparently feels compelled to discuss the relationship between the two sets of plates no less than six times in his preciously small account (1 Ne. 1:16–17; 6; 9; 19:1–6; 2 Ne. 4:14–15; 5:28–33). This costly repetition seems to suggest that Nephi’s own mind is not clear on the matter.

Additional evidence of Nephi's self-doubt about his performance as a record keeper is found in the phrase "And now, if I do err." This suggestion of self-criticism should not be exaggerated, inasmuch as Nephi qualifies it by saying that "even did they [the ancient prophets] err of old." Nevertheless, Nephi's twinge of doubt takes on concrete meaning when he apparently decides to change his mode of record keeping, for he immediately changes the content of his writing and shifts to transcribing excerpts from the brass plate writings of Zenock, Zenos, Neum, and Isaiah (1 Ne. 19–22), thereby adding an entirely new dimension to the small plates.

Nephi's Heroes

Nephi's reverence for records is indicative of a profound interest in the religious past of his people. Records were intended to preserve not only the commandments of the Lord (1 Ne. 4:15), but also an awareness of the Nephites' ancestors and a realization of their foreknowledge of the Nephites' destiny (1 Ne. 19:21–22). As we shall see below, the intertwining of Nephite experience with the lives and prophecies of the ancients is a central feature of Nephi's writing.

The first heroic forebear revealed in Nephi's writing is his father Lehi, with whom he spares no effort to identify himself. His first-mentioned aspiration is to keep a record as Lehi did. He recounts his pouring out his soul in prayer and receiving a prophetic calling immediately after his account of Lehi doing the same things (1 Ne. 1–2). Nephi sees the tree of life vision entrusted to Lehi (1 Ne. 8, 11–14) and receives the same vow from the Lord that he would be led to a promised land (1 Ne. 2:20; 5:5; 2 Ne. 1:5). Finally, Nephi flees into the wilderness from Laman and Lemuel, just as Lehi fled from Jerusalem.

Nephi also knew that he and Lehi fit into a broader pattern, one set by earlier prophets who kept records, prayed, and went into the wilderness to gain a promised land. For example, he makes repeated reference to Moses as a prophetic prototype. Just prior to the final attempt to acquire the brass plates from Laban, Nephi compares this challenge to Moses dividing the waters of the Red Sea (1 Ne. 4:2) in seeking to persuade his brothers that the Lord would empower them to accomplish their appointed task. His account gives compelling proof of his argument, for after invoking the Mosaic model of faith, Nephi penetrates Jerusalem and finds Laban by being "led by the Spirit, not knowing beforehand the things which I should do" (1 Ne. 4:6). A near carbon copy of this experience occurs later, when Nephi rebukes Laman and Lemuel for not helping construct a ship. Here Nephi recalls Moses' difficulties in the Exodus, likening his

brothers to the rebellious Israelites and identifying himself with Moses. Significantly, immediately after he rehearses that archetypal story, Nephi is filled with the same power of God which he has just described in Moses, and thoroughly confounds his defiant brothers (1 Ne. 17:23–55).

But of all the ancient prophets he cites, Joseph is probably the most important to Nephi. This judgment rests primarily on Nephi's written references to Joseph, but it is reinforced by the uncanny parallels that connect them. Both Joseph and Nephi were young sons with wicked elder brothers, in a culture that favored firstborn males. Yet both were promised they would rule over their elder brothers and were hated for it. After divine intervention saved Nephi and Joseph from death at the hands of their brothers, they each led their families out of their homeland to preserve them from destruction and famine, respectively. Finally, both families sought internal reconciliation through blessings bestowed by dying patriarchs.

Nephi's unique identification with Joseph is underscored by the exclusive nature of his first references to Joseph, inserted poignantly into his account of Lehi reading the brass plates. Here Lehi learns he is a descendant of Joseph "who was sold into Egypt, and who was preserved by the hand of the Lord, that he might preserve his father, Jacob, and all his household from perishing with famine" (1 Ne. 5:14). This synopsis of Joseph's ministry sticks out in Nephi's record because it calls to mind the very similar mission that Nephi would fulfill for his family. Secondly, it is injected into a very sweeping context. Lehi's reading about Adam and Eve and the prophets down to Jeremiah, followed by his prophecies about the ultimate future of the brass plates and his descendants, endow these verses (10–19) in 1 Nephi 5 with a scope that encompasses virtually the entire history of the earth. Of all the prophets who could have been mentioned, only Joseph's special mission is referred to. It must therefore be no coincidence that Nephi gives exclusive honor to Joseph when he summarizes Lehi's genealogy by saying, "It sufficeth me to say that we are a descendant of Joseph" (1 Ne. 6:2, 1920 ed.).

Nephi's longest reference to Joseph occurs near the end of the "historical" segment of his record. It, too, involves Lehi, as he gives his dying blessing to his youngest son who was named Joseph. This chapter, 2 Nephi 3, is perhaps best known for Lehi's prophecies of a "choice seer" to be raised up who would be named Joseph. Latter-day Saints believe this to be a specific prophecy about the mission of Joseph Smith. But to Nephi, Lehi's blessing seems to be equally important for its purposeful bonding to the great Joseph in the Nephites' past.

It is clear from Lehi's blessing that his son Joseph embodied a connection with Joseph of old to which Lehi ascribed great significance.

The intimacy of the connection is suggested by Lehi's mention of his son Joseph's birth "in the days of my greatest sorrow" (v. 1); this suggests that naming the baby after Joseph of old may have been a heartfelt effort to give meaning to the great suffering Lehi's family experienced in the wilderness. That is, the boy would be a reminder that, as Lehi goes on to say in his blessing, the earlier Joseph "truly saw our day" and prophesied that a "righteous branch" would be broken off from the house of Israel and would play an important role in the Lord's latter-day work (v. 5). By reproducing Lehi's full blessing in his record, Nephi demonstrates his own deep affinity for Joseph. His intent is to show that Joseph made unsurpassed prophecies and received remarkable promises from the Lord, and that the Nephites figured in both (2 Ne. 3:23–24, 4:2), all of which reinforces the prophetic necessity of the Nephite exodus from Jerusalem.

The points made in Lehi's blessing are brought home with climactic emphasis in Nephi's final reference to Joseph. The passage in question draws some of its power from its location amidst the dynamic, concluding chapters of Nephi's record. Furthermore, having already dwelt on Nephi's painfully intense commitment to keep a meaningful record, we can appreciate deeply his triumphant declaration:

Wherefore, for this cause hath the Lord God promised unto me that these things which I write shall be kept and preserved, and handed down unto my seed, from generation to generation, that the promise may be fulfilled unto Joseph, that his seed should never perish as long as the earth should stand. (2 Ne. 25:21)

This passage is a classic archetypal statement. Nephi clearly believes that his entire life's work fits into a line of purposeful action which extends back to a great hero of old, Joseph, and forward to the end of the world. Nephi sees the enduring contribution of his life, his writings, as intimately connected with Joseph since in the end they will be preserved because of Joseph's promise from the Lord.⁵ If the transcendent tone of his final chapters is any indication, Nephi obviously reveled in the spiritual assurance that this promise gave him.

In summary, one can discern readily that Nephi consistently sought to associate his life and work with ancient prophecies and prophetic precedents. In concert with the "records theme," this pattern can only compound the effect of unity and coherence embodied in the outline of 1 and 2 Nephi identified earlier.

CONCLUSION

By proposing a holistic view of 1 and 2 Nephi, this study has argued that we underestimate Nephi's work if we take it only at face value, that is merely as a collection of instructive but unrelated

incidents, doctrines, and prophecies. Delving into the integrative patterns in Nephi's writing, we obtain a deeper conviction of his authorship of these books and a greater appreciation of his inspiration and intensity as a prophetic writer.

This is not, however, to say that a reader must perceive the underlying elements of unity described here in order to understand Nephi's main messages. Indeed, Nephi's repeated emphasis on plainness and simplicity in writing would seem to preclude his use of complex or intricate methods in order to convey his main points: "for behold, my soul delighteth in plainness unto my people, that they may learn" (2 Ne. 25:4). Nevertheless, even though awareness of the unity and internal consistency of 1 and 2 Nephi is not a prerequisite to obtaining a testimony of the Book of Mormon, it is essential to perfecting a testimony of Nephi's authorship of the portion ascribed to him.

It is hoped that the study presented here has demonstrated some of the merit in a holistic approach to the study of scriptural texts. The wide application of this approach seems to face something of an uphill battle. The emphasis of almost all LDS scriptural commentaries, study guides, and lesson plans, as well as reference tools such as the "Topical Guide" inserted in the recent LDS edition of the Bible, is to focus on short passages, phrases, or even single words of scripture. Rarely is the reader guided toward contemplation of thematic developments in or the organizational structure of a given chapter, section, or book of inspired writing. Thus, while these study helps play a necessary and valuable role, extra effort is required (to paraphrase an earlier quotation) to grasp a view of the separate stones of inspired writing as parts of a broader, more eloquent, and more convincing structure. Nevertheless, any number of horizons in the Book of Mormon and Doctrine and Covenants can afford such a view and promise to justify the required labor.

NOTES

¹Hyrum M. Smith and Janne M. Sjodahl, *Doctrine and Covenants Commentary*, rev. ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1951), 429.

²Not by coincidence, Nephi's writings are also the focus of Noel B. Reynolds's contribution to broad-gauged scriptural analysis. He analyzes 1 Nephi chapters 2–18 using chiasmus to see whether Nephi had an outline which guided his writing in these chapters. See Noel B. Reynolds, "Nephi's Outline," in *Book of Mormon Authorship: New Light on Ancient Origins*, ed. Noel B. Reynolds (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1982), 53–74.

³Compare the chronological footnotes to 1 Ne. 18:23 and 2 Ne. 5:34. It should also be noted that the vast majority of historical data given in this subsection is concentrated in a few verses in 2 Ne. 4–5.

⁴*Journal of Discourses* 7:333.

⁵It is significant that Moroni, writing some nine hundred years after Nephi, also invokes the archetypal figure of Joseph: "For as Joseph brought his father down into the land of Egypt, even so he died there; wherefore, the Lord brought a remnant of the seed of Joseph out of the land of Jerusalem, that he might be merciful unto the seed of Joseph that they should perish not, even as he was merciful unto the father of Joseph that he should perish not" (Ether 13:7).

Isis Egypt-Bound

Now on her third quarter's
sullen plunge through cloud, the moon
(lugubriously
bellied hoy) will soon slim to
death's horned boat, a nail-paring.

—Arthur Henry King
February 1983

The Throne-Theophany and Prophetic Commission in 1 Nephi: A Form-Critical Analysis

Blake Thomas Ostler

The first chapter of the Book of Mormon, in the words of Hugh Nibley, “has the authenticity of a truly ancient pseudepigraphic writing stamped all over it. It is a well-nigh perfect example of the genre.”¹ Indeed, the first chapter of 1 Nephi conforms precisely to a literary pattern that form-critical studies have demonstrated to be the very essence of the prophetic commission in ancient Israel which “gives the individual’s credentials as a prophet, messenger and ambassador of the heavenly council.”² The pattern that emerges in the pseudepigrapha is that of a righteous individual who, concerned for the wickedness of his people, prays and weeps on their behalf until physically overcome by the spirit of revelation and who, carried away in a vision, sees God enthroned amidst the heavenly council. He also receives a heavenly book which explains the secrets of the universe and the impending disaster of his people. The vision is completed with a call or commission extended from the heavenly council to warn his people of their impending destruction if they will not repent; however, he is also forewarned that his people will reject him. Ultimately, such an apocalyptic pattern derives from the visionary experiences of the prophets Micaiah (1 Kgs. 22:19–22), Isaiah (Isa. 6), and Ezekiel (Ezek. 1:1–3:21), who had visions of God on his throne preceding their prophetic calls.

After defining the literary pattern of the prophetic commission and its historical development, this article will examine the throne-theophany in 1 Nephi and compare the prophetic commission pattern found therein with numerous Old Testament and pseudepigraphic sources. The account found in 1 Nephi will then be compared with nineteenth-century visions of God. Finally, this article will consider the probable origins of the pattern and indicate the significance of the form in the Book of Mormon.

Blake T. Ostler is an attorney in private practice. He wishes to thank John W. Welch and Robert F. Smith for comments on an earlier version of this paper distributed by the Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies. He would also like to thank Don Norton for editing suggestions.

ORIGIN AND HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

There are essentially three distinct types of ascension motifs. The first type is the ecstatic ascension through the heavens such as that experienced by the Apostle Paul (2 Cor. 12:2–4); the second type is the ritual ascension which involved kings at the New Year rites; the third is the initial calling of the prophet preceded by a theophany, such as a vision of God on his throne.³ While this article will be concerned primarily with the latter type, at times the other two types of ascension motifs overlap the prophetic call. For instance, Isaiah's call may represent both Isaiah's personal experience of a vision of God and a ritual enactment of the coronation of Yahweh.⁴ There are also two distinct types of prophetic commission patterns. The narrative type of call, such as that of Moses, Gideon, or Jeremiah, involves a "dialogue" with Yahweh in which the prophet voices his reluctance to be called as a prophet but is finally reassured by divine injunction. The other type is classically represented by the calls of Isaiah and Ezekiel, where the seer experiences a theophany before his commission as a prophet.⁵ Again, this article will be concerned primarily with the latter form.

In his study of the office and calling of the prophet, Klaus Baltzer remarks, "If we can expect to find information about the essence and function of the prophetic office anywhere, it is in the stories of the prophets' call and commission."⁶ Such theophany-commission experiences are structured according to a literary pattern, which scholars have termed a *Gattung* (literary form) or a literary form within a *Traditionsgeschichte* (historical development of a literary or oral tradition), to emphasize their formal nature, and manifest what Baltzer calls a "programmatic character."⁷ Such theophanic experiences were placed anciently "at the beginning of the traditions of the works and words of the prophet" as a means of providing "vindication and legitimization of the prophet in his office."⁸ Gerhard Von Rad states that the prophetic call

in fact gave rise to a new literary category, the account of the call. . . . The event of which the prophet tells burdened him with a commission, with knowledge and responsibility which place him in a complete isolation before God. It forced him to justify his exceptional status in the eyes of the majority. This makes clear that the writing down of a call was something secondary to the call itself and that it served a different end from the latter. The call commissioned the prophet: the act of writing down an account of it was aimed at those sections of the public in whose eyes he had to justify himself. No doubt these accounts are of great importance because of the insight they give us into the experience which made a man a prophet. . . . At the same time, however, exegesis has always to remember that these narratives are probably not simply transcripts of what was experienced at the time. They are as well accounts designed to serve certain definite ends and they no doubt to a certain extent stylized the call.⁹

The literary pattern of the prophetic call found in Ezekiel—"the apocalyptic vision of God (in human form) seated on his throne preceding the call of prophet"—has been traced by Walther Zimmerli along a line of developing tradition in the Old Testament from Isaiah 6 back to 1 Kings 22:19ff.¹⁰ Thus, Isaiah expressed his throne-vision in a literary pattern first elucidated in the oldest Old Testament model, which dates to the ninth century B.C., found in the vision of Micaiah:

1 Kings 22:19–22

I saw the Lord sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him. . . . And the Lord said, Who shall persuade Ahab? . . . And there came forth a spirit, and stood before the Lord, and said, . . . I will go forth [all biblical quotes are from the King James Version unless otherwise noted].

Isaiah 6:1–2, 8

I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and . . . above it stood the seraphims. . . . Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me.

The similarity between the two accounts justifies scholars in speaking of a literary pattern or form of the throne-vision followed by a prophetic call. Just as Isaiah expresses his vision in the literary form of the prophetic vision and commission of Micaiah, so Ezekiel elaborates "the same theophanic pattern of prophetic call in the sixth century . . . with a wealth of apocalyptic detail which one can only describe as baroque," says Matthew Black, "and with an anthropomorphic type of theophany which has been responsible for an entire mystical tradition of Judaism."¹¹ Von Rad adds, "Among the reception of visions more elaborately described in the Old Testament, those of Micaiah ben Imlah (I Kgs. 22:19ff.), Isaiah (Isa. 6), and Ezekiel (Ezek. 1–3) fall into the same class, for they follow what was obviously a given basic concept, that of solemn commissioning by Yahweh as he sat enthroned in the midst of his heavenly entourage. Each of the three, however, adapts the 'schema' in its own particular way."¹² Jeremiah also couches his prophetic call in a formal pattern or call narrative in the early sixth century, but it is expressed in the "dialogue and reassurance" form established in the call of Moses (Jer. 1:1–9; compare Ex. 3:4–12). The formal elements of the prophetic call form in Hebrew literature include:

1. *Historical Introduction*: There is a brief introductory remark providing circumstantial details such as time, place, and historical setting.
2. *Divine Confrontation*: Either deity or an angel appears in glory to the individual.
3. *Reaction*: The individual reacts to the presence of the deity or his angel by way of an action expressive of fear, unworthiness, or having been overpowered.

4. *Throne-Theophany*: In the commissions of Isaiah and Ezekiel, the individual sees the council of God and God seated upon his throne. This element distinguishes the throne-theophany commission from the primarily auditory commissions.
5. *Commission*: The individual recipient is commanded to perform a given task and assume the role of prophet to the people.
6. *Protest*: The prophet responds to the commission by claiming that he is unable or unworthy to accomplish the task. This element is usually absent when the *reaction* element is present, as in the call of Ezekiel.
7. *Reassurance*: The deity reassures the prophet that he will be protected and able to carry out the *commission*. The deity may also reassure the prophet by giving him a sign indicative of divine power and protection.
8. *Conclusion*: The commission form usually concludes in a formal way, most often with a statement that the prophet has begun to carry out his commission.¹³

The theophany and commission form was eventually absorbed into the genre "apocalypse," which may be defined as a "genre of revelatory literature with a narrative framework, in which a revelation is mediated by an otherworldly being to a human recipient, disclosing a transcendent reality which is both temporal, insofar as it envisages eschatological salvation, and spatial, insofar as it involves another supernatural world."¹⁴ It must be emphasized that a literary genre is more inclusive than a literary form because, in this case, it could include not only the prophet's initial vision followed by a commission but also any vision thereafter which conforms to the genre. The genre apocalypse developed in classic Hebrew works such as Isaiah 49–66 but flourished especially during the intertestamental period in such works as the Merkaba (the divine throne-chariot motif) found among the Dead Sea Scrolls and in pseudepigraphic works such as 1 Enoch, 2 Enoch, the Testament of Levi, 4 Ezra, 3 Baruch, the Ascension of Isaiah, and the Apocalypse of Abraham, among others. The theophany-prophetic commission pattern is readily discernible in pseudepigraphic literature, such as the Ethiopic Enoch, when compared with Ezekiel's throne-chariot vision:

Ezekiel 1:26–28

Above the vault over their heads there appeared . . . a throne, . . . and upon the throne, a form in human likeness (*Kemar adam*). . . . When I saw this I . . . heard a voice speaking to me: Man, he said, stand up, and let me talk with you. (New English Bible)

1 Enoch 14:18–24

And I observed and saw . . . a lofty throne—its appearance was like crystal . . . and from beneath the throne were issuing streams of flaming fire. . . . And the Great Glory was sitting upon it. . . . And the Lord called me . . . and said to me, "Come near to me, Enoch, and to my holy Word."¹⁵

In the genre apocalypse, the prophetic commission pattern is fleshed out with other elements that became essential to the ascension experience: the visionary petitions Deity on behalf of his people; is overcome by the spirit of revelation; is caught up into heaven; is shown a vision of the throne-chariot; is given a commission to warn others of the impending judgment; and finally is given a tour of the world's history and the heavens. For example, in 1 Enoch (the sections quoted here are the earliest in the Enoch literature, dated to the late third century B.C. by Scholem).¹⁶ Enoch petitions the Lord for his people (14:7) and is lifted up into the heavens by the winds (14:8); he is then overcome with trembling and falls on his face (14:14); he then sees a lofty throne whereon God is seated (14:18–22) and receives a commission to preach to the Watchers (14:24–16:3) before he receives revelation in the form of vision and audition concerning the heavens, Sheol, and history of the earth (chaps. 17–36).

Similarly, in the Testament of Levi (about 180 B.C.), Levi, grieving over the wickedness of the sons of men, prays to God on their behalf (2:4), is overcome with the Spirit and falls to sleep (2:5), and then ascends into the heavens with the *angelus interpres* (2:7). As he ascends through the heavens, their contents are revealed to him by the angel (2:8–3:10). In the highest heaven, Levi beholds God on his throne of glory (5:1) and is then given the priesthood and commissioned to teach his sons of the vision (5:2; compare 8:2–9; 14:7–8; 16:1; chaps. 17–18) and the contents of the heavenly tablets (5:4).

Likewise, in the Slavonic Enoch (after 70 A.D.), Enoch sleeps on his bed while he weeps (1:3) and is then visited by two majestic angels who take him into heaven on the wings of the Spirit (1:4–8; 3:1) where Enoch is endowed and sees all the contents of the heavens and the history of the earth (3:2–19:6). Enoch then beholds the throne of God and glory of his presence (chaps. 20–22). Enoch is commissioned to write the history of the earth and secrets of the heavens on the heavenly books (22:11). Finally, Enoch is commissioned to instruct his sons (36:1).

In the Apocalypse of Abraham (a Hebrew work dating after 70 A.D.), Abraham encounters the mighty angel Iaoel, who appears in brilliant glory. When Abraham hears Iaoel's voice, he falls to the ground as one dead. Iaoel strengthens Abraham and lifts him to his feet (10:1–5). As Abraham offers a sacrifice and ritual prayers, Iaoel appears, casts Satan out, and Abraham and Iaoel ascend into the heavens on the wings of the sacrificial dove (13:1–14). As they ascend, Iaoel explains the vision of Abraham (15:2–17:4). In the highest heaven Abraham sees the throne-chariot and the glory of God (18:1–14), the secrets of the universe (19:1–20:7), the heavenly council and chosen spirits before their birth (21:1–22:5), the history of the world beginning with Adam and Eve in the garden (23:1–14), a vision of judgment and

salvation (24:1–31:8) and the mission of Christ (29:3–9). Abraham is then commissioned to preach the contents of his vision to his posterity (32:1–6).

Finally, in the *Ascension of Isaiah* (about 150 A.D.), Isaiah is overcome by the Holy Spirit as he lies upon a couch and becomes as one dead (6:10); he is then “taken up” in a vision of the heavens (6:14) by “a glorious angel” (7:2–3). Isaiah beholds a throne with angels on the right and on the left (7:14–15; compare 11:32–33). He is then lifted through the seven heavens by the angel who interprets their contents to him (7:17–8:28). Isaiah’s angel-guide gives him a book wherein is written “the deeds of the children of Israel” (9:22). In the highest heaven, Isaiah beholds Christ, who descends through the seven heavens to the earth where he is born of the virgin Mary, put to death, descends to the realm of Sheol, and sends out his Twelve Apostles before ascending again through the heavens to be seated on the right hand of God while the Holy Spirit is seated on the left (9:7–11:33). Isaiah is then commanded to return to his garment of flesh (11:35) where he tells all present of his vision (11:36–37).

The genre apocalypse influenced early Christianity, where it is fragmentarily found in the call of Paul (Acts 9:3ff.; 22:6ff.; 26:12ff.; compare Matt. 24–25, 28) and in the *Apocalypse*. The genre also found its way into other early Christian works in, among others, the *Odes of Solomon*¹⁷ (Ode 36) and the *Ascension of Isaiah*. The genre, as distinct from the prophetic commission pattern, may also be detected in numerous classical, rabbinic, Gnostic, and Jewish sources (see app. 2).

THE ASCENSION OF LEHI

The experience of Lehi reported in 1 Nephi 1 compares very favorably with the genre apocalypse in general (see app. 1), and with the literary pattern and the developing history of the call form found in pseudepigraphic and Old Testament works in particular, as the following chart demonstrates.

	Isaiah 6	Jeremiah	Ezekiel	Lehi
1. Historical Introduction:	6:1a	1:1–3	1:1–3	1:4
2. Divine Confrontation:	6:1b–4	1:4	1:4–26a	1:6
3. Reaction:	6:5		1:28b	1:7
4. Throne-Theophany:	6:2–4		1:20–26a	1:8
5. Commission:	6:1b, 13b	1:5–7	2:3–5	2:1
6. Protest:	6:11a	1:6		
7. Reassurance:	6:6–7	1:8–9	2:1–2	1:10–12
8. Conclusion:	6:11b–13b	1:10	3:11–14	1:20, 2:1

Lehi, concerned about the wickedness and impending disaster of Israel, "prayed to the Lord . . . in behalf of his people" (1:5), and "as he prayed" a "pillar of fire" came and dwelt "on a rock before him," causing him to "quake exceedingly" (1:6). Completely overcome by the Spirit, Lehi cast himself on his bed (1:7) until he was "carried away in a vision" (1:8). Lehi was then lifted into heaven where he thought he saw "God sitting upon his throne, surrounded with numberless concourses of angels" (1:8).

Lehi then saw one descending from the heavenly council who "gave him a book, and bade him that he should read" (1:9-11). The book contained the deeds of the children of Israel (1:13) and told "of the coming of a Messiah, and also the redemption of the world" (1:19). Lehi's "soul did rejoice, and his whole heart was filled" as he praised God while reflecting on his vision of the throne and songs of the angelic hosts (1:14-5). Lehi was then evidently commissioned to warn his people, but they rejected him and sought his life (1:19-20). Nevertheless, God had promised protection and deliverance from those who sought his life (1:20).

The account of Lehi's throne-theophany and prophetic commission is very closely related to Ezekiel's account in the *Formgeschichte* or historical development of the literary pattern, but because Lehi's account also exhibits elements of the pattern unique to pseudepigraphic works it must be considered as part of the line of development inherited from the Hebrew theophany-commission pattern quite independent of Ezekiel's inaugural vision. Both 1 Nephi and Ezekiel manifest a number of similar formal elements. Among these are: (1) a historical introduction (1 Ne. 1:4; Ezek. 1:1-3); (2) a divine confrontation (1 Ne. 1:6; Ezek. 1:4); (3) a throne-theophany (1 Ne. 1:8; Ezek. 1:26-28); (4) a heavenly book (1 Ne. 1:11-12; Ezek. 2:8-10); (5) a *Qedussa* or angelic songs of praise (1 Ne. 1:14; Ezek. 3:12); (6) a commission of the prophet (1 Ne. 1:18, 2:1; Ezek. 2:2-3); (7) a rejection by his people (1 Ne. 1:19-20; Ezek. 3:8-9); and (8) reassurance and a promise of deliverance (1 Ne. 1:20; Ezek. 3:8-9).

Those elements which are unique to the pseudepigrapha and 1 Nephi include: (1) an intercessory prayer (1 Ne. 1:5); (2) revelation received on the prophet's bed or couch (1 Ne. 1:7); (3) an ascension into heaven (1 Ne. 1:8); (4) a vision of one descending from the heavenly council followed by twelve others (1 Ne. 1:11-13); and (5) a prophecy of the coming Messiah and redemption of the world (1 Ne. 1:19). Perhaps a microanalysis of each element in the pattern will clarify the significance of each in the overall narrative structure.

Historical Introduction

1 Nephi 1:4, 6

For it came to pass in the commencement of the first year of the reign of Zedekiah, king of Judah, (my father, Lehi, having dwelt at Jerusalem in all his days); and in that same year there came many prophets, prophesying unto the people that they must repent, or the great city Jerusalem must be destroyed. . . . And it came to pass as he prayed unto the Lord, there came a pillar of fire and dwelt upon a rock before him.

Ezekiel 1:1–3

Now it came to pass in the thirtieth year, in the fourth month . . . that the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God. In the fifth day of the month, which was the fifth year of king Jehoiachin's captivity, The word of the Lord came expressly unto Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the river Chebar; and the hand of the Lord was there upon him.

The historical introduction fills the double function of establishing the time and place setting and giving certain biographical information about the prophet.¹⁸ Such historical notes were added at the beginning of the words of numerous Old Testament prophets.¹⁹ Ezekiel's historical prologue gives the date in the first person, a reference to the locality, and the beginning of an autobiographical note in verse 1. Verse 2 gives a simple date reference and the reign of the king. Verse 3 mentions the receiving of the divine word, gives the name and vocation of the prophet, his father's name, and the name and place of his work.²⁰ Nephi's redaction of Lehi's account gives a simple time reference and mentions the reign of the king, the activities of Lehi (Nephi's father), the places of those activities, and the receiving of the divine word in the third person.

Isaiah's call begins: "In the year that King Uzziah died I saw also the Lord" (6:1). What N. Habel said of Isaiah's historical prologue is equally true of Lehi's: "Despite the overwhelming glory of the sacred locale [the temple], the historical moment is just as important to the prophet's proclamation. The year was a year of transition, crisis and import; it was the year of the king's death."²¹ The historical prologue underscores the significance of the experience's historical orientation. According to Zimmerli, "[In] the dating there is expressed unmistakably the conviction that the word of Yahweh, which was given the prophet and communicated by him, was not a timeless truth, but represented a message of God for a particular occasion."²² For example, according to the Slavonic Enoch, Enoch's ascension purportedly took place at the first of the year: "In the first month, on the assigned day of the first month, . . . two [angels] appeared to me" (2 Enoch 1:2–4 [see note d of v. 2]). Ezra prefaced his theodicy with, "In the thirtieth year after the destruction of our city [Jerusalem], . . . I began to speak anxious words to the Most High. . . . Then the angel that had been sent to me . . . answered" (4 Ezra 3:1ff.).

The Intercessory Prayer

1 Nephi 1:4-5

For it came to pass in the commencement of the first year of the reign of Zedekiah, king of Judah . . . there came many prophets, prophesying unto the people that they must repent, or the great city Jerusalem must be destroyed. Wherefore it came to pass that my father, Lehi, as he went forth prayed unto the Lord, yea, even with all his heart, in behalf of his people.

4 Ezra 3:1-3

In the thirtieth year after the destruction of our city, I . . . was in Babylon. I was troubled as I lay on my bed, and my thoughts welled up in my heart, because I saw the desolation of Zion and the wealth of those who lived in Babylon. My spirit was greatly agitated, and I began to speak anxious words to the Most High.

The intercessory prayer motif is absent from all of the biblical accounts of the call form (though intercessory prayers are found elsewhere in the Old Testament outside the context of the prophetic call). The prayer is also a well-established motif in the pseudepigraphic accounts.²³ In these accounts, the prophet's prayer is always motivated by concern for his people. While Lehi is distraught over the wickedness and impending disaster about to befall Jerusalem, the pseudepigraphic authors look back to the fall of Jerusalem and mourn Israel's failure to heed the Lord's warnings. God responds to the prayer by sending an otherworldly mediator and by showing the visionary the history of the world and eventual eschatological redemption of Israel, granting solace in the face of disaster. Compare the Greek Baruch and the Testament of Levi with Lehi's prayer:

3 Baruch 1:1-3

Woe, now I Baruch (was) weeping in my mind and considering the people and how King Nebuchadnezzar was permitted by God to plunder his city, saying: "Lord, why have you set fire to your vineyard and laid it waste?" . . . And behold, while I was weeping and saying such things, I saw an angel of the Lord.

Test. of Levi 2:3-4, 6

As I was tending the flocks . . . a spirit of understanding from the Lord came upon me, and I observed all human beings making their way in life deceitfully. Sin was erecting walls and injustice was ensconced in towers. I kept grieving over the race of the sons of men, and I prayed to the Lord that I might be delivered. . . . And . . . the heavens were opened, and an angel of the Lord spoke to me: 'Levi, Levi, enter!'

1 Nephi 1:4-6

There came many prophets, prophesying unto the people that they must repent, or the great city Jerusalem must be destroyed. Wherefore it came to pass that my father, Lehi, as he went forth prayed unto the Lord, yea, even with all his heart in behalf of his people. And it came to pass as he prayed unto the Lord, there came a pillar of fire and dwelt upon a rock before him; and he saw and heard much.

The Divine Confrontation

1 Nephi 1:6-7

There came a pillar of fire and dwelt upon a rock before him; and he saw and heard much; and because of the things which he saw and heard he did quake and tremble exceedingly. And it came to pass that he returned to his own house at Jerusalem; and cast himself upon his bed, being overcome with the Spirit and the things which he had seen.

Ezekiel 1:4

And as I looked, behold, a storm wind came from the north, a great cloud of flashing fire [with brightness around it] and out of its midst [it shone] as it were the appearance of electrum [from the midst of the fire]. (Zimmerli translation)

The pillar of fire appearing upon the rock in Lehi's account is reminiscent of the description of the *Shekinah* (divine glory) of Yahweh going before Israel in the exodus and his words to Moses: "Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb" (Ex. 17:6). All of the pseudepigraphic sources note the fiery glory of the mediating angel who has come to initiate the prophet into the heavenly realm.²⁴ It should also be noted that Lehi saw the pillar of fire "as he went forth," but was carried away in a vision only after he had returned to his house in Jerusalem and lay upon his bed. Though the initial experience is temporally distinct from the experience of the ascension, they are presented as a literary unity. Hence, the concern with presenting Lehi's experience in a unified literary pattern is evident.

Reaction

1 Nephi 1:6-7

[And] because of the things which he saw and heard he did quake and tremble exceedingly. . . . And he cast himself upon his bed, being overcome with the Spirit.

Ezekiel 1:28

And when I saw it, I fell upon my face, and I heard a voice of one that spake.

The effect of the divine encounter on the prophet is one of fright, sleepiness, and loss of consciousness of the earthly realm simultaneously.²⁵ For instance, Isaiah was overcome by the glory of his heavenly vision: "Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone" (Isa. 6:5). As a result of his encounter with the fiery throne-chariot, Ezekiel fell upon his face (Ezek. 1:28), much as Enoch in the Ethiopic Enoch, who beheld lightning and fiery cherubim speaking with fiery tongues: "And as I shook and trembled, I fell upon my face and saw a vision" (1 Enoch 14:14). A vivid account of the effects of the divine encounter is found in the Apocalypse of Abraham where, as a result of Abraham's vision of the glorious angel Iaoel, Abraham said: "And behold there

was no breath of man. And my spirit was amazed, and my soul fled from me. And I became like a stone, and fell face down upon the earth, for there was no longer strength in me to stand up on the earth" (Apocalypse of Abraham 10:2). Certainly, the pillar of fire had a similar effect on Lehi, who, overcome by the spirit, "did quake and tremble exceedingly" insomuch that he "cast himself upon his bed" (1 Ne. 1:6-7).

One motif that is mentioned in pseudepigraphic accounts and in 1 Nephi 1, but absent from biblical calls, is the emphasis on the bed or couch on which the prophet casts himself to see the vision.²⁶ For instance, in the Ascension of Isaiah, Isaiah is overcome by the spirit of prophecy and ascends into heaven as he lies upon a couch in the palace. Ezra reports that his vision occurred "as I lay on my bed" (4 Ezra 3:1), while Enoch reports his vision came as "I was in my house alone. And I lay on my bed, sleeping" (2 Enoch 1:2). The bed or couch was necessary because the prophet entered into a trance state wherein physical strength and consciousness were lost while a consciousness of the heavenly realm opened to his gaze. As D. S. Russell points out:

The vision is said to come before sleep (Dan. 10:9) or during sleep (2 Baruch 54:1) or after sleep (2 Enoch 1:6). . . . The coming of the vision puts him into a trance-like state as when he lies on the ground as one dead, his understanding being confused (2 Esdras 10:30; Dan. 10:9ff.). So overwhelming is his experience that he might even . . . lose consciousness. . . . The very nature of these experiences suggest that they are more than literary convention; their very nature argues strongly that they reflect the actual experiences of the apocalyptic writers themselves.²⁷

The Ascension

1 Nephi 1:8

And being thus overcome with the Spirit, he was carried away in a vision, even that he saw the heavens open.

1 Enoch 14:8; 71:1

In the vision the winds were causing me to fly and rushing me high up into heaven. . . . (Thus) it happened after this that my spirit passed out of sight and ascended into the heavens. And I saw the sons of the holy angels.

The ascension of the prophet is absent in the biblical call accounts but may be represented fragmentarily by the Spirit's setting Ezekiel on his feet after he falls to the earth (Ezek. 2:1). The ascent through the heavens is accomplished by the power of the Spirit, symbolized in many pseudepigraphic accounts by the wings of the otherworldly mediator. For example, Enoch was borne on the wings of two angels who carried him through the several heavens (2 Enoch 3:1);²⁸ Levi

entered the several heavens through the gates that were open (Testament of Levi 5:1); Baruch went up as though borne on wings (3 Baruch 2:2); Abraham ascended on the wings of a sacrificial dove (Apocalypse of Abraham 15:2–4); and Isaiah was taken up by an angel (Ascension of Isaiah 7:3).²⁹ The phrase used by Lehi, “and the heavens opened,” is not found in the Old Testament except for the historical introduction of Ezekiel’s call (1 Ne. 1:8; Ezek. 1:1).

The Throne-Theophany

1 Nephi 1:8

He saw the heavens open, and he thought he saw God sitting upon his throne, surrounded with numberless concourses of angels in the attitude of singing and praising their God.

Ezekiel 1:1, 26, 28

The heavens were opened, and I saw the visions of God. . . . And above the firmament that was over [the seraphim’s] heads was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone: and upon the . . . throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man. . . . This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord.

The presentation of the prophet before the heavenly council was a momentous experience. Such a scene has an extensive ancient Near Eastern background.³⁰ The vision of God on his throne was more than literary convention, however, for there is every indication that the Hebrew prophets who related their experience of this council felt it was as much a reality as the existence of Yahweh himself.³¹ According to D. S. Russell, “In passages like 1 Kings 22:19ff., Job 1:6ff., and Isaiah 6:6ff. God is described as presiding over a council whose members are there to carry out his will. . . . This council is attended, however, not only by Gods and angels but also by men, for it is the privilege of the truly inspired prophet to stand in its midst and hear the word of Yahweh.”³² The vision of God’s throne in his heavenly temple had a great influence on pseudepigraphic literature.³³ For example, in the Testament of Levi, Levi reports, “At this moment the angel opened for me the gates of heaven and I saw the Holy Most High sitting on the throne” (Testament of Levi 5:1–2). The Apocalypse of Abraham, undoubtedly influenced by Ezekiel, conjoins the images of the throne and the chariot: “I saw . . . a chariot with fiery wheels. Each wheel was full of eyes round about. And above the wheels was the throne which I had seen” (Apocalypse of Abraham 18:12–13). Enoch beheld a scene very similar to that of Lehi and Alma; he saw “cherubim and seraphim standing all around his throne . . . singing with gentle voice in front of the face of the Lord (2 Enoch 21:1).

The Descensus

1 Nephi 1:9–10

And it came to pass that he saw One descending out of the midst of heaven, and he beheld that his luster was above that of the sun at noon-day. And he also saw twelve others following him, and their brightness did exceed that of the stars in the firmament.

Ascension of Isaiah 10:7; 11:22

And I heard the voice of the Most High, the Father of my Lord, as he said to my Lord Christ, . . . “Go out and descend through all the heavens. You shall descend through the firmament and through that world . . . And the angel who led me said to me: “Understand, Isaiah.” And I saw when he sent out the twelve disciples.

The Hebrew symbols employed make clear that the *descensus* is a continuation of the vision of the heavenly council. Yahweh is typically envisioned in the Old Testament as enthroned amidst the worshiping host of heaven—the sun, moon, and stars. As Frank Cross demonstrated, “the heavenly bodies, given ‘personality’ in protological fashion, were conceived as part of the worshiping host of beings about the throne of Yahweh.” He pointed out that *kokebe boker* ‘the morning stars’ in Job 38:7 may be considered in parallel with *bene elohim* ‘the sons of God’ (compare Isa. 14:12; Ps. 148:2–3), and the terms *saba*’ or *sebot* apply equally to heavenly bodies and the angelic host.³⁴ Thus, the sun and stars which Lehi beheld in vision proceeded from the heavenly council and probably foreshadowed Christ and the Twelve Apostles as in the Ascension of Isaiah, or possibly the chosen one and the twelve tribes of Israel as in Joseph’s dream (Gen. 37:9). Such a symbolic vision of the coming Messiah can be found in the Testament of Judah: “And after this there shall arise for you a Star from Jacob in peace: And a man shall arise from my posterity like the Sun of righteousness” (Testament of Judah 24:1).³⁵ Although the *descensus* motif is not essential to the *Gattung* of the call narrative, nevertheless, the motif, as it appears in 1 Nephi 1, is a logical extension of the throne-theophany and evidence of the Hebrew influence on Lehi’s account.

The Heavenly Book

1 Nephi 1:11–13

And the first came and stood before my father, and gave unto him a book, and bade him that he should read. And . . . as he read, he was filled with the Spirit of the Lord. And he read, saying: Wo, wo, unto Jerusalem, for I have seen thine abominations! Yea, and many things did my father read concerning Jerusalem.

Ezekiel 2:9–10

And when I looked, behold, an hand was sent unto me; and, lo, a roll of a book was therein; And he spread it before me; and it was written within and without: and there was written therein lamentations, and mourning, and woe.

The book given to the prophet by the messenger from the heavenly council is another motif of the call *Gattung* that derives from ancient Near Eastern origins, a motif that enjoyed widespread popularity.³⁶ Georg Widengren, who wrote probably the most extensive study to date of the heavenly book, states, "Few religious ideas in the Ancient Near East have played a more important role than the notion of heavenly tablets, or the heavenly book. . . . One of the most significant features in history . . . [is] the oft recurring thought that the heavenly book is handed over at the ascension in an interview with a heavenly being, or the gods or heavenly beings."³⁷ The idea of the heavenly book was pivotal in Israel where Moses received the Law on heavenly tablets from God on Sinai. It may have become associated with the commission narrative because of the role of fixing the fates on the divine tables at the Babylonian Akitu festival; but for whatever reason, the motif became very prominent in the apocalyptic and pseudepigraphic literature.³⁸ For example, in the Ethiopic Enoch, Enoch "looked at the tablet(s) of heaven, read all the writing (on them), and came to understand everything. I read that book and all the deeds of humanity and all the children of the flesh upon the earth for all the generations of the world" (1 Enoch 81:2). In the Ascension of Isaiah, Isaiah says, "One of the angels . . . showed me (some) books, but not like the books of this world; and he opened them, and the books had writing in them. . . . And they were given to me, and I read them, and behold the deeds of the children of Israel were written there" (9:21–22). The motif in 1 Nephi matches the ancient Hebrew call pattern exactly—a book delivered from the heavenly council which tells of the deeds of the children of Israel and their impending doom.

The Qedussa

1 Nephi 1:14

When my father had read and seen many great and marvelous things, he did exclaim many things unto the Lord; such as: Great and marvelous are thy works, O Lord God Almighty! Thy throne is high in the heavens, and thy power, and goodness, and mercy are over all the inhabitants of the earth; and, because thou art merciful, thou wilt not suffer those who come unto thee that they shall perish!

1 Enoch 39:6, 10, 12

And in those days my eyes saw the Elect One of righteousness. . . . And I gazed . . . and I blessed and praised, saying, "Blessed is he, and may he be blessed, from the beginning and forever more." . . . Those who do not slumber but stand before your glory . . . shall bless, praise, and extol (you), saying, 'Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord of the Spirits; the spirits fill the earth.' "

The *Qedussa*,³⁹ or angelic songs of the heavenly council praising Yahweh as thrice holy, is prominent in the calls of Isaiah (Isa. 6:3) and

Ezekiel (Ezek. 3:12), for they join the council as the emissaries of Yahweh.⁴⁰ Lehi also joins the heavenly council in songs of praise. Ezekiel states that "the spirit took me up, and I heard behind me a voice of a great rushing, saying, Blessed be the glory of the Lord from his place" (Ezek. 3:12). The seer joining in songs of praise with the heavenly hosts while raised on high is also found in the Apocalypse of Abraham 17:3–21 where the heavenly mediator teaches the angelic songs to Abraham: "Eternal One, Mighty One, Holy El. . . . Sabaoth, most glorious El, El, El, El, Iael. . . . You make the light shine before the morning light upon your creation." In 2 Enoch 21:1 (recension J), Enoch joins the angels who deliver the threefold sanctus: "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord Sabaoth, Heaven and earth are full of his glory." The poet of the odes of Solomon 36 also joins the heavenly choir: "The Spirit of the Lord . . . raised me up to heaven; And caused me to stand on my feet in the Lord's high place, before his perfection and his glory, Where I continued praising (him) by the composition of his odes. . . . I was most praised among the praised." The *Qedussa* is developed in 1 Enoch 39:10–13, a later part of the Book of Enoch known as the "Similitudes" (dating probably from the first century A.D.) in a manner similar to Lehi's praise of the Lord.⁴¹

The Commission

1 Nephi 1:18–19

After the Lord had shown so many marvelous things unto my father, Lehi, . . . behold he went forth among the people, and began to prophesy and to declare unto them concerning the things which he had both seen and heard . . . and also the things which he read in the book.

Ezekiel 2:3; 3:1, 4

And he said unto me, Son of man, I send thee to the children of Israel, . . . Son of man, . . . eat this roll, and go speak unto the house of Israel . . . with my words.

The commission element of Lehi's call has been obscured by Nephi's editorial activities. Nevertheless, the motif is still evident from Lehi's actions following the vision, such as preaching to his people of the contents of the vision and of the book, and from the subsequent revelation given to him commending him for having fulfilled the commission given before that time: "Blessed art thou Lehi, because of the things which thou hast done; and because thou hast been faithful and declared unto this people the things which I commanded thee" (1 Ne. 2:1).

The commission was given only to the prophet who had stood in the heavenly council and heard the words of Yahweh, which the prophet was commanded to deliver to his people as contained in the heavenly

book.⁴² Indeed, the very designation *nabi* (the Hebrew word for “prophet”) meant literally “one who is called” and, according to E. Theodore Mullen, Jr., “implies the background of the [heavenly] council, for the prophet was called to proclaim the will of the deity which issued from the assembly.”⁴³ For example, when summoned by the heavenly council, Isaiah responds, “Here am I; send me” (Isa. 6:8). Then he is commissioned: “Go, and tell this people, Hear” (Isa. 6:9–10). Similarly, Ezekiel’s commission is to “go, get thee unto the house of Israel” and speak the words put into his mouth by Yahweh as represented by the book Ezekiel had ingested (Ezek. 3:1–4). A similar motif is found in 4 Ezra, where Ezra reports, “Then I went as he commanded me, and I gathered all the people together, and said, ‘Hear these words, O Israel.’ . . . And on the next day, behold, a voice called me, saying, ‘Ezra, open your mouth and drink what I give you to drink.’ . . . And I took it and drank; and when I had drunk it, my heart poured forth understanding, and wisdom increased in my breast, for my spirit retained its memory; and my mouth was opened, and was no longer closed” (4 Ezra 14:27–28, 38, 40–41). The commission is found in numerous pseudepigraphic narratives.⁴⁴

The Rejection and Reassurance

1 Nephi 1:19–20

And it came to pass that the Jews did mock him because of the things which he testified of them; for he truly testified of their wickedness and their abominations; . . . And when the Jews heard these things they were angry with him; yea, even as with the prophets of old, whom they had cast out, and stoned, and slain; and they also sought his life, that they might take it away. But behold, I, Nephi, will show unto you that the tender mercies of the Lord are over all those whom he hath chosen, because of their faith, to make them mighty even unto the power of deliverance.

Ezekiel 3:7; 2:6

But the house of Israel will not hearken unto thee; for they will not hearken unto me: for all the house of Israel are impudent and hard-hearted. . . . And thou, son of man, be not afraid of them, neither be afraid of their words, though briers and thorns be with thee.

Notwithstanding the prophet’s commission, he will be rejected by his people. This paradox also meets us in Isaiah’s call: “Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart” (Isa. 6:9–10). In a sense, the preaching of the prophet

is justification for God's destruction of his people, for they have been given a chance and rejected it. Both Ezekiel and Isaiah are reminded of the difficulty and hopelessness of their position, for the people are hardheaded and stubborn of heart. The rejection by the people prompts a protest from Isaiah: "Lord, how long?" (Isa. 6:11). The protest is absent from Ezekiel's and Lehi's call. As Benjamin J. Hubbard notes, however,

the two elements appearing with least frequency are the Protest and the Reaction. However, one or the other of them occurs in seventeen different (biblical) pericopes out of twenty-seven. Only five commissioning accounts have both. It appears that there is a general tendency to have the individual *respond* either to the *presence* of the commissioner (Reaction) or to his commission (Protest).⁴⁵

Since Lehi's account contains a reaction to the presence of the pillar of fire, his account would not be expected to also present a protest to the commission itself. Hence, the absence of a protest in Lehi's account actually conforms to the *Gattung* presented in Hebraic prophetic call forms. Both Ezekiel and Isaiah are fully prepared for the failure of their undertaking despite God's omnipotent help. As Von Rad notes:

The three visions just considered (in other words, Micaiah [1 Kings 22:19ff.], Isaiah [6] and Ezekiel [1-3]) thus end by indicating a completely negative result—in no sense will the prophet's work lead to deliverance; it will only hasten on the inevitable disaster. The ideas which the three men each held about the nature of their calling must have been very much alike: there must have been some kind of common call experience which put a stamp upon their work from the outset. Their devastatingly negative outlook on the future of their work, and the way in which, without any illusions, they faced up to its complete failure, are again a factor which compels us to look for these prophets outside the cult.⁴⁶

Lehi shares this common call experience, for like Ezekiel, he learns from the heavenly book that whatever his efforts those at Jerusalem will reject his message and be destroyed (1 Ne. 1:13). As Walther Zimmerli notes, however, God's promise of protection in the face of threatened death and bitter opposition to the prophet is essential to his call: "[Ezekiel] 2:6-7 adds an admonition to fearlessness, which Jer. 1:8 (17) shows to be an essential part of a call-narrative. . . . The element of encouragement and strengthening, which is also found in a different form in calls of Moses and Gideon, follows naturally upon the oracle of commissioning."⁴⁷ It is Nephi, the redactor of Lehi's call, who reminds us that God "is mighty even unto the power of deliverance" (1 Ne. 1:20) unto all those who receive the commission to declare "unto this people all the things which I commanded thee" (1 Ne. 2:1).

THE NINETEENTH CENTURY
AND 1 NEPHI

The implications of the theophany-commission pattern for the origins of the Book of Mormon must be tested against the Prophet Joseph Smith's nineteenth-century environment because the book available to us is a product of his revelatory experiences. To the extent that 1 Nephi is similar to nineteenth-century visions, its antiquity would have to be demonstrated on other grounds. To the extent that 1 Nephi 1 is unlike nineteenth-century accounts, however, it becomes reasonable to view this text as an expression of antiquity.

Joseph Smith was reared in an era of intense apocalyptic fervor and spiritual experience.⁴⁸ One of the results of this intense fervor was the publication of literally hundreds of conversion experiences and visions of God by Puritan pietists and Quaker disciples.⁴⁹ Hence, one might expect numerous accounts in nineteenth-century literature resembling the theophany-commission pattern in 1 Nephi. In point of fact, however, the sole account in the literature of nineteenth-century America conforming in any significant detail to the ancient literary pattern uncovered by a thorough, though perhaps not an exhaustive, search of such visions is the account in 1 Nephi 1.

Neal Lambert and Richard H. Cracroft demonstrated that early nineteenth-century conversion experiences involving a vision of God were expressed, almost without exception, in a "common pattern" involving "literary, structural and stylistic elements."⁵⁰ Among the most influential of these accounts (not considered by Lambert and Cracroft) were the spiritual diary of Indian missionary David Brainerd, the journals of Anglican evangelist George Whitefield, and the accounts of Henry Alline, a Methodist.⁵¹

These conversion accounts conform to the stages of conversion standardized in the Calvinist theology by learned Puritan theologians: (1) a recognition of one's inherently sinful and depraved nature; (2) a prayer, often in a solitary forest or field, seeking forgiveness of personal sins; (3) a spiritual experience often described as an actual or metaphorical vision of Christ; (4) a forgiveness of sins resulting from Christ's atonement; and (5) an experience of intense love and/or transformation of nature. The accounts of Elder Jacob Knapp (1808) and Elder Benjamin Putnam (1821) are typical of early nineteenth-century visions of God expressed in the ubiquitous pattern:

Elder Knapp

It appeared certain that . . . I should be eternally miserable; justice seemed to demand it, and I could see no possible way of escape. . . . While I was confessing my sins, bemoaning my wretched and undone situation, . . . I instantly had a view of the Lord Jesus Christ with his arms extended in an inviting posture. . . . The great cause of my grief seemed to be gone, and I could think nothing that could sadden my heart. . . . Every object that I beheld seemed to speak forth the praises of Jehovah, indeed there seemed to be an universal change.

Elder Putnam

I felt myself sinking down into despair. I saw clearly the righteousness of God in sending me to the lowest hell. At this moment the earth seemed to open beneath me, and hell appeared to be yawning at my reception. . . . I rose up quickly, turned my eyes toward heaven and I thought I saw Jesus descending with his arms extended for my reception. My soul leaped within me. . . . All nature smiled and everything, animate and inanimate praised God with a voice (though unheard before) too loud and too plain to misunderstand. My soul was wholly absorbed in loving.

It appears that Joseph Smith used the nineteenth-century conversion theology to describe his own experiences, just as the classical Hebrew prophets used literary patterns significant to their culture to express their experiences. Joseph's 1832 account of the First Vision conforms to this pattern precisely, emphasizing a vision of Christ the Lord and referring to the atonement and forgiveness of his sins:

From the age of twelve years to fifteen . . . my mind became exceedingly distressed for I became convicted of my sins. . . . I felt to mourn for my own Sins and for the Sins of the world . . . therefore I cried unto the Lord for mercy . . . and while in the attitude of calling upon the Lord in the 16th year of age a pillar of light above the brightness of the Sun at noon-day came down from above and rested upon me and I was filld with the Spirit of God and the Lord opened the heavens upon me and I saw the Lord and he spake unto me saying Joseph my son thy Sins are forgiven thee . . . my soul was filled with love . . . for many days.⁵²

While Joseph Smith's own vision is expressed in terms conforming to the nineteenth-century vision model, Lehi's vision is not. *None* of the nineteenth-century conversion accounts are prefaced by a literary prologue, refer to a prior divine confrontation, include a vision of the *descensus*, a prophetic commission, *Qedussa*, or a narrative conclusion as found in Lehi's account. Some elements are superficially similar. For example, the prayers in the nineteenth-century accounts are concerned with individual sins; the prayers in 1 Nephi and the pseudepigrapha are concerned with the destruction of Israel in the sixth century B.C. The visions of God in nineteenth-century literature do not mention the council in heaven, nor do they employ any uniquely Hebrew symbolism in relation to the council. Two nineteenth-century

accounts mention an ascension to the throne of God of some element in the vision, but not an ascension of the prophet himself.⁵³ The accounts of Jacob Young (1857) and Orange Scott (1829) mention a book in heaven, but this book is the Book of Life, in which the names of the elect are inscribed, rather than a book telling of the world's history. In sum, none of the nineteenth-century accounts conform to the throne-theophany and commission pattern found in the ancient works and 1 Nephi 1.

Five nineteenth-century accounts contain the formulaic language found in 1 Nephi: "I thought I saw" or "Methought I saw" (compare Alma 36:22).⁵⁴ This language may express the tentative language common to Hebraic descriptions of divine glory or may be a nineteenth-century mode of expression.⁵⁵ It should be noted that the doctrines expressed in Lehi's account seem to be more archaic than those elsewhere in the Book of Mormon. Lehi refers to the coming Deliverer as "the Messiah" rather than the more specific Christian terms of "Son of God" or "Christ."⁵⁶ Lehi refers to the redemption of the world rather than to the more specific "resurrection" and refers to the throne of God, rather than the throne of God and the Lamb.

It may appear that any person who had read Ezekiel could faithfully reproduce the theophany-commission pattern as it appears in 1 Nephi. However, a number of significant differences exist between the two accounts which suggest that the similarity of 1 Nephi to Ezekiel consists of dependence on a call *Gattung* common to both rather than the mere duplicating of Ezekiel by a later author. First, Lehi's account in 1 Nephi is singularly lacking in the Babylonian symbolism so prominent in Ezekiel's account, while at the same time manifesting a peculiarly Hebrew symbolism in relation to the heavenly council that is lacking in Ezekiel's account. Second, the chariot motif that dominates Ezekiel's theophany is completely absent from Lehi's account. Third, Lehi's call pattern includes elements such as the intercessory prayer, ascension, and bed motifs which do not appear in Ezekiel but are likely a development from Old Testament call forms, judged by their presence in the pseudepigrapha. Thus, the similarity between Lehi's and Ezekiel's commission may be best explained in terms of their common experience of a theophany which is expressed in terms of a common literary pattern with minimal actual dependence of the author of Lehi's account on Ezekiel.

Hence, anyone who would argue that Lehi's account originated with Joseph Smith in 1830 must be prepared to explain the following details: First, the call form does not appear in nineteenth-century literature. Second, the author of 1 Nephi 1 was apparently aware of the significance of the call narrative anciently, as evidenced by its placement at the beginning of the book. Third, the author of

1 Nephi 1 evidently had literary or oral access to an ancient call pattern or *Gattung*, evidenced by the combination and comparison of essential motifs, formulaic language, and the completeness of the throne-theophany and commission pattern. Fourth, while the theophany and commission pattern may be detected in part in the Bible if a scholarly synthesis is superimposed upon its texts, it is by no means obvious. Further, it appears that the call form as it is presented in the Book of Mormon evidences at least some awareness of the apocalyptic expansion of that form as is evidenced by its presence in the later pseudepigrapha. If the scholars of Joseph Smith's own day were ignorant of the call form, what are the chances that he could have detected the essential pattern, isolated and deleted all Babylonian influences, and included in his version elements that were present only in the yet unknown pseudepigrapha?

CONCLUSION

First Nephi fits better into its claimed historical matrix of preexilic Israel than into a nineteenth-century setting. The form-critical method provides a critical control to explain why there are close parallels between Old Testament call accounts, the pseudepigrapha, and 1 Nephi 1, and the significance of such parallels. The similarities between the call form as represented in Ezekiel and in 1 Nephi 1 may indicate a similar time period of composition. Those elements common to the pseudepigrapha and 1 Nephi 1 may indicate an awareness of a growing literary tradition that flourished in later Judaism but which was originally dependent upon the Hebraic prophetic tradition. The Hebraic prophetic call form has been appropriated and expanded in apocalyptic visions found in pseudepigraphic works.

Any study of the antiquity of the Book of Mormon is severely hampered because its ancient source is unavailable. Hence, forms that are language-dependent are not detectable in 1 Nephi 1, with the possible exceptions of the phrases "the heavens opened" (1 Ne. 1:8; Ezek. 1:1) and "in the year of the king" (1 Ne. 1:4; Ezek. 1:2) found in the literary prologue. The possibility that the Book of Mormon derives from an ancient source, however, must be considered in light of some features better explained in terms of ancient Israel than nineteenth-century America.

APPENDIX 1

PARADIGM OF THE GENRE "APOCALYPSE"

Adapted from John C. Collins, "Introduction: Towards the Morphology of a Genre," *Semeia* 14 (1979): 1–20. Collins writes: "Apocalypse may be defined as a genre of revelatory literature with a narrative framework, in which a revelation is mediated by an otherworldly being to a human recipient, disclosing a transcendent reality which is both temporal, insofar as it envisages eschatological salvation, and spatial, insofar as it involves another supernatural world" (9).

Manner of Revelation

- 1 *Medium* by which revelation is communicated:
 - 1.1 *Visual* revelation may consist of
 - 1.1.1 *Visions*, where the content of the revelation is seen, or
 - 1.1.2 *Epiphanies*, where the appearance of the heavenly mediator is described, or
 - 1.1.3 *Theophanies*, where the appearance of God on his throne or chariot is described.
 - 1.2 *Auditory* revelation usually clarifies the visual. Epiphanies are always followed by auditory revelation, in the form of
 - 1.2.1 *Discourse*, uninterrupted speech by the mediator, or
 - 1.2.2 *Dialogue*, where there is conversation between the mediator and recipient and/or questions by the human recipient of the heavenly mediator.
 - 1.3 *Otherworldly Journey*, when the visionary travels through the heavens, hell, or remote regions beyond the normally accessible world. Revelation in the course of a journey is usually predominantly visual.
 - 1.4 *Heavenly Book(s)*, when the revelation is contained at least in part in a written document, usually a heavenly book.
- 2.1 An *Otherworldly Mediator* communicates the revelation. Often the mediation consists of interpreting a vision but it can also take the form of direct speech or simply of guiding the recipient and directing his attention to the revelation. The mediator is most often an angel, or in some Christian texts, Christ.
- 2.2 *Divine Encounter*, the initial encounter of the recipient with a divine being of fiery glory prior to a theophany.
- 3 *The Human Recipient*:
 - 3.1 *Pseudonymity*: The recipient is usually identified as a venerable figure from the past. A few Christian apocalypses are not pseudonymous. Parts of the biblical texts remain in question.
 - 3.2 *Intercessory Prayer*, the prayer of the recipient on behalf of others which results in divine disclosure and revelation.
 - 3.3 *Disposition of the Recipient* notes the circumstances and emotional state in which the revelation is received.
 - 3.4 *The Reaction of the Recipient* usually describes the overpowering awe and/or perplexity of the recipient confronted with the revelation.
- 4 *Ascension*, the lifting aloft of the human recipient into a heavenly realm, usually lifted up by the winds or on wings of birds.

APPENDIX 1—*Continued*

Content: Temporal Axis

- 5 *Protology*: Matters which deal with the beginning of history and prehistory.
 - 5.1 *Cosmogony*, creation and origin of the world.
 - 5.2 *Primordial Events*, events which have paradigmatic significance for the remainder of history (for example, the sin of Adam).
- 6 *History*:
 - 6.1 *Recollection of Past*, explicit recognition of past events, or
 - 6.2 *Historical Prologue*, usually a literary introduction indicating the year and place of the revelation, or
 - 6.3 *Ex Eventu Prophecy* where past history is disguised as future and so associated with the eschatological prophecies—prophecy.
- 7 *Eschatological Crisis*. *This may take the form of*
 - 7.1 *Persecution* of the recipient for preaching of his revelation, and/or
 - 7.2 *Other Eschatological Upheavals* which disturb the order of nature or history.
- 8 *Eschatological Judgment* and/or *Destruction*. This comes upon
 - 8.1 *The Wicked*, brought about by divine intervention.
 - 8.2 *The World*, that is, the natural elements.
 - 8.3 *Otherworldly Beings*, for example, the forces of Satan or Belial, or fallen angels, or the Watchers.
- 9 *Eschatological Salvation*, may involve
 - 9.1 *Cosmic Transformation*, where the entire world is redeemed or renewed, or
 - 9.2 *Resurrection*, in bodily form, or
 - 9.3 *Other Forms of Afterlife*, for example, exaltation to heaven with angels or delivery to an intermediate state of rest.

Content: Spatial Axis

- 10 *Otherworldly Elements*:
 - 10.1 *Otherworldly Regions* are described especially in the otherworldly journeys, but also in lists of revealed things or in contexts of theophanies in the heavenly temple.
 - 10.2 *Otherworldly Beings*, angelic or demonic.

Concluding Elements

- 11 *Prophetic Call*, the recipient's initial call to represent Deity.
 - 11.1 *Commission*, the call and response of the recipient to the heavenly council to go forth and publish the divine will.
 - 11.2 *Instructions to Recipient*, tell the recipient to either publish his revelation or conceal it, also to inform him of his field of labor.
- 12 *Rejection*, the refusal of the people to heed the prophet's message.
- 13 *Narrative Conclusion*. This may describe the awakening or return to earth of the recipient, the departure of the revealer or the consequent actions of the recipient.

APPENDIX 2

Apocalyptic Works 250 B.C.E.–250 C.E.

<i>Jewish</i>	<i>Christian—Continued</i>	<i>Rabbinic</i>
Daniel	Sibylline Oracles	Hekalot Rabbati
I Enoch 1–36	6 Ezra	Merkaba Rabba
Animal Apocalypse	Apocalypse of Elijah	Sefer Hekalot (3 Enoch)
Apocalypse of Weeks	Apocalypse of Thomas	Apocalypse of Elijah (Hebrew)
Similitudes of Enoch	Testament of Adam	Chronicles of Jerahmeel
4 Ezra	Didache 16	Revelation of Joshua ben Levi
2 Baruch (Syriac)		Ascension of Moses
3 Baruch (Greek)	<i>Gnostic</i>	Visions of Ezekiel
Apocalypse of Abraham	Apocalypse of Adam	Hekalot Zuttarti
Heavenly Luminaries	The Allogenes CG XI, 3	Shiur Qoma
2 Enoch	Melchizedek CG IX, 1	Ma'aseh Merkaba
Testament of Levi	Sophia of Jesus Christ CG III, 4; BG 8502	Tractate Hekalot
Testament of Abraham	Apocryphon of John CG II, 1; III, 1; IV, 1; BG 8502	Tosepta to the Targum of Ezekiel I
Apocalypse of Zephaniah	Gospel of Mary BG 8502	Sefer Ha-Razim
<i>Christian</i>	Hypostasis of the Archons CG II, 4	Assumption of Moses
Jacob's Ladder	First Apocalypse of James CG, V, 3	Revelation of Moses
Revelation	Apocalypse of Peter CG VII, 3	
Apocalypse of Peter	Letter of Peter to Philip CG VIII, 2	<i>Classical</i>
Shepherd of Hermas	Hypsiphron CG XI, 4	The Poimandres
Apocalypse of Elchasai	Pistis Sophia	Parmenides
Apocalypse of St. John Theologian	Paraphrase of Shem CG VII, 1	Plato, Republic 614b–621b
Testament of the Lord	Zostrianos CG VIII, 1	Heraclides Ponticus
5 Ezra	Apocalypse of Paul CG V, 2	Cicero, Somnium Scipionis
Testament of Isaac	Thomas the Contender CG II, 7	Seneca, Ad Marciam de Consolatione
Testament of Jacob	Dialogue of the Savior CG III, 5	Plutarch, De genio Socratis
Questions of Bartholomew	I Book of Jeu	Plutarch, De sera numinis vindicta
Book of Resurrection of Jesus Christ by Bartholomew the Apostle 8b–14b, 17b–19b	II Book of Jeu	Lucian, Icaromenippus
Ascension of Isaiah	The Thunder, Perfect Mind, CG VI, 2	Homer, Odyssey XI
Apocalypse of Paul	Trimorphic Protennoia CG XIII, 1	Virgil, Aeneid VI
Apocalypse of Ezra	Second Treatise of the Great Seth CG VII, 2	Lucian, Nekomanteia and Kataplous
Apocalypse of the Virgin	Concept of our Great Power, CG VI, 4	Euhemerus, Hiera Anagraphe
Apocalypse of Zosimus	Apocryphon of James CG I, 2	Plato, Axiochus
Apocalypse of Holy Mother of God	Three Steles of Seth CG VII, 5	Plutarch, De facie in orbe lunae
Concerning the Punishments	Acts of Peter and 12 Apostles CG VI, 1	The Demotic Chronicle
Apocalypse of James, Brother of Jesus		The Lamb to Bocchoris
Mysteries of St. John the Apostle and the Holy Virgin		The Asclepius "Apocalypse"
Apocalypse of Sedrach		Asclepius, 1–41
Mark 13		The Kore Kosmou
		Orpheus, Hieroi Logoi
		Lycophron, Alexandra

For codices labeled CG and BG, see James M. Robinson, ed., *The Nag Hammadi Library*, (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1981), v–xv.

This appendix was adapted from the index in *Semeia* 14 (1979): 219–21. This issue of *Semeia* includes discussions and bibliographies of these and other apocalyptic works.

APPENDIX 3

Jewish Apocalypses

Asterisks indicate either
 (1) that the element is possibly
 but not certainly present, or
 (2) it is implicit, or
 (3) it is minor.

Manner of Revelation	Isaiah 6	Ezekiel 1-4	Alma 36	1 Nephi 1-2	Test. Abraham 10-15	3 Baruch	Test. Levi	2 Enoch	Heavenly Luminaries	Apoc. Abraham	2 Baruch	4 Ezra	Jubilees 23	Apoc. of Weeks	Animal Apocalypse	1 Enoch 1-36 (14)	Daniel	% of Total
1.1.1 Visions	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	.94
1.1.2 Epiphanies	x	x		x	x			x		x						x	x	.47
1.1.3 Theophanies	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x						x	x	.65
1.2.1 Discourse								x	x				x	x			x	.29
1.2.2 Dialogue/Questioning	x	x		x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x					x	.65
1.3 Otherworldly Journey					x	x	x	x	x	x								.35
1.4 Heavenly Book(s)		x		x			x	x	x			x	x		x		x	.57
2.1 Otherworldly Mediator	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	100
2.2 Divine Encounter		x	x	x	x			x		x						x	x	.47
3.1 Pseudonymity					x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	.76
3.2 Intercessory Prayer				x		x	x	x*		x	x	x				x	x	.57
3.3 Disposition of Recipient		x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x					x	.65
3.4 Reaction of Recipient	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x				x	x	.76
4. Ascension				x	x	x	x	x		x					x	x		.47
Temporal Axis																		
5.1 Cosmogony								x			x	x						.17
5.2 Primordial Events						x		x		x	x	x				x		.35
6.1 Recollection of Past			x							x	x	x						.24
6.2 Historical Prologue	x	x		x		x*	x	x			x	x					x	.57
6.3 Ex eventu Prophecy	x	x	x*	x						x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	.71
7.1 Persecution	x	x	x	x							x	x	x		x	x	x	.59
7.2 Eschatological Upheaval							x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	.59
8.1 Judgement/Destruction of wicked	x	x	x*	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	100
8.2 of world								x	x	x				x				.24
8.3 of heavenly beings							x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x		x	.57
9.1 Cosmic Transformation				x*			x	x	x	x	x	x	x*	x	x*	x	x	.71
9.2.1 Resurrection										x	x	x			x*		x	.29
9.2.2 Other types of afterlife			x	x*	x	x	x	x	x	x			x	x*	x	x		.71
Spatial Axis																		
10.1 Otherworldly Regions	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			x	x	x	.88
10.2 Otherworldly Beings	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	100
Concluding Elements																		
11.1 Commission	x	x		x*			x	x		x		x				x	x	.57
11.2 Instruction to Recipient	x	x	x	x			x	x		x	x	x				x	x	.65
12 Rejection	x	x	x	x			x				x	x					x	.47
13 Narrative Conclusion		x		x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x			x		x	.65
Percentage of Total	.45	.58	.45	.73	.45	.52	.70	.85	.45	.79	.73	.70	.73	.36	.36	.61	.79	

Adapted from John J. Collins, "The Jewish Apocalypses," *Semeia* 14 (1979): 28.

NOTES

¹Hugh Nibley, "To Open the Last Dispensation," in *Nibley on the Timely and the Timeless*, ed. Truman G. Madsen (Provo: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1978), 4.

²Norman Habel, "The Form and Significance of the Call Narratives," *Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 77 (December 1965): 323: "The goal of the prophetic formulation of the call in this *Gattung* is to announce publicly that Yahweh commissioned the prophet in question as His representative." The German school of form criticism has produced a number of studies defining literary genre and patterns associated with prophetic calls. See especially Walther Zimmerli, "Form-und Traditionsgeschichte der prophetischen Berufungserzählungen," in *Ezechiel*, 2 vols. (Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag, 1955), 1:14–25. I will refer to the now available English translation of this work: *Ezekiel*, trans. Ronald Clements, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979). All notes are from the first volume of this work. See also Georg Fohrer, "Die Gattung der Berichte über symbolische Handlungen der Propheten," *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 64, no. 1 (1952): 101–20; "Die Hauptprobleme des Buches Ezechiel," *Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 72 (1967): 65–80; Ernst Kutsch, "Gideons Berufung und Altarbau Jdc. 6, 11–24," *Theologische Literaturzeitung* 2 (February 1956): 75–83; Hans Walter Wolff, "Erkenntnis Gottes im Alten Testament—Hauptprobleme alttestamentlicher Prophetie," *Evangelische Theologie* 15 (1955): 446–68; Friedrich Horst, "Die Visionsschilderungen der alttestamentlichen Propheten," *Evangelische Theologie* 20 (1960): 193–205; Wolfgang Richter, *Die sogenannten vorprophetischen Berufsberichte* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1970); J. Kenneth Kuntz, *The Self Revelation of God* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967), 45–168. Form criticism is the isolation, analysis, and interpretation of oral or literary forms underlying written texts. Form criticism is based on the assumption that the structure and language of written texts often reflect ritual and literary patterns. Hence, form-critical investigation attempts to discover the original oral, ritual, and literary sources underlying the written narrative by reconstructing the pattern common to the sources. Because literary genre inevitably reflects the socio-cultural and historic origins of the work in question, form criticism is a useful tool in determining the place, time, and purpose of composition of a work. See, generally, John H. Hayes, *Old Testament Form Criticism* (San Antonio, Tex.: Trinity University Press, 1974).

³Edward T. Jones, "A Comparative Study of Ascension Motifs in World Religions," in *Deity and Death*, ed. Spencer J. Palmer (Provo: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1978), 81; see also Francis T. Fallon, *The Enthronement of Sabaoth: Jewish Elements in Gnostic Creation Myths*, in *Nag Hammadi Studies* 10 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1978), 38–67.

⁴Ivan Engnell, *The Call of Isaiah* (Uppsala: A-B Lundequistska, 1949), 30–33; *The Interpreter's Bible* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1956), 5:204–7, 7:46–47; Aubrey R. Johnson, *Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967), 64.

⁵Zimmerli, *Ezekiel* 1:16–21; Habel, "Significance of the Call Narratives," 297–309; Matthew Black, "The Throne-Theophany Prophetic Commission and the Son of Man," in *Jews, Greeks and Christians: Religious Cultures in Late Antiquity*, ed. Robert Hamerton-Kelly and Robert Scroggs (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1976), 57–73. It should be noted that Black's purpose is not to delineate the prophetic call form, but to date the Son of Man doctrine.

⁶Klaus Baltzer, "Considerations Regarding the Office and Calling of the Prophet," *Harvard Theological Review* 61 (October 1968): 568.

⁷Ibid., 568; see also Habel, "Significance of the Call Narratives," 297.

⁸Baltzer, "Office and Calling of the Prophet," 568.

⁹Gerhard Von Rad, *The Message of the Prophets* (New York: Harper and Row, 1967), 33–34.

¹⁰Black, "The Son of Man," 58ff.; see also Zimmerli, *Ezekiel* 1:97–110.

¹¹Black, "The Son of Man," 59.

¹²Von Rad, *Message of the Prophets*, 43.

¹³Benjamin Jerome Hubbard, *The Matthean Redaction of a Primitive Apostolic Commissioning: An Exegesis of Matthew 28:16–20* (Missoula, Mont.: Society of Biblical Literature and Scholar's Press, 1974), 25–67. The auditory form of prophetic call is also found at Gen. 11:28–30, 12:1–4a, 15:1–6, 17:1–14, 24:1–9, 26:23–25, 28:10–22, 35:9–15, 41:37–45, 46:1–5a; Ex. 3:1–4:16, 6:2–13, 7:1–6; Num. 22:22–35; Deut. 31:14–31; Josh. 1:1–11; Judg. 4:4–10, 6:11–24; 1 Sam. 3:1–4:1a; 1 Kgs. 19:1–19a; Isa. 49:1–6; 1 Chr. 22:1–16; Ezra 1:1–5.

¹⁴John J. Collins, "Toward the Morphology of a Genre," *Semeia* 14 (1979): 9. Until recently the genre apocalypse was thought to be a rather late development coming well after the Babylonian captivity. In recent years, however, the genre is recognized to have developed from and concurrently with the prophetic tradition. See Paul D. Hanson, "Jewish Apocalyptic against Its Near Eastern Background," *Revue Biblique* 78 (January 1971): 31–58; Frank Moore Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), 326–46.

¹⁵*The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, ed. James H. Charlesworth, 2 vols. (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1983), 1:42. Translations of pseudepigraphic texts will be from this work unless otherwise indicated.

¹⁶Gershon G. Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, 3d ed. rev. (New York: Schocken Books, 1961), 46, 184; David Suter, *Tradition and Composition in the Parables of Enoch* (Missoula, Mont.: Scholar's Press, 1979), 16; Ephraim Isaac, "1 (Ethiopic Apocalypse of) Enoch (Second Century B.C.—First Century A.D.)," in Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* 1:6–7.

¹⁷James Rendel Harris, *Odes and Psalms of Solomon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1909). The poet of the Odes, like the singer of the Thanksgiving Hymns at Qumran, is caught up to God's presence and joins the heavenly choir in praising God.

¹⁸Zimmerli, *Ezekiel* 1:101.

¹⁹Hosea 1:1; Joel 1:1; Micah 1:1; Zeph. 1:1; Jer. 1:1–4.

²⁰Zimmerli, *Ezekiel* 1:100–101.

²¹Habel, "Significance of the Call Narrative," 310.

²²Zimmerli, *Ezekiel* 1:113.

²³In the Apocalypse of Abraham, Abraham's vision is stimulated by a liturgical prayer offered over a sacrifice (chap. 9ff.). In 1 Enoch, Enoch says, "I wrote down your prayers—so it appeared in vision—for your prayers will not be heard throughout all the days of eternity. . . . And your petitions on their behalf will not be heard—neither will those on your own behalf (which you offer) weeping (and) praying" (1 Enoch 14:4, 7). The Greek Apocalypse of Ezra also begins with a prayer to which an angel answers: "It came to pass in the thirtieth year on the twenty-second of the month, I was in my house and I cried out, saying to the Most High, 'Lord, grant (me) glory so that I may see your mysteries.' When night fell the angel Michael, the archangel, came" (1:1–3). Louis F. Hartman and Alexander DiLella see a liturgical background to prayers used in the Book of Daniel and the pseudepigrapha (*The Book of Daniel*, Anchor Bible Series [New York: Doubleday, 1978], 248).

²⁴In 2 Enoch the heavenly messengers are described as follows: "Their faces were like the shining sun; their eyes were like burning lamps; from their mouths fire was coming forth; their clothing was various singing; their wings were more glistening than gold; their hands were whiter than snow" (2 Enoch 1:5, recension J). Compare 1 Enoch 14:9–12. The Apocalypse of Abraham describes the mediating angel Iaoel: "The appearance of his body was like sapphire, and the look of his countenance like chrysolite, and hair of his head like snow, and the turban upon his head like the appearance of a rainbow and clothing of his garments like purple." See pt. 2 of chap. 10 of George Herbert Box, *The Apocalypse of Abraham* (London: Society for Promotion of Christian Knowledge, 1919).

²⁵In the Ascension of Isaiah, Isaiah seats himself upon a couch in the palace, "and while he was speaking with the Holy Spirit . . . he became silent, and his mind was taken up from him, and he did not see the men who were standing before him" (6:2ff.). In 2 Enoch, Enoch reports, "And I lay on my bed, sleeping. And, while I slept, a great distress entered my heart, and I was weeping with my eyes in a dream. And I could not figure out what this distress might be, nor what might be happening to me" (1:2–3, recension J). In the Testament of Levi, after Levi's prayer, "Then sleep fell upon me, and I beheld an high mountain, and I was on it. And behold, the heavens were opened, and an angel of the Lord spoke to me: 'Levi, Levi, enter!' " (1:5–6). Compare 1 Nephi 11:1: "As I sat pondering in mine heart I was caught away in the Spirit of the Lord, yea, into an exceedingly high mountain, which I never had before seen, and upon which I never had before set my foot. And the Spirit said unto me: Behold, what desirest thou?" (see also Ether 3:6–8). Von Rad notes, however, that this psychological effect of the vision is not unique to the call account because it is also found in secondary visions not involving a prophetic commission (see Von Rad, *Message of the Prophets*, 40).

²⁶See Ascension of Isaiah 6:1–3. The bed or couch motif is not found in the context of call accounts in the Old Testament, but such a bed supporting the visionary recipient may be found in Dan. 2:28–29, 4:5–15, 7:1; 1 Sam. 3.

²⁷David Syme Russell, *The Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1964), 165–66.

²⁸"And it came about, when I had spoken to my sons, those men called me. And they took me up onto their wings, and carried me up to the first heaven" (1 Enoch 3:1, recension J).

²⁹The raising onto a different dimension of experience was thought to be quite literal by the pseudepigraphic authors. For ancient Jews there was a plurality of heavens. God dwelt in the highest. For many, there were seven heavens, derived from Babylonian cosmology. The belief in seven heavens is found in late 1 Enoch, 2 Enoch, Apocalypse of Abraham, Testament of Levi (Text "B"), and the Talmudic treatise Chagigah 12b. The emphasis on a plurality of heavens is also found in the Old Testament (Deut. 10:14; 1 Kgs. 8:27; Ps. 148:4). The emphasis in early 1 Enoch, the Testament of Levi, and early Christian sources, however, was upon three heavens. See Marius DeJonge, *The Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs* (Assen, Netherlands: N.p., 1953), 46; Andrew T. Lincoln, "Paul the Visionary," *New Testament Studies* 25 (1979): 212–18.

³⁰Hanson, "Jewish Apocalyptic," 31–58; Julian Morgenstern, "The Gates of Righteousness," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 6 (1929); Samuel Henry Hooke, *The Origins of Early Semitic Ritual* (London: British Academy, 1938); Frederick James Hollis, "The Sun-Cult and the Temple at Jerusalem," in *Myth and Ritual*, ed. Samuel Henry Hooke (London: Oxford University Press, 1933); Aubrey R. Johnson, "Hebrew Conception of Kingship," in *Myth, Ritual and Kingship* (London: Oxford University Press, 1958), 228ff.; Ferdinand Dexinger, *Sturz der Göttersöhne; oder, Engel vor der Sintflut?* (Vienna: Verlag Herder, 1966), 33–60; E. Theodore Mullen, *The Assembly of the Gods*, Harvard Semitic Monograph (Chico, Calif.: Scholar's Press, 1980).

³¹H. Wheeler Robinson, "The Council of Yahweh," *Journal of Theological Studies* 45 (1944): 151–57; Frank Moore Cross, "The Council of Yahweh in Second Isaiah," *The Heavenly Council in Isaiah XL.13–21* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1971), 49–53; Hugh Nibley, "The Expanding Gospel," in *Nibley on the Timely and the Timeless*, 22–41. The statement that the heavens opened is found only in Ezekiel 1:1 in the Old Testament, but occurs many times in 1 Nephi and elsewhere in the Book of Mormon (see 1 Ne. 1:8; 11:14, 27, 30; 12:6; Hel. 5:48; 3 Ne. 17:24; 28:13). This phraseology exerted a great influence in the pseudepigraphic genre, evidenced in the Syriac Apocalypse of Baruch 22:1; Testament of Levi 2:6, 5:1, 18:6; Testament of Judah 24:2; 3 Maccabees 6:18.

³²Russell, *Message and Method*, 168.

³³Mullen, *Assembly of the Gods*, 156–68, 274–78. The vision of God on his throne attended by the heavenly council is found in 1 Enoch no less than five times: 14:18–22; 47:1–3 (Enoch “saw him—the Antecedent of Time, while he was sitting upon the throne of his glory, and the books of the living ones were open before him. And all his power in heaven above and his escorts stood before him”); 60:1–3; 71:5–14; 90:20–37; 102:3. The scene in the Ascension of Isaiah (11:32–33) of Christ on the right hand and the Holy Spirit on the left hand of the Father demonstrates a well developed tri-theism wherein the Son was subordinate to the Father, and the Spirit to the Son. See Robert Henry Charles, *The Ascension of Isaiah* (London: Adam and Black, 1900), p. 1: “I saw Him sit down on the right hand of that Great Glory whose glory I told you that I could not behold. And also the angel of the Holy Spirit I saw sitting on His left.”

³⁴Cross, *Canaanite Myth*, 274, n. 1; compare Mullen, *Assembly of the Gods*, 195–97, 217–19.

³⁵Compare Hugh Nibley, *Since Cumorah* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1973), 172–73. “And then the Lord will raise up a new priest to whom all the words of the Lord will be revealed. He shall effect the judgment of truth over the earth for many days. And his star shall rise in heaven like a king; kindling the light of knowledge as day is illumined by the sun. And he shall be extolled by the whole inhabited world” (Testament of Levi 18:2–3). “The stars shone in their watches, and were glad. . . . They shone with gladness for him who made them” (Baruch 3:34).

³⁶Georg Widengren, *The Ascension of the Apostle and the Heavenly Book*, 7 (Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, 1950), 22–39; Russell, *Message and Method*, 108: “The apocalyptic writers indicate that these divine revelations—disclosed in direct visions by angelic mediation or the heavenly tables—were written down by ancient seers and preserved in their sacred books. Like the heavenly tablets themselves, the books revealed not only what had been, but also what would be and related the whole purpose of God for the universe from creation to the end-time. They had been hidden away for many generations and handed down in a long line of secret tradition, faithfully preserved until the ‘last days,’ these books are now being revealed to the faithful people of God.”

³⁷Ibid., 7.

³⁸In Jubilees 32:21–22, from Bethel, Jacob “saw in a vision of the night, and behold an angel was descending from heaven, and there were seven tablets in his hands. And he gave (them) to Jacob, and he read them, and he knew everything which was written in them, which would happen to him and to his sons during all the ages.” Ezra dictated many books concerning the earth’s past and future at the behest of an angel (4 Ezra 14). Levi read tables which told what would befall Israel (Testament of Levi 5:4).

³⁹“Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory” (Isa. 6:3). “Then the spirit took me up, and I heard behind me a voice of a great rushing, saying, Blessed be the glory of the Lord from his place” (Ezek. 3:12). See Simeon Singer, *The Authorised Daily Prayer Book* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1929), 39; and Suter, *Tradition and Composition*, 18–19.

⁴⁰Mullen, *Assembly of the Gods*, 209–26.

⁴¹Chapter 39 of the Similitudes is a commentary on Enoch’s throne-vision and commission in 1 Enoch 14–16. The *Qedussa* in 1 Enoch 39 has six elements in common with 1 Ne. 1:14: (1) the pause in 1 Enoch 39:10a (“And I gazed at that place [under his wings], and I blessed and praised”) is nearly identical to Nephi’s pause (“And it came to pass that when my father had read and seen many great and marvelous things, he did exclaim many things unto the Lord”); (2) the praise of the might and attributes of God in 1 Enoch 39:11 corresponds with the praise of God’s power and goodness in 1 Ne. 1:14; (3) Enoch’s ecstatic utterances at seeing God’s abode in the high heavens in 1 Enoch 39:3–8 are similar to Lehi’s exclamation of praise to God immediately subsequent to seeing his throne “high in the heavens”; (4) the seers praise God in both 1 Enoch 39:11 and 1 Ne. 1:14; (5) God’s sovereignty over the whole earth is recognized in both 1 Enoch 39:12 (“Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord of the Spirits; the spirits fill the earth,” dependent on Isa. 6:3) and 1 Ne. 1:14 (“Great and marvelous are thy works, O Lord God Almighty! . . . And thy power, and goodness, and mercy are over all the inhabitants of the earth”); and (6) the angels of the council in heaven sing continual praises to God in both 1 Enoch 39:13–14 and 1 Ne. 1:8, 14. Suter believes the Similitudes date from the first century B.C. (*Tradition and Composition*, 29).

⁴²Habel, “Significance of the Call Narratives,” 308–9. According to Zimmerli, “From the words of the canonical prophets it becomes increasingly clear that the fact of being sent out by God forms the basic authorization of the prophet. Neither the mastery of the mantic technique nor the possession of a particular psychic disposition distinguishes a man as a prophet, but only the fact of being sent by Yahweh. Thus, the word [*s-l-h*] appears at the decisive point in the call narratives (Isa. 6:8; Jer. 1:7). . . . It is therefore entirely to the point that the first divine word to Ezekiel should contain the statement of sending” (*Ezekiel* 1:132).

⁴³Mullen, *Assembly of the Gods*, 216.

⁴⁴Enoch is commissioned to teach his sons the contents of the heavenly books: “And now, Enoch, I am giving you a waiting period of 30 days to set your house in order and to instruct your sons and all the members of your household about everything from me personally, so that they may obey what is said to them by you. And they will read and understand that there is no other God apart from myself, so that they may carry out all your instructions and study the books in your handwriting accurately and attentively” (2 Enoch 36:1, recension J). Levi is commissioned to teach his sons of the heavenly journey: “Therefore counsel and understanding have been given to you so that you might give understanding to your sons concerning this” (Testament of Levi 4:5). Abraham is commissioned to teach his posterity of the vision: “See, Abraham, what you have seen, hear what you have heard, know what you have known. Go to your inheritance! And behold I am with you forever” (Apocalypse of Abraham 29:21). Isaiah and Habakkuk also receive a commission to write

their visions so that others might read of their experiences (Isa. 8:1; Hab. 2:2). However, in some of the apocalypses the book is to be sealed up and not opened until the end of time (Assumption of Moses 10:11).

⁴⁵Hubbard, *Matthean Redaction*, 63–64.

⁴⁶Von Rad, *Message of the Prophets*, 44.

⁴⁷Zimmerli, *Ezekiel* 1:106.

⁴⁸Marvin S. Hill, "Shaping the Mormon Mind in New England and New York," *Brigham Young University Studies* 9 (Spring 1969): 351–73; Timothy L. Smith, "The Book of Mormon in a Biblical Culture," *Journal of Mormon History* 7 (1980): 3–22.

⁴⁹See, generally, George A. Starr, *Defoe and Spiritual Autobiography* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1965); Edmund S. Morgan, *Visible Saints: The History of a Puritan Idea* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1963); Daniel B. Shea, *Spiritual Autobiography in Early America* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1968).

⁵⁰Neal E. Lambert and Richard H. Cracroft, "Emergence of a Fundamental: The Expanding Role of Joseph Smith's First Vision in Mormon Religious Thought," *Journal of Mormon History* 7 (1980): 31–42. See also Lawrence Foster's account of John Lyon's vision of God in 1802 ("First Visions," *Sunstone* [September–October 1983], 39–43); Lawrence Foster, *Religion and Sexuality: The Shakers, the Mormons and the Oneida Community* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), 62–71.

⁵¹*Edward's and Dwight's Life of Brainerd* (New Haven: Yale, 1822), 45–57; Robert Philip, *The Life and Times of George Whitefield* (London: N.p., 1837); Henry Alline, *The Life and Journal of the Rev. Mr. Henry Alline* (Boston: Gilbert and Dean, 1806). See especially J. M. Bumsted, *Henry Alline, 1748–84*, in *Canadian Biographical Studies* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971), 31–41. The following early American visions of God conform to the spiritual conversion account: *Sketch of the Life of Elder Benjamin Putnam* (Woodstock, N.Y.: David Watson, 1821), 18–20; *Autobiography of Elder Jacob Knapp* (New York: Sheldon and Co., 1803), 14–15; *The Life of Elder Abel Thornton* (Providence: J. B. Yerrinton, 1828), 20–21; *A Discourse on the Life and Character of Rev. Alfred Bennett* (Homer, N.Y.: Rufus A. Reed, 1851), 9–10; *Memoirs of the Life and Travels of B. Hibbard* (New York: Privately printed, 1825), 22–25; *The Dealings of God, Man and the Devil in the Life, Experience and Travels of Lorenzo Dow* (Norwich, Conn.: Wm. Faulkner, 1833), 15–16; *Memoirs of the Life and Religious Experience of Roy Potter* (Providence: H. H. Brown, 1829), 120–23; *Memoirs of Rev. Jesse Lee* (New York: N. Bangs and T. Mason, 1823), 607; *The Life, Conversion, Travels, Preaching and Sufferings of Elias Smith*, 2 vols. (Dartmouth, N.H.: Privately printed, 1816), 58–60; *Memoirs of Rev. Charles G. Finney* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1832), 18–20; *The Narrative of Eleazer Sherman* (Providence: H. H. Brown Co., 1830), 18–20; *Life and Observations of Rev. E. F. Newell* (Worcester, Mass.: C. W. Ainsworth, 1847), 10–12; Rev. Frederic Denison, ed., *The Evangelist: or, Life and Labors of Rev. Jabez S. Swan* (Waterford, Conn.: William L. Peckham, 1873), 50–51; *Autobiography of Elder Henry Kendall* (Portland, Maine: Privately printed, 1853), 14–16; Lucious Matlock, *The Life of Rev. Orange Scott* (New York: C. Prindle and L. C. Matlock, 1847), 9–10; *Tears of Contrition: Sketches of the Life of John W. Maffitt* (New London, Conn.: Samuel Green, 1821), 49–51; Daniel O. Morton, ed., *Memoir of Rev. Levi Parsons* (Poultney, Vt.: Smith and Shute, 1824), 18–19; *Memoirs of Elder Elijah Shaw* (Boston: L. J. Shaw, 1852), 21–22; John Buzzell, *The Life of Elder Benjamin Randal* (Limerick, Maine: Hobbs and Woodman, 1827), 18–21; *Autobiography of a Pioneer: Rev. Jacob Young* (Cincinnati: Hunt and Eaton, 1857), 46–47; "Nathan Cole's Spiritual Travels," cited in Daniel Shea, *Spiritual Autobiography*, 208–21; *Sketches of the Late Rev. Samuel Hopkins* (Hartford, Conn.: Hudson and Goodwin, 1805), 35; George Peck, *Early Methodism within the Bounds of the Old Genesee Conference from 1788–1828* (New York: Green and Porter, 1860), 185–86; *A Sketch on the Life of Stephen H. Bradley* (Madison, Conn.: N.p., 1830), 7–8.

⁵²James B. Allen, "The Early Accounts of Joseph Smith's First Vision," *BYU Studies* 9 (Spring 1969), 279–80. Compare Joseph's account especially with that of Stephen Bradley.

⁵³*Life of Elias Smith*, 59: "My mind seemed to rise in that light to the throne of God and the Lamb." Peck, *Early Methodism*, 185: "While I was there knelt before the Lord, with the eye of my mind directed heavenward, a straight gate opened to my view, which it seemed I had entered; and directly before me a beautiful narrow way opened, ascending to the throne of God."

⁵⁴Stephen Bradley, George Whitefield, Lorenzo Dow, Jacob Knapp, and Benjamin Putnam.

⁵⁵The restraint in the description of Deity in Ezekiel's account is evidenced by a succession of phrases denoting approximate similarity, rendered in the King James Version as "the likeness as the appearance of a man" (Ezek. 1:26), and "the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord" (Ezek. 1:28). The tentative nature of Ezekiel's account was translated into the very language used by Lehi in the work of an Alexandrian dramatist of the second century B.C. known as Ezekiel the Tragedian: "Methought upon Mount Sinai's brow I saw a mighty throne that reached high to heavens high vault, whereon there sat a man of noblest mien wearing a royal crown; whose left hand held a mighty sceptre; and his right hand to me made sign; and I stood forth before the throne" (Eusebius, "Preparatio Evangelica 43:1," *Eusebii Pamphili, Evangelicae Preparationis*, trans. E. H. Gifford, 4 vols. pt. 1 (Oxford: N.p., 1903), 3:470).

⁵⁶S. Kent Brown, "Lehi's Personal Record: Quest for a Missing Source," *BYU Studies* 24 (Winter 1984): 19–42.

Forbidden Glass

A young woman peers into the glass case
At the wooden coffin lid of Isis.
The exhibit catalog says Isis is
Wife of Kha-bekhnet, son of Sen-nedjem.
There are painted lines for the folds of her gown,
Two round knobs in the lobes of her ear.
Her painted hands clasp a cluster
Of swirled green lines and bell shapes,
Enhanced, of course, by the gown's whiteness.

The carefully groomed guide requests
That the visitors should please not touch
The glass of the display cases.

The young woman passes on to see the golden geese
Whose backs are set with lapis lazuli.
They turn their necks to gaze behind them.
Carved in the bottom of a blue bowl, a fish swims.
A girl walks lightly among the lilies of the Nile.
Folds in her linen gown round over her breasts and thighs.
She wears two gold pieces in her ears,
And in her hands she carries hollyhocks.
To die so young like a yearling goose
Slaughtered on the temple altars of Ra,
To live as a swan bending its neck among the lilies.

The young woman returns to see Isis.
She leans near, placing a hand on the glass.

—Cara Bullinger

The Narrative Call Pattern in the Prophetic Commission of Enoch (Moses 6)

Stephen D. Ricks

INTRODUCTION

In his luminous examination of the book of Ezekiel, Walther Zimmerli distinguishes between two types of prophetic call in the Bible—the “narrative” type, which includes a dialogue with God or other divine interlocutor; and the “throne theophany” type, which introduces the prophetic commission with a vision of the heavenly throne of God.¹ Blake Ostler, in his study on “The Throne-Theophany and Prophetic Commission in 1 Nephi,”² has demonstrated in detail the presence of the “throne theophany” type of prophetic call in the Bible, the Apocrypha, the Pseudepigrapha, and the Book of Mormon.

There is a similarly striking example of a “narrative” type call in the prophetic commission of Enoch in Moses 6:23–36. This study considers the elements of the narrative call pattern; those elements of this form found in the prophetic commission of Enoch are examined and compared with the biblical narrative call passages.

Among the first to isolate and examine in detail the elements in the narrative call pattern in the Bible was Norman Habel. In a 1965 article, he distinguished six characteristic features of the pattern: (1) the divine confrontation, (2) the introductory word, (3) the commission, (4) the objection, (5) the reassurance, and (6) the sign.³ Habel sees this pattern embracing the prophetic commissions of the throne theophany type (for example, Isa. 6:1–13; Ezek. 1:1–3:11) as well as the narrative variety (Ex. 3:1–12 [Moses]; Judg. 6:11–27 [Gideon]; and Jer. 1:4–10 [Jeremiah]). The Jeremiah passage provides a typical example of the pattern:

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1. Divine Confrontation (v. 4) Then the word of the Lord came unto me, saying,
2. Introductory word (v. 5a) Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and
3. Commission (v. 5b) I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.
4. Objection (v. 6) Then said I, Ah, Lord God! behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child.
5. Reassurance (vv. 7–8) But the Lord said unto me, Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak.
Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the Lord.
6. Sign (vv. 9–10) Then the Lord put forth his hand, and touched my mouth. And the Lord said unto me, Behold, I have put my words into thy mouth.
See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant.⁴

Since Ostler's study so ably discusses the throne theophany type of the prophetic call pattern, this discussion is restricted to an examination and comparison of the prophetic commission passages in Exodus, Judges, Jeremiah, and the book of Moses.

ELEMENTS OF THE NARRATIVE CALL PATTERN

The Divine Confrontation

In both the Moses and Gideon prophetic call narratives, there is an unexpected confrontation with the divine. Moses was tending the flocks of his father-in-law Jethro when "the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. . . . And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt" (Ex. 3:1–3). Similarly, Gideon was surreptitiously threshing wheat when "the angel of the Lord appeared unto him" (Judg. 6:11–12). There is a like element of surprise in the Enoch pericope. There, Enoch is on a journey (whose exact nature and purpose are not further indicated) when "the Spirit of God descended out of heaven, and abode upon him" (Moses 6:26).

In the Exodus and Judges passages there appears to be an alternation between the divine spokesmen. In the Exodus section, the divine agent is first identified as "the angel of the Lord" (Ex. 3:2). However, later in the passage the being with whom Moses converses

is identified as “the Lord” (Ex. 3:4, 7). In Exodus 3:6, Moses’ divine interlocutor says, “I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob,” whereafter “Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God.” In the Judges call passage, the divine being is again identified as “the angel of the Lord” (Judg. 6:12) but is later referred to in the narrative alternately as “the Lord” (Judg. 6:14, 16, 23) and “the angel of the Lord” (Judg. 6:20, 21, 22). It is, of course, possible and perhaps likely that in each of these cases both the Lord and an angel of the Lord were present and spoke. In the case of Enoch, “the Spirit of God” rests upon him, after which the Lord addresses him (Moses 6:26–27, 32, 35).

The Introductory Word

The function of the “introductory word” in the call narratives is, as Norman Habel explains, “not merely to arouse the attention . . . [of the prophet] but to spell out the specific basis or grounds (*Grund*) for the commission.”⁵ In the calls of Moses, Gideon, and Enoch the reasons for their vocation as prophet are explained. In the Exodus pericope, after Moses’ divine interlocutor identifies himself as “the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob” (Ex. 3:6), he continues, “I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters. . . . I have also seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppress them” (Ex. 3:7, 9). Therefore, he has come down to deliver them from the Egyptians and to lead them out of Egypt to “a land flowing with milk and honey” (Ex. 3:8). In contrast, in the passage containing Gideon’s call, it is Gideon who describes the current crisis: “But now the Lord hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites” (Judg. 6:13). Similarly, it is the wickedness and unbelief of the people which provide the grounds for Enoch’s call: “And for these many generations, ever since the day that I created them, have they gone astray, and have denied me, and have sought their own counsels in the dark” (Moses 6:28).

The “introductory word” section of the Jeremiah call passage is slightly different. Whereas the Moses, Gideon, and Enoch passages each provide an insight into the historical situation that necessitated their calls to be prophets, God’s premortal knowledge and foreordination of Jeremiah formed the basis of his commission to act as God’s spokesman: “Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee” (Jer. 1:5).

The Commission

In the Moses, Gideon, and Jeremiah passages, following the recitation of the grounds for their prophetic vocation, the call itself

is made. Thus in Moses' call, God tells him, "Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt" (Ex. 3:10; compare Judg. 6:14; Jer. 1:5b). The Enoch pericope differs from the biblical passages only in that the "call" is stated before the "introductory word," which is introduced by the causal conjunction "for": "And he heard a voice from heaven, saying: Enoch, my son, prophesy unto this people and say unto them—Repent, for thus saith the Lord: I am angry with this people" (Moses 6:27).

The Objection

In each of the call passages, the prophet protests his inability to fulfill his prophetic commission. Moses—possibly with an eye to the slaying which had initially caused him to flee from Egypt—objects to his call by saying, "Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?" (Ex. 3:11). Indeed, Moses' protest against his commission is not exhausted by a single outburst, but is followed by four more which, with their concomitant words of reassurance and giving of a sign, constitute the balance of Exodus 3 and most of Exodus 4. Gideon replies to his task of saving "Israel from the hand of the Midianites" (Judg. 6:14) with the protest, "Oh my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house" (Judg. 6:15). Both Jeremiah and Enoch cite youth and lack of speaking ability as reasons for refusing their prophetic calls (in like manner, Moses complains of a want of eloquence in Ex. 4:10); Enoch further insists that "all the people hate me" (Moses 6:31; Jer. 1:6).

The Reassurance

In response to their protestations of inexperience and incapacity, God assures his chosen vessels of aid sufficient to fulfill their commission. In reply to Moses' objection, God replies simply, "Certainly I will be with thee" (Ex. 3:12a). Similarly, the Lord tells Gideon, "Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man" (Judg. 6:16). Both Moses and Gideon had misunderstood their calls, assuming that they would be required to stand alone against the power of Pharaoh or the might of the Midianites. God's reassurance places in sharper focus the nature of their prophetic commission: they are to act as God's agents and spokesmen, but they could expect and would receive his constant companionship and aid.

The divine reassurance to Jeremiah and Enoch represents an explicit response to their objections. Jeremiah had objected that he was "a child" (Jer. 1:6) and could not speak, to which God replies,

“Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak. Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the Lord” (Jer. 1:7–8). Enoch had similarly protested his youth, his want of glibness, and the contempt in which he was held. God’s response contains both command and reassurance: “Go forth and do as I have commanded thee, and no man shall pierce thee. Open thy mouth, and it shall be filled, and I will give thee utterance” (Moses 6:32). If before Enoch had been weak in speaking, God’s gift would make that weakness a strength unequalled in other men: “Behold my Spirit is upon you, wherefore all thy words will I justify; and the mountains shall flee before you, and the rivers shall turn from their course” (Moses 6:34).

The Sign

To betoken and guarantee the prophetic commission, God gives the prophet a sign, usually of a miraculous nature. Gideon is the only one among the prophets under discussion who explicitly requests and receives a sign: “And he said unto him, If now I have found grace in thy sight, then shew me a sign that thou talkest with me” (Judg. 6:17), whereupon he is provided a sign. The sign given Moses following his first objection was the promise that he and the children of Israel would “serve God upon this mountain” (Ex. 3:12b). Following his third objection (Ex. 4:1), his hand is made leprous and then healed again; after his final protest, Moses is given a rod “wherewith thou shalt do signs” (Ex. 4:17). God touches Jeremiah’s mouth, previously the source of embarrassment and shame, and says, “Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth” (Jer. 1:9). Following God’s reassurance to Enoch, God tells him to “anoint [his] eyes with clay, and wash them” (Moses 6:35). Thereafter, “he beheld the spirits that God had created; and he beheld also things which were not visible to the natural eye” (Moses 6:36).

CONCLUSION

The report of the prophetic vocation of Enoch in the book of Moses accords with impressive consistency with the call narratives in the Bible. All of the elements of the prophetic call pattern isolated and examined by Habel in the calls of Moses, Gideon, and Jeremiah are also found in the Enoch passage; with one minor exception, the order of the elements in the vocation of Enoch is the same as in the call accounts recorded in the Bible. This additional authenticating detail places Enoch more securely in the tradition of the prophets and the book of Moses more firmly in the form and tradition of the prophetic literature.

APPENDIX
THE NARRATIVE CALL PATTERN IN EXODUS, JUDGES, JEREMIAH, AND MOSES

	Exodus 3:1-12	Judges 6:11-21, 23	Jeremiah 1:4-10	Moses 6:26-36
1. Divine Confrontation	<p>Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father in law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb.</p> <p>And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed.</p> <p>And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt.</p> <p>And when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see,</p>	<p>And there came an angel of the Lord, and sat under an oak which was in Ophrah, that pertained unto Joash the Abi-ezrite: and his son Gideon threshed wheat by the winepress, to hide it from the Midianites.</p> <p>And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him,</p>	<p>Then the word of the Lord came unto me, saying,</p>	<p>And it came to pass that Enoch journeyed in the land, among the people; and as he journeyed, the Spirit of God descended out of heaven, and abode upon him.</p>
2. Introductory Word	<p>God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I.</p> <p>And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.</p> <p>Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God.</p> <p>And the Lord said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows;</p>	<p>and said unto him, The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valour.</p> <p>And Gideon said unto him, Oh my Lord, if the Lord be with us, why then is all this befallen us? and where be all his miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not the Lord bring us up from Egypt? but now the Lord hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites.</p>	<p>Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee,</p>	<p>(27b) for thus saith the Lord: I am angry with this people, and my fierce anger is kindled against them; for their hearts have waxed hard, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes cannot see afar off;</p> <p>And for these many generations, ever since the day that I created them, have they gone astray, and have denied me, and have sought their own counsels in the dark; and in their own abominations have they devised murder, and have not kept the commandments, which I gave unto their father, Adam.</p>

And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites.

Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel is come unto me: and I have also seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppress them.

3. Commission

Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt.

4. Objection

And Moses said unto God, Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?

Wherefore, they have foresworn themselves, and, by their oaths, they have brought upon themselves death; and a hell I have prepared for them, if they repent not;

And this is a decree, which I have sent forth in the beginning of the world, from my own mouth, from the foundation thereof, and by the mouths of my servants, thy fathers, have I decreed it, even as it shall be sent forth in the world, unto the ends thereof.

And the Lord looked upon him, and said, Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee?

(27a) And he heard a voice from heaven, saying: Enoch, my son, prophesy unto this people, and say unto them—Repent,

Then said I, Ah, Lord God! behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child.

(31) And when Enoch had heard these words, he bowed himself to the earth, before the Lord, and spake before the Lord, saying: Why is it that I have found favor in thy sight, and am but a lad, and all the people hate me; for I am slow of speech; wherefore am I thy servant?

5. Reassurance

And he said, Certainly I will be with thee;

But the Lord said unto me, Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak. Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the Lord.

And the Lord said unto Enoch: Go forth and do as I have commanded thee, and no man shall pierce thee. Open thy mouth, and it shall be filled, and I will give thee utterance, for all flesh is in my hands, and I will do as seemeth me good.

Say unto this people: Choose ye this day, to serve the Lord God who made you.

APPENDIX—Continued

	Exodus 3:1-12	Judges 6:11-21, 23	Jeremiah 1:4-10	Moses 6:26-36
6. Sign	<p>and this shall be a token unto thee, that I have sent thee: When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain.</p>	<p>And he said unto him, If now I have found grace in thy sight, then shew me a sign that thou talkest with me.</p> <p>Depart not hence, I pray thee, until I come unto thee, and bring forth my present, and set it before thee. And he said, I will tarry until thou come again.</p> <p>And Gideon went in, and made ready a kid, and unleavened cakes of an ephah of flour: the flesh he put in a basket, and he put the broth in a pot, and brought it out unto him under the oak, and presented it.</p> <p>And the angel of God said unto him, Take the flesh and the unleavened cakes, and lay them upon this rock, and pour out the broth. And he did so.</p> <p>Then the angel of the Lord put forth the end of the staff that was in his hand, and touched the flesh and the unleavened cakes; and there rose up fire out of the rock, and consumed the flesh and the unleavened cakes. Then the angel of the Lord departed out of his sight.</p> <p>And the Lord said unto him, Peace be unto thee; fear not: thou shalt not die.</p>	<p>Then the Lord put forth his hand, and touched my mouth. And the Lord said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth.</p> <p>See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant.</p>	<p>Behold my Spirit is upon you, wherefore all thy words will I justify; and the mountains shall flee before you, and the rivers shall turn from their course; and thou shalt abide in me, and I in you; therefore walk with me.</p> <p>And the Lord spake unto Enoch, and said unto him: Anoint thine eyes with clay, and wash them, and thou shalt see. And he did so.</p> <p>And he beheld the spirits that God had created; and he beheld also things which were not visible to the natural eye; and from thenceforth came the saying abroad in the land: A seer hath the Lord raised up unto his people.</p>

NOTES

¹Walther Zimmerli, *Ezekiel*, trans. Roland E. Clements, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), 1:97–100. I also wish to thank my colleague, David P. Wright, for sharing with me his insights on the narrative call pattern in the Bible and in the book of Moses.

²Blake T. Ostler, "The Throne-Theophany and Prophetic Commission in 1 Nephi: A Form-Critical Analysis," *Brigham Young University Studies* 26 (Fall 1986): 67.

³Norman Habel, "The Form and Significance of the Call Narratives," *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 77 (October 1965): 298–301. The literature treating the narrative call pattern in biblical literature is not inconsiderable; compare Rudolf Kilian, "Die prophetischen Berufungsberichte," in *Theologie im Wandel* (Tübingen: Katholisch-Theologische Fakultät Tübingen, 1967), 356–76; Antonius H. J. Gunneweg, "Ordinationsformular oder Berufungsbericht in Jeremia 1," in Gerhard Müller and Winfried Zeller, eds., *Glaube Geist Geschichte: Festschrift für Ernst Benz* (Leiden: Brill, 1967), 91–98; Klaus Baltzer, "Considerations Regarding the Office and Calling of the Prophet," *Harvard Theological Review* 61 (October 1968): 567–81; Wolfgang Richter, *Die sogenannten vorprophetischen Berufungsberichte* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1970); Gregorio del Olmo Lete, *La vocación del líder en el antiguo Israel* (Salamanca: Universidad Pontificia de Salamanca, 1973); W. Vogels, "Les récits de vocation des prophètes," *Nouvelle revue théologique* 95 (January 1973): 3–24.

⁴The appendix is a chart showing the respective elements of the narrative call passages in Ex. 3:1–4:17; Judg. 6:11–24; Jer. 1:4–10; and Moses 6:26–36.

⁵Norman Habel, "Call Narratives," 298–99.

NOTES TO THE APPENDIX

¹In general, the analysis of the call passages into constituent elements follows Habel, "Call Narratives," 297–309.

²It should be noted that the commission element in the Enoch passage precedes, rather than follows, the introductory word section.

³In the Moses call passage, the objection/reassurance/sign elements continue from Ex. 3:13–4:17:

Objection 2: Ex. 3:13–14; Reassurance: Ex. 3:14–22

Objection 3: Ex. 4:1; Sign: Ex. 4:2–9

Objection 4: Ex. 4:10; Reassurance: Ex. 4:11

Objection 5: Ex. 4:13; Reassurance: Ex. 4:14–16; Sign: Ex. 4:17.

Ode to Isis

Follow the body to Byblos, and to lotus
Shores where, Isis, your imprisoned lord
Lies lean in his casket: his floating
Soul wails weary for its shard.

All Nile waits birthless for the nexus.
Seth with famine fingers strangles
The land. Come, goddess, with ankh
In hand, with immortality mingled,

Be bearer of seed to Egypt's gaunt
Daughters, restoring the scattered parts
Of your lord: husband and brother. Grant
Greenery to fields: heal hearts.

—Edward L. Hart
1941

The Legislative Antipolygamy Campaign

Richard D. Poll

“Presumptions,” Orma Linford has pointed out, “are the balancing blocks in striking a balance between majority rule and minority rights, between liberty and order, between established social rules and religious freedom.” Two interrelated presumptions underlay the nineteenth-century campaign against Mormon plural marriage that is reviewed in this essay. The first was that an institution so repugnant to conventional Christian values as polygamy could not qualify as an “exercise of religion” presumptively entitled to protection under the First Amendment. The second was that Mormon plural marriage, whatever its practitioners might believe or say about it, was “an overt act against peace and good order” (Jefferson’s phrase) and therefore ineligible for constitutional protection. These presumptions, Linford notes, eventually paved the way “for any kind of action Congress desired to take.” She might have included acts by several territorial and state legislatures and added that the same presumptions led the federal courts to sustain almost all such measures.¹

The legislative campaign against Mormon plural marriage began in Congress a few weeks before the new Republican party took official cognizance of the “twin relics of barbarism” in its 1856 platform. It continued for almost forty years, with Idaho, Nevada, and Arizona joining the campaign toward the last. A mixture of political and moralistic considerations motivated each phase of the undertaking, from the linking of polygamy with slavery in the early efforts to assert congressional authority over the “domestic institutions” of the territories to the coupling of plural marriage and “theocratic despotism” in the later efforts to establish non-Mormon control of the government of Utah Territory. The latter pairing was often labeled “the Mormon Question.”²

The distinction of introducing the first antipolygamy measure belongs to Edwin Ball, an Ohio Republican, who on 14 April 1856,

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asked the unanimous consent of the House of Representatives to offer this resolution:

Resolved, That the Committee on the Judiciary be instructed to inquire into the propriety of the enactment by Congress of a law prohibiting, under appropriate penalties, any person who may have been married, and who at the time may have a husband or wife living, from intermarrying or cohabiting with another, within any of the territory of the United States; anything in any law, regulation, or usage in such territory to the contrary notwithstanding. And if the said committee shall deem such regulation expedient that they shall prepare and report to this House a bill to that effect with as little delay as may be convenient.³

Objection being made, Ball moved to suspend the rules so that the proposition could be received. But the solid Republican contingent, augmented by only a handful of Americans (Know-Nothings) and Democrats, failed to give the motion the necessary two-thirds majority, and it died.

The first antipolygamy bill was introduced in the House in the same preelection session. Republican Justin S. Morrill, Representative and afterwards Senator from Vermont and a man remembered by Mormons as a leader in the campaign for a monogamous America, reported the measure from the Committee on the Territories on 26 June 1856. His remarks on that occasion struck the keynote of most later arguments for congressional action against the marital practices of the Latter-day Saints:

So great is the necessity for some decisive legislation, if there are any who hesitate, I would say to them, as did Jefferson, at the time Louisiana was acquired, that they should "throw themselves on their country"—"casting behind them metaphysical subtilties, and risking themselves like faithful servants."

There is no purpose to interfere with the most absolute freedom of religion, nor to intermeddle with the rights of conscience; but the sole design is to punish gross offenses, whether in secular or ecclesiastical garb; to prevent practices which outrage the moral sense of the civilized world, and to reach even those "who steal the livery of the court of Heaven to serve the Devil in."⁴

The bill provided that any person, or persons, in the territory of the United States, who, being married, should "intermarry with . . . or cohabit with, or live with, any person or persons as partners, acknowledging the conjugal relation, the former husband or wife being still living," was to be punished by a fine of five hundred dollars and two to five years in prison.⁵ Noteworthy is the distinction between open polygamy and surreptitious bigamy and cohabitation, a distinction made in almost all subsequent legislation designed for Utah.

The Morrill bill never came up for debate in a Congress more interested in the turmoil in Kansas and the forthcoming presidential contest. It did receive attention in Utah, however, where Brigham Young suggested, with oratorical embellishments, the course that Latter-day Saints intended to follow if such laws were passed:

Polygamy they are unconstitutionally striving to prevent; when they will accomplish their object is not for me to say. . . . How will they get rid of this awful evil in Utah? They will have to expend about three hundred millions of dollars for building a prison, for we must all go into prison. And after they have expended that amount for a prison, and roofed it over from the summit of the Rocky Mountains to the summit of the Sierra Nevada, we will dig out and go preaching through the world.⁶

The Utah Expedition kept the Mormon Question before the Thirty-fifth Congress, but again the demand for antipolygamy legislation was insufficient to produce results. Representative Morrill reintroduced his bill in January 1858, but it died in committee.⁷ When Indiana Representative Schuyler Colfax sought to amend an appropriation bill to repeal all laws of Utah "authorizing or tolerating polygamy, or the collection of tithes for the benefit or maintenance of any religious organization," he was ruled out of order.⁸

With the termination of the Utah War, the demand for action relative to the customs of the Mormons declined momentarily. But journalistic and official reports about the passive sabotage of judicial proceedings in the territory were ammunition for Republican reformers, and Morrill was back with his legislation early in 1860. It was insured of some attention by the adoption of Pennsylvanian Thaddeus Stevens's resolution instructing the Committee on the Judiciary "to inquire into the expediency of prohibiting polygamy in the Territories, and so to modify the laws of Utah as to make the future commission of that offense penal."⁹

The bill recommended by the committee contained a preamble that denounced plural marriage as an "abomination in a Christian country" and rejected the Mormon claim that it was a religious rite. Section 1 offered substantially the same definition and punishment of polygamy as were found in the earlier Morrill bills. Section 2 disapproved and annulled all acts of the legislatures of the State of Deseret and Utah Territory that incorporated The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and all other acts which "establish, support, maintain, shield, or countenance polygamy."¹⁰ The committee report reasserted the barbaric nature of polygamy, declared that the First Amendment was intended to protect only Christian belief and practices, and placed this expansive interpretation upon the authority of the national government over the territories of the United States: "It is competent for Congress to declare any act

criminal which is not sanctioned or authorized by the provisions of the Constitution.'"¹¹

No one in the House of Representatives except William H. Hooper, Utah's delegate, was willing to disagree with the censure of polygamy, but there was no such unanimity on the question of congressional powers in relation to the practice. The bill was warmly debated, the discussion colored throughout by the slavery question and strong sectionalism. The outcome, however, demonstrated that anti-Mormon sentiment was sufficiently strong to override proslavery objections and the argument that the measure would be futile. Fifty-seven Democrats, three Know-Nothings, and only one Republican opposed final passage.¹²

Delegate Hooper was heard briefly before the voting. His statement was strikingly prophetic of the results that the antipolygamy proposal did bring when finally enacted two years later:

I . . . beg all to hear me say, then, upon my honor as a gentleman, that the passage of this bill will not be unacceptable to the extreme advocates of polygamy in the Territory of Utah. It will entitle them to accuse of luke-warmness and disaffection to the common cause all those who hesitate to defend it as an institution. Sir, it will unite us all in opposition to the unjust pretensions of the national Government to put it down by force.¹³

The House bill was favorably reported from the Senate Committee on the Judiciary, but it was still untouched on the calendar when the second session of the Thirty-sixth Congress came to an end the day before Abraham Lincoln was inaugurated and a month before Fort Sumter fell.

As might be expected, the months that witnessed the beginning of the Civil War saw the Mormon Question pushed into the background. But the Republicans controlled the new Congress, and their obligation to the other "twin relic" could not be indefinitely forgotten. Morrill's bill was reintroduced on 8 April 1862, reported favorably by the Committee on the Territories, and passed without debate or roll call twenty days later.¹⁴ It came out of the Senate Committee on the Judiciary on 8 May with amendments and a recommendation that it pass.

The change proposed in Section 1 would delete reference to punishing "cohabitation without marriage" because, as Delaware Senator James A. Bayard later explained for the committee, "It would be of no utility to carry the act beyond the evil intended to be remedied."¹⁵ Section 2 was left unchanged, disapproving and annulling the charter of the LDS church and all other acts of the Utah Legislative assembly that abetted polygamy. A third section was added, the purpose of which was declared by Bayard to be

“to operate in the nature of a mortmain law, to prevent the entire property of that Territory being accumulated in perpetuity in the hands of a species of theological institutions.” It provided that no corporation or association for religious or charitable purposes in a territory could hold real property in excess of one hundred thousand dollars, all property above this amount to escheat to the United States.¹⁶

The Senate debate was perfunctory. James A. McDougall of California questioned the prudence of arousing the Mormons at a time when secure overland communications were vital to the Union cause, but only he and his colleague, Milton S. Latham, cast negative votes when thirty-seven Senators voted to accept the committee recommendations after lowering the limitation on real property holdings to fifty thousand dollars. The House concurred in the Senate amendments without debate.¹⁷

A Mormon legend to the contrary notwithstanding, President Lincoln signed the Morrill Act on 1 July 1862. It is memorable as an initial step—a foundation for later congressional action—for its provisions doomed it to failure. Section 1 defined the crime of bigamy as the act of marrying one or more persons while already having a living husband or wife, and prescribed a fine of not more than five hundred dollars and imprisonment for not more than five years as the penalty. The Mormons soon demonstrated that as long as enforcement was left to them, the act would be ignored as an unconstitutional infringement upon their religion.¹⁸ Not until the enactment of the Edmunds Act in 1882 were more than a handful of polygamy cases successfully prosecuted.

Section 2 professed to revoke the charter of the Mormon church and repeal other territorial laws, but it was rendered innocuous by the proviso that “this act shall be so limited and construed as not to affect or interfere with the rights of property legally acquired under the ordinance . . . nor with the right ‘to worship God according to the dictates of conscience.’ ”

Section 3 set a fifty thousand dollar limit on the real property of any religious association in the territories, but the exemption of “vested rights in real estate,” necessary to avoid the Constitutional ban on ex post facto legislation, weakened the force of this provision. It was ignored in Utah until the passage of the Edmunds–Tucker Act of 1887.

Sporadic efforts by territorial judges to enforce the antibigamy law came to nothing during the Civil War years, President Lincoln being disinclined to risk trouble in Utah. Only when the issues of Southern reconstruction brought a new tone and new leaders to national politics did the Mormons again receive congressional

attention. The construction of the transcontinental railroad, the expansion of western gold and silver mining, and the development of organized anti-Mormon politics in Utah with the Godbeite movement and the Liberal party all influenced the postwar approaches to the remaining "twin relic."

As early as 1866, the House Committee on the Territories held hearings on Utah affairs but was able to propose no "practical solution of the abuses and evils" believed to exist. Neither establishment of a military government nor division of the territory among its neighbors seemed to answer the Mormon Question.¹⁹ Senator Benjamin F. Wade's plan for placing all executive, judicial, and militia activities under the direct control of the governor and stripping the Mormon church of its temporal authority got nowhere, but it pointed the way for future laws.²⁰

A novel proposal was made in 1869 by Indiana Republican George W. Julian "to discourage polygamy in Utah by granting the right of suffrage to the women of that territory."²¹ It died in a committee of the House. That it was conceived in a false notion about Utah women became plain later in 1869 when the territorial legislature passed a women's suffrage law, the effect of which was to increase the voting strength of the Church-dominated People's party.

A commoner type of proposal during the years 1869-74 followed the earlier Wade bill and used some of the lessons being learned about political reconstruction in the South. The Cullom bill, named for another long-time foe of the "twin relic," Illinois Republican Shelby M. Cullom, came from the House Committee on the Territories in February 1870. A hodgepodge of thirty-four sections, it called for the appointment of all probate judges, justices of the peace, judges of elections, notaries public, and sheriffs by the territorial governor; reduced the probate courts' jurisdiction; placed the selection of jury panels in the hands of federal appointees; prescribed penalties for cohabitation and adultery as well as bigamy and polygamy; barred believers in plural marriage from jury service in polygamy and cohabitation trials; exempted polygamy and related offenses from the statute of limitations; permitted wives to testify against their husbands as to the fact of polygamous marriage; excluded polygamists from naturalization, voting, or holding public office; permitted confiscation of polygamists' property to care for their dependents; and authorized the President, "when in his judgment it shall be necessary to enforce the laws . . . or the convictions and sentences of the courts thereof, to send such a portion of the Army of the United States to said Territory as shall be required therefor."²²

New York Republican Hamilton Ward's defense of the bill echoed the spirit of the times:

I am sorry to see in this country the signs of a sickly sentimentality which proposes to punish nobody, which proposes to hang nobody, which proposes to let all the unchained passions of the human heart become free to prey upon mankind. . . . Had you hung one hundred traitors you would not have had rebellion in North Carolina and Tennessee today. Had you enforced the laws of the country against Utah years ago you would not have had this terrible power confronting you at this moment.²³

The opposition mustered some of the same arguments that were used without too great effect against the Reconstruction Acts and the Force Acts. Several of the more drastic provisions were eliminated, including the arbitrary use of the army, before the bill passed the House. A motion to recommit, which would have killed the bill without placing on the killers the onus of pro-Mormonism was narrowly defeated, Republicans comprising almost the entire voting majority that saved the bill. A fourth of the Representatives abstained on this key vote, and only nine members from the states of the former Confederacy, all Radical Republicans, voted to pass the Cullom bill.²⁴ This pattern was to be repeated in subsequent voting on antipolygamy measures, not because Democrats and Southerners were more favorable to Mormonism than their political opposites, but because the alignment on post-Civil War reconstruction inevitably influenced the consideration of similar measures for Utah.

The Cullom bill died in the Senate, partly because of reports that a liberal movement among the Saints would undermine the theocracy if external pressure were withheld. The Godbeite movement disappointed these hopes, but the excessive zeal of Utah Chief Justice James B. McKean generated sufficient embarrassment for the Grant administration to briefly reduce the pressure for new Utah legislation.

Despite later efforts to secure comprehensive reconstruction measures, as in the Freylinghuysen bill of 1873,²⁵ the only statutory product of the Grant era was the Poland Act of 1874, which sharply curtailed the jurisdiction of the Mormon-held probate courts and changed the method of impaneling juries to facilitate convictions under the Morrill Act.²⁶ A significant feature of this clearly Republican measure was language expediting appeal of convictions for polygamy to the U.S. Supreme Court. Under this provision Brigham Young's secretary, George Reynolds, was prosecuted in a test case, and in January 1879 the Court moved the antipolygamy campaign into a new phase by sustaining the constitutionality of the 1862 law.²⁷

The gist of the Court's unanimous decision follows:

[By the first amendment] Congress was deprived of all legislative power over mere opinion, but was left free to reach actions which were in violation of social duties or subversive of good order.

Polygamy has always been odious among the northern and western nations of Europe, . . . and there never has been a time in any State of the Union when polygamy has not been an offence against society, cognizable by the civil courts. . . . In the face of all this evidence, it is impossible to believe that the constitutional guaranty of religious freedom was intended to prohibit legislation in respect to this most important feature of social life.

This being so, the only question which remains is, whether those who make polygamy a part of their religion are excepted from the operation of the statute. If they are, then those who do not make polygamy a part of their religious belief may be found guilty and punished, while those who do, must be acquitted and go free. This would be introducing a new element into criminal law.²⁸

These findings in the first Supreme Court decision arising from the religion clauses of the First Amendment have been eroded since in cases involving Jehovah's Witnesses and other conscientious objectors, but in 1879 they settled the issue of constitutionality insofar as the opponents of polygamy were concerned. As for the stubborn defenders of that practice, their decade of civil disobedience, remembered in Mormon lore under the captions "crusade" and "underground," brought them and their church the pains and penalties that legislators would shortly devise and courts would almost uniformly sustain.²⁹

The Reynolds decision touched off considerable nationwide agitation. While the Liberal party and its feminine auxiliary, the Ladies' Anti-Polygamy Society, were responsible for much of the excitement, aroused moral sensibilities prompted calls for action from all parts of the country. When the Mormon reaction to the decision became known—sustain plural marriage and take the consequences—President Hayes addressed the issue in his 1 December 1879 state of the union message:

If necessary to secure obedience to the law, the enjoyment and exercise of the rights and privileges of citizenship in the Territories of the United States may be withheld or withdrawn from those who violate or oppose the enforcement of the law.³⁰

When Presidents Garfield and Arthur continued to press for action, it is not surprising that the first session of the Forty-seventh Congress, which met from December 1881 to August 1882, saw no less than twenty-three bills and constitutional amendments on polygamy introduced, along with other proposals and stacks of petitions on the Mormon Question.³¹ The Edmunds Act, the

single law that emerged from this plethora, bears the stamp of the Reconstruction era in terms and sponsorship. As finally signed on 22 March 1882, it contained nine sections, most of them designed to expedite polygamy prosecutions by defining a new offense, "cohabiting with more than one woman," and barring believers in plural marriage from jury service in such cases. Section 8 prohibited polygamists and their spouses from voting or holding selective or appointive office in any territory, without requiring conviction of law violation. Section 9 abolished the election machinery in Utah Territory and placed the registration of voters and the conduct of elections under a commission of five persons to be appointed by the president with the advice and consent of the Senate.³²

The doctrine of absolute congressional authority over the territories was relied on by Vermont Senator George F. Edmunds and other advocates of the bill. Chief opposition came from Southern senators who argued that this Republican view had brought war and ruin to the South and promised to do the same for Utah. In both houses of Congress, opposition came exclusively from Democrats, many of whom charged that sections 8 and 9 were intended to "transfer the political power of this Territory to the Republican party—a party which has 1,500 votes out of 15,000."³³ The bill passed the Senate without a record vote. After the Democratic motion to recommit failed in the House of Representatives, the measure was approved decisively; all but five of the "nay" votes came from below the Mason–Dixon line.³⁴

It is clear that national political considerations influenced the enactment and enforcement of the Edmunds Act, both in Utah and in Washington. Eventually Utah would become a state whose allegiance was worth courting. Developments in the 1880s suggest that the Republican strategy was to bring such pressure against the Mormon church as an institution that power would pass into the hands of pragmatic Mormons who would yield on polygamy to relieve the pressure and achieve statehood, while the Democrats tried to hold the support of Utah's Mormon majority by a milder policy of law enforcement.³⁵

The Utah Commission, originally three Republicans and two Democrats, arrived in Salt Lake City in 1882 and went vigorously to work. Its set of new election regulations included the registration requirement of an oath of nonpolygamous status. Three years later the Supreme Court held that the oath exceeded the commission's authority,³⁶ but meanwhile it had been used in barring an estimated twelve thousand polygamists, alleged polygamists, and their wives from the polls. This reduced People's party majorities in Utah but produced no Liberal party victories outside the small gentile mining and railroad towns.³⁷

Hardly had the "judicial crusade" been launched, which would convict thirteen hundred Mormons of polygamy or unlawful cohabitation and send hundreds of others into hiding, before more antipolygamy proposals appeared. President Arthur called for Congress to assume "entire political control" of Utah, and the 1884 Republican platform called for the use of military force if necessary to suppress polygamy and Mormon theocratic power. The election, however, was a Democratic victory, and the pressure for legislation was temporarily relieved.

While President Cleveland did not ignore the Mormon Question, his view of the subject was more restrained than that of his predecessors. He recalled Governor Eli H. Murray in March 1886 for "impeding the government of Utah," and he refused to sign the Edmunds-Tucker Act a year later. Beginning in 1887 the Utah Commission was divided in its recommendations, those members who denied the need for new legislation being all Democrats. The new district attorney and district judge appointed in the latter part of Cleveland's first administration took such a conciliatory view that many polygamists voluntarily surrendered, declared their guilt, pledged future compliance with the law, and were given very light sentences. Although President Harrison restored the zealous Judge Charles S. Zane in 1889, the "judicial crusade" never regained its former momentum.³⁸

Meanwhile, Congress worked intermittently under Senator Edmunds's leadership to produce the last major piece of legislation on polygamy and related Utah issues. The Vermont Senator's first proposal to amend the 1882 antipolygamy statute was introduced before that year ended, but it died on the calendar.³⁹ An expanded measure made its way to Senate passage in 1884, the opposition Southern Democrats receiving some help from Senators like Massachusetts Senator George F. Hoar who objected to the provision that would eliminate female suffrage in Utah. More than a third of the Senate did not participate in the final vote for passage, and the House went off to the elections without considering the measure.⁴⁰

The Forty-ninth Congress (1885-86) witnessed the initial committee sponsorship of a proposal to amend the Constitution to ban polygamy. Speaking for the House Committee on the Judiciary, Virginian John Randolph Tucker urged passage on the ground that "the evils of the Mormon system are deeper than can be cured by ordinary legislation." Apparently congressmen were of the opinion, however, that there was still latitude under the existing Constitution, for the resolution expired on the calendar.⁴¹ Instead, Tucker cooperated with Senator Edmunds to produce the last major statute dealing with the Mormon Question.

The Edmunds–Tucker Act, an extraordinary composite of moral, social, and political reform legislation, became law on 3 March 1887. Most of its twenty-seven sections sought to facilitate conviction of polygamists by permitting exceptions to standard judicial and law enforcement procedures. Spouses were permitted to testify against their mates, witnesses could be attached without previous subpoena, illegitimate children “born more than twelve months after the passage of this act” were not entitled to inherit property from their fathers, all marriages must be publicly recorded, and prosecutions for adultery, incest, and fornication could be initiated by law enforcement officials. The “right of dower,” abolished by Utah statute to protect plural wives, was reinstated; like the provision concerning children’s inheritances, it was intended to place polygamous relationships outside the pale of the law.

Several major sections looked beyond Mormon marital practices to the temporal interests and institutional solidarity of the LDS church:

1. The Church, the Perpetual Emigrating Fund Company, and the Nauvoo Legion (Utah militia) were all abolished as corporate entities, and all property held by them in excess of the \$50,000 limit set by the 1862 Morrill Act was declared escheated to the United States, to be administered by the territorial supreme court for the schools of Utah. Under these provisions, which exempted houses of worship, parsonages, and cemeteries, over \$800,000 worth of real and personal property was soon under federal management.
2. Female voting was abolished over the objections of a few congressional friends of the national women’s suffrage movement, and a comprehensive test oath was prescribed to eliminate polygamists from voting, office holding, or jury service.
3. All judicial, law enforcement, and militia powers in Utah were vested in federal appointees—the now-permanent Utah Commission, governor, territorial district and supreme courts, U.S. marshal, and local officials answerable to them. Even the probate judges, whose duties were now reduced to handling estates and presiding over county commissions, were made appointive by the president with the endorsement of the Senate.
4. Direct responsibility for the schools was placed on the territorial supreme court in an effort to promote a public educational system free from Mormon influences.⁴²

It will be observed that most of the proposals of the Cullom bill of 1870 had thus finally become law. Evidence of the state of national opinion was the recognition by opponents of this comprehensive measure that theirs was a lost cause. Softness toward Mormonism was as politically inexpedient as is softness toward communism in the

present generation, and partisan division in Congress is reflected only in the fact that such opposition as there was to the Edmunds-Tucker Act came from the Democratic side.⁴³

The federal antipolygamy statutes applied to all of the territories, and efforts to prosecute violators were pressed sporadically in Idaho and Arizona, where substantial Mormon communities existed in the 1870s and 1880s. Most of the local sponsorship for such efforts came from Republicans like Idaho's Fred T. DuBois, whose primary target was the political solidarity and Democratic leanings of the Saints. Evidence of this concern was the adoption by both territorial legislatures of test oaths banning all members of the Mormon church from voting, office holding, and serving on juries. The Idaho statute, adopted in 1885, disfranchised every "member of any . . . organization . . . which teaches . . . its members . . . to commit the crime of bigamy or polygamy . . . as a duty arising or resulting from membership."⁴⁴

A comparable law was passed in Arizona in 1885, but Mormons who were willing to take the oath were permitted to do so and to vote; the law was repealed two years later. Nevada's 1887 ban on voting by anyone "who is a member of the 'Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,' commonly called the Mormon Church," was part of a political maneuver to annex part of Idaho Territory. A year later the Nevada Supreme Court found it violative of the state constitution.⁴⁵

On the other hand, the Idaho test oath was vigorously enforced to disfranchise the Latter-day Saints in several elections. The ban on Mormon voting was then incorporated in the first Idaho state constitution (1890), the U.S. Congress finding the provision acceptable after heatedly debating the matter. Since the Woodruff Manifesto did not immediately end bloc voting by Idaho's Mormons, the state legislature then changed the language of the test oath to disqualify members of any organization which "teaches or has taught . . . patriarchal or celestial marriage." This apparently *ex post facto* law was upheld by the Idaho Supreme Court, but the "has taught" language was repealed shortly afterward when it became clear that Idaho Mormons, like their Utah contemporaries, were no longer bloc voting. The Idaho constitution still disfranchises believers in "patriarchal or celestial marriage," but the interpretation since an Idaho Supreme Court decision in 1908 has been that only the practice of polygamy in this world is meant by the language.⁴⁶

If Congress and state courts had little difficulty justifying the antipolygamy and associated anti-Mormon statutes of the 1880s, the United States Supreme Court proved equally capable of adjusting the First Amendment to the temper of the times. The prohibition of unlawful cohabitation was upheld in 1885,⁴⁷ and a Utah court ruling

that no sexual intercourse need be proved to establish guilt was sustained.⁴⁸ The doctrine of "constructive cohabitation," which predicated guilt on any acknowledgment of a marital tie by word or act, was found constitutional in 1886.⁴⁹ Only the ingenious "segregation" doctrine, under which Lorenzo Snow and others were sentenced to several consecutive terms of six months for being found guilty of unlawful cohabitation at several past intervals of time, was overruled.⁵⁰ The escheatment of Mormon church property was upheld in 1890,⁵¹ and even the Idaho test oath survived a court challenge,⁵² increasing the likelihood that a similar congressional requirement for Utah voters, if enacted, would be found constitutional.⁵³

By now it had become apparent to many Mormons that discretion must be the better part of valor. Not only was the property of the Church being taken into custody, but one Utah judge was refusing to naturalize any LDS immigrants on the ground that they belonged to a subversive organization. The Republican platform of 1888 called for further laws "to divorce the political from the ecclesiastical power, and thus stamp out the attendant wickedness of polygamy,"⁵⁴ and President Harrison's appointments for Utah betokened an increase in the pressure on the Saints. When, in the spring of 1890, the Cullom-Struble bill proposed to apply an Idaho-style test oath to Utah, something had to give. The measure, which bore the names of now-Senator Shelby M. Cullom of Illinois and Representative Isaac R. Struble of Iowa, did not reach debate in either house of Congress,⁵⁵ but it was one of the factors that made 1890 the decisive year in the history of Mormon polygamy and the campaign by the federal government for its abolition.

The Woodruff Manifesto of 25 September 1890, by which the President of the LDS church announced his intention to comply with the law of the land and advised the Saints to do the same, is complex and ambiguous in its causes, meaning, and consequences. It did relieve the pressure for further antipolygamy legislation, but it did not prevent Congress from requiring that Utah's state constitution contain a guarantee of separation of church and state and a proviso "that polygamous or plural marriages are forever prohibited."⁵⁶

Neither the proviso and implementing statutes, nor sporadic efforts at enforcement, nor the dogmatic stand against polygamy that the Mormon church adopted early in the twentieth century has prevented a small segment of Latter-day Saints from responding to the same rationale that brought perhaps 25 percent of their forebears into polygamous families during the half-century that the United States marshaled its legal resources against the practice. On the other hand, the same considerations that led most of Wilford Woodruff's Mormon contemporaries to come to terms with his 1890 revelation

make most of today's Mormons so content with the option of only one wife per family that even a Supreme Court reversal of the Reynolds decision would be unlikely to generate a revival of the patriarchal order of marriage.

Notes

¹Orma Linford, "The Mormons and the Law: The Polygamy Cases," *Utah Law Review* 9, pts. 1, 2 (Summer, Winter 1964): pt. 1, 329-30. This two-part series, based on Linford's Ph.D. dissertation with the same title (University of Wisconsin, 1964), is an informative overview of the federal laws and a detailed review of the court cases stemming from them.

²My article "The Twin Relic" is still the most complete review of congressional measures; appendix J itemizes and gives document citations on bills and resolutions introduced between 1856 and 1890. Useful on Utah background and political events mentioned in this essay are Gustive O. Larson, *The "Americanization" of Utah for Statehood* (San Marino, Calif.: Huntington Library, 1971); Robert J. Dwyer, *The Gentile Comes to Utah* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America, 1941); B. H. Roberts, *A Comprehensive History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 6 vols. (1957; reprint, Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 1965); and Edward Leo Lyman, *Political Deliverance: The Mormon Quest for Utah Statehood* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986).

³*Congressional Globe*, 34th Cong., 1st sess., 895. The first oblique congressional attempt to discourage polygamy was in an 1854 proposal, not adopted, to extend the federal land laws to Utah. It provided that "the benefits of this act shall not extend to any person who shall now, or at any time hereafter, be the husband of more than one wife" (*ibid.*, 33d Cong., 1st sess., 1092).

⁴*Ibid.*, 1491.

⁵*Ibid.*

⁶*Journal of Discourses* 4:39.

⁷*Congressional Globe*, 35th Cong., 1st sess., 184-85, 2114.

⁸*Ibid.*, 1985.

⁹*Ibid.*, 36th Cong., 1st sess., 793, 796.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, 1410, 1559.

¹¹*House Reports*, 36th Cong., 1st sess., no. 83 (1860).

¹²*Congressional Globe*, 36th Cong., 1st sess., 1409-13, 1491-1501, 1512-23, 1540-46, 1557-59, and appendix, 187-202.

¹³*Ibid.*, 1558-59.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, 37th Cong., 2d sess., 1581, 1847-48.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, 2506.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, 2507. According to Linford, "The Mormons and the Law," pt. 1, 315, this was "the first mortmain law ever enacted by Congress."

¹⁷*Congressional Globe*, 37th Cong., 2d sess., 2507, 2587, 2766, 2769, 2906. The text of the act is in chap. 126 of *Statutes at Large* 12 (1865), 501-2.

¹⁸Brigham Young told a Salt Lake City congregation: "How are we transgressing that law? In no other way than by obeying a law which God has given unto us. . . . By and by men will appear in the departments of the Government who will inquire into the validity of some laws and question their constitutionality" (*Journal of Discourses* 11:270). Asked five years later what the Mormons were going to do about the law, he replied, "Nothing at all; we mind our own business and I hope everybody else will" (*ibid.*, 14:120).

¹⁹*House Reports*, 39th Cong., 1st sess., no. 96 (1866).

²⁰*Congressional Globe*, 39th Cong., 1st sess., 3750.

²¹*Ibid.*, 41st Cong., 2d sess., 72.

²²*Ibid.*, 1367-69. For debate on the bill, see *ibid.*, 1009, 1339, 1367-73, 1517-20, 1607, 2142-53, 2178-81, 2189, 2603, 3136, 3571-82, 4305, and 41st Cong., 3d sess., 92.

²³*Ibid.*, 41st Cong., 2d sess., 2114.

²⁴*Ibid.*, 2179, 2181.

²⁵A milder version of the Wade and Cullom proposals, this bill sponsored by Senator Frederick T. Freylinghuysen, New Jersey Republican, passed the Senate but died in the House (*ibid.*, 42d Cong., 3d sess., 1133, 1375, 1779-1815, 1833, 2128).

²⁶*Ibid.*, 43d Cong., 1st sess., 3395, 4466-75, 5417-18. The Poland Act is found in chap. 469 of *Statutes at Large* 18 (1875), 253-56.

²⁷*George Reynolds vs. U.S.*, 98 U.S. 145 (1879).

²⁸*Ibid.*

²⁹Larson, *The "Americanization" of Utah*, 61-222.

³⁰James D. Richardson, ed., *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents, 1789-1902*, 10 vols. (Washington, D.C.: Bureau of National Literature, 1911), 6:4512.

³¹Poll, "The Twin Relic," appendix J.

³²Chap. 47 of *Statutes at Large* 22 (1883), 30-32; Linford, in "The Mormons and the Law," pt. 1, 321, n. 59, points out that in 1882 common usage defined polygamists to include people who "maintain its lawfulness." The proposed language of the Edmunds Act was therefore modified to protect the voting rights of Mormons who only believed but did not practice plural marriage. It did not prevent believers from being barred from office-holding, however.

³³Senator George H. Pendleton, Ohio, *Congressional Record*, 47th Cong., 1st sess., 1211.

³⁴The history of the Edmunds bill is in *ibid.*, 68, 577, 1152-63, 1195-1217, 1732, 1845-77, 1910, 1931, 2197.

³⁵Larson, *The "Americanization" of Utah*, 223-304; Henry J. Wolfinger, "A Re-examination of the Woodruff Manifesto in the Light of Utah Constitutional History," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 39 (Fall 1971): 328-49. The fullest account is Lyman, *Political Deliverance*.

³⁶Murphy vs. Ramsey, 114 U.S. 15 (1885).

³⁷See Stewart L. Grow, "A Study of the Utah Commission, 1882-1896" (M.S. thesis, University of Utah, 1954), especially 82-194.

³⁸Poll, "The Political Reconstruction of Utah Territory," 120-21. The more lenient Cleveland policy accounts in part for the relatively large number of convictions reported by the Utah Commission for the years 1888 (334) and 1889 (346).

³⁹*Congressional Record*, 47th Cong., 2d sess., 3056-59, 3170-87.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, 48th Cong., 1st sess., 4553-66, 5182-91, 5234-50, 5281-98.

⁴¹*House Reports*, 49th Cong., 1st sess., no. 2568 (1886).

⁴²Paraphrased from chap. 396 of *Statutes at Large* 24 (1887), 635-41.

⁴³The history of the bill is found in *Congressional Record*, 49th Cong., 1st sess., 122, 345, 405-8, 457-62, 503, 520, 549-67, 611, 5437, 5516, 8032, and 49th Cong., 2d sess., 581-96, 609, 695, 1585, 1785-87, 1877-83, 1896-1904, 1943, 1970, 2667. See also, *House Reports*, 49th Cong., 2d sess., no. 2753 (1887). The only Republican vote against the act was by Senator Hoar, who opposed the women's suffrage provision.

⁴⁴"An Act to Provide for Holding Elections," Idaho, sec. 16 of *Thirteenth Session Laws* (1884-85), 110.

⁴⁵Joseph H. Groberg, "The Mormon Disfranchisements of 1882 to 1892," *Brigham Young University Studies* 16 (Spring 1976): 399-408; Eric N. Moody, "Nevada's Anti-Mormon Legislation of 1887 and Southern Idaho Annexation," *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly* 22 (Spring 1979): 21-32.

⁴⁶Groberg, "The Mormon Disfranchisements," 401-7; see also Merle W. Wells, *Anti-Mormonism in Idaho, 1872-1892* (Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 1978).

⁴⁷Clawson vs. U.S., 113 U.S. 143 and 114 U.S. 477 (1885).

⁴⁸Cannon vs. U.S., 116 U.S. 55 (1885) and 118 U.S. 355 (1886).

⁴⁹Snow vs. U.S., 118 U.S. 346 (1886).

⁵⁰*In re Snow*, 120 U.S. 274 (1887).

⁵¹Late Corporation of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints vs. U.S., 136 U.S. 1 (1890) and *ibid.*, 140 U.S. 664 (1891).

⁵²Davis vs. Beason, 133 U.S. 333 (1890).

⁵³Linford, "The Mormons and the Law," pt. 1, 308-70, deals with the cases on polygamy and unlawful cohabitation; pt. 2, 543-91, details the civil rights cases and those affecting the LDS church as an entity.

⁵⁴Kirk H. Porter, ed., *National Party Platforms* (New York: Macmillan, 1924), 149-50.

⁵⁵*Congressional Record*, 51st Cong., 1st sess., 3327, 4000, and *House Reports*, 51st Cong., 1st sess., no. 1811 (1890).

⁵⁶Lyman, *Political Deliverance*, is the fullest and most recent account; see also Larson, *The "Americanization" of Utah*, 243-304; and Roberts, *A Comprehensive History of the Church* 6:179-229, 277-346, which are more readily accessible.

Hamlet at Cairo

Where the ghost watches the moon rise over Ceti's pyramid

I could stay in the grave, Horatio,
but give myself to water more than earth.

The Nile shivers with a ghost or two.
It's in the blood, from father to son,

that being dead, we may be what we like.

He ate the body of vengeance.
Me? I claim the tree at Ceti's grave.
A fitting throne—

I could spread a branch or two
as easily as Ophelia's skirts,

sit on the bough to watch her rise,
and catch the shimmering tail of asps
knotting over his veiled eyes.

Goose! Not him. Let dead kings lie.
I mean the moon,
and Ceti—

See how she pulls herself against his side?
One sphere—a breast, a womb, an open eye—

Hst, Horatio—history is made tonight.

*The Pharaoh has preserved his skin,
but she must do the leavening.*

A pretty ditty.
I should sing it over water.

There. She's in him now.
Let no mother, but a lover
tend him, kings.

You or I could not buy his lot,
not for all the fish in Denmark
or the foreskins of two true servants.

The Greeks once named that woman's face.
No, not Helen. What was the word?
But then, the Greeks, they died as a race.

So? That was Ptolemy's folly,
another, mine—

Delusion will get you
six princes, no more
to bear you up.

Mark it, Horatio. Make no slaves
of gods and sundry skeletons.

Athena! Or was it Artemis?
An archer, I think—

No matter. Dust is to dust.

The Hebrews kept their god alive
and called him only that he was—

then said, "*who art thou,
that we should worship thee?*"

And what have I called virgins,
that they might live, rise
over me?

How grandly these Egyptians failed.

He is dead.
But he holds and loves her yet.

Grave robbers take the rest.

Watch close, Horatio.
A woman's kiss could do no better—

At that final point,
as she breaks free
and rises whole above him,

she leaves one drop of honey
to linger from between her lips.

Her light is in him. See?
That point where he is no more
than the silhouette against her,

you would almost think he lived again.

—Virginia Ellen Baker

Minding Business: A Note on “The Mormon Creed”

Michael Hicks

On Christmas Day 1844, William Wines Phelps wrote a letter to William Smith in which he described Mormonism as “the great leveling machine of creeds.”¹ Smith would have understood Phelps’s meaning. His late brother, the Prophet Joseph, had always maintained that Mormonism should not only resist the pat confessions of Christian orthodoxy—which, as he said, “set up stakes . . . to . . . the Almighty”²—but also resist pat formulations of Mormon belief itself. “The Latter-day Saints have no creed,” Joseph had once said, “but are ready to believe all true principles that exist, as they are made manifest from time to time.”³ Yet in September 1844, three months before Phelps wrote his Christmas letter, William Smith scolded a New York congregation for forgetting “the Mormon Creed,” a creed, he observed, that consisted of a single well-known phrase: “mind your own business.”⁴

The use of this Americanism as the “Mormon Creed” appears to have originated in the political controversies of the 1842 Illinois state elections. In a circular dated 20 December 1841, Joseph Smith had urged the Saints to vote with him for the Democratic ticket in the following year’s election.⁵ By spring 1842, the issue of whether or not the Mormons would vote as a block began to heat up in the press. Republican newspapers routinely loosed their invective against both the Democratic-courting Mormons and the Mormon-courting Democrats. They charged the Latter-day Saints and the Democrats with conspiring to keep Democratic incumbents in office while maintaining for the Mormons “extraordinary chartered privileges—over and above those enjoyed by any other sect.”⁶ Matters were not helped when Governor Boggs of Missouri, the man whose vendetta against the Mormons had helped drive them into Illinois, was mysteriously shot from outside his home. Among the Republican journalists, the presumption of innocence was not with the Saints.

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Chiefly to rebut the charges being leveled at the Church from Illinois and Iowa journalists, William Smith founded the *Wasp*, a newspaper dedicated to combatting “the shafts of slander . . . foul calumnies, and base misrepresentations” of anti-Mormons.⁷ In its ninth issue Smith printed this notice:

Mormon Creed

To mind their own business, and let everybody else, *do likewise*. Publish this, ye *Editors*, who boast of equal rights and privileges.⁸

This barb understandably irritated the editors at whom it was aimed. The *Alton Telegraph and Democratic Review* quickly reprinted Smith’s notice, followed by this response:

The above is taken from the *Wasp*, a political paper published by the Mormons at Nauvoo. This advice given is *unexceptionable*; and it is to be regretted that it had not been adopted in the “Mormon Creed,” when Joe Smith issued his proclamation to elect Snyder and Moore, and defeat the “old settler,” Joe Duncan. If the Mormons had minded “their own business,” instead of attempting to control the elections of this State as a church, they would have spared themselves the dilemma in which their unwarrantable *spiritual* interference has placed them.⁹

Within a month, the Creed had also aroused the attention of the *New York Herald’s* editor. Apparently considering that the Creed comprised all of Smith’s blurb, he wrote of the Mormons’ “Delicious Privileges, *according to the Mormon Creed*.”¹⁰ At some point in the season, the Creed seems to have appeared in another East Coast newspaper, for the British Mormon paper, the *Millennial Star*, quoted Smith’s Mormon Creed (slightly altered) and credited it to a “Boston Paper.”¹¹

From this point the Mormon Creed embarked on a long career, its intended audience rapidly coming to embrace members of the Church as well as outsiders. In the weeks preceding William Smith’s publication of the Creed, the elite of Nauvoo were introduced by Joseph Smith to a new order of marriage, the rituals of Freemasonry, and the Mormon temple endowment ordinance—all of which were to be concealed from the public. Amid the whispering about these matters at Nauvoo in the early 1840s, a growing spirit of privacy took hold of the Saints. The Mormon Creed became an emblem of that spirit.

As its intended audience expanded, the Creed was shortened. The *Millennial Star* published another note on the Creed in June 1843, but reduced its text to “mind your own business” and gave its own version of the Creed’s applicability both to the Gentiles and to some overly-zealous Mormons: “We think the practice of the above [creed] worthy of recommendation to many who are not over scrupulous in

their statements respecting the character and religion of the Saints; also worthy the notice of those Saints who forget the gospel by attacking the systems of men.”¹² In January 1844, the *Nauvoo Neighbor* published a mock recipe, a cure for the “terrible disorder of the mouth commonly called ‘Scandal.’” Among its ingredients was one ounce of “an herb called by the Mormons, ‘mind your own business.’”¹³ By the spring of 1844, the phrase had entered the Prophet’s public speaking. In his 7 March 1844 address to the Saints, he complained of those outsiders who would not “mind their own business.” His solution to their interference was to recommend that the Saints, fittingly, “let them alone to use themselves up.”¹⁴

Shortly after Joseph Smith was assassinated, Orson Pratt published the Creed in his *Prophetic Almanac* for the coming year, more or less restoring it to its original wording: “Let every body mind their own business.”¹⁵ But this less direct version of the Creed clearly came to be dominated by the simpler “mind your own business,” which, as the *Times and Seasons* noted in 1846, was “Good Council [*sic*].”¹⁶

The idiom of “minding one’s own business” can be traced in some form at least back to Seneca.¹⁷ In English usage, one finds Bacon using it in 1625—“Neither can he, that mindeth but his own Businesse, finde much matter for Envy”—and Addison in 1711—“I have nothing to do but mind my own business.”¹⁸ In the American republic, however, “mind your own business” had a special place in folk parlance well before its connection with the Mormons, and was known among frontiersmen as “the Negro’s eleventh commandment.” Joseph Smith’s grandfather Asael cited it as such in a letter to Jacob Towne, 14 January 1796.¹⁹ In 1821, the “Backwoods Preacher,” Peter Cartwright, advised those who were prone to complain about jokes in his sermons, “I want you to take the negro’s eleventh commandment; that is, Every man mind his own business.”²⁰

When the main body of Latter-day Saints moved to Utah, they continued to hold forth the phrase as the Mormon Creed. The *Deseret News*, for example, freely alluded to it in editorials addressed to the outside world: “all is peace and prosperity . . . men are attending to ‘their own business,’ as usual, according to the Mormon Creed”; “‘Mormons’ . . . believe in attending to their own business, and letting foreign matters alone”; “take every liberty of exhorting and advising each accountable dweller within the extended borders of the United States, who really loves his country and her free institutions, to observe the ‘Mormon’ motto of ‘mind your own business.’” One editorial title summed up the Saints’ attitude toward critics of affairs in Utah with the terse inquiry, “Whose Business Is It?”²¹

The Creed also inspired some Saints to versification in the 1850s. An anonymous comic poem titled “Mind Your Own Business” ran as a filler in the 2 March 1854 *Deseret News* (emphasis in original):

The substance of our query	If it is, we'll join the rabble,
Simply stated would be this—	And act the nobler part
Is it <i>anybody's business</i>	Of the tattlers and defamers
what <i>another's business</i> is?	Who throng the public mart.
If it is or if it isn't	But if not, we'll act the teacher
We would really like to know	Until each meddler learns
For we're certain if it isn't	It were better in the future
There are some who make it so.	To mind his own concerns.

Apparently at least two “Mormon Creed” songs were written in the 1850s. One was by the popular Utah songwriter William Willes and was to be sung to the tune of “In the Days When We Went Gypsying.” Its four eight-line stanzas emphasized the Creed’s prophetic origins, saying it was built upon “the rock of ages” and was endorsed by “the Spirit’s warning voice.” The Chorus exhorted:

So let us mind the Mormon Creed,
And then we shall all thrive,
Shall hide a multitude of sins,
And save our souls alive.²²

Another was by Emily Hill, contained seven ten-line stanzas, and was to be sung to the tune of “The Ivy Green.” The first stanza gives a good sense of its moralistic tone:

'Tis a difficult thing, indeed, to stand
And always do just right,
To fully adopt the Mormon creed
With heart and soul and might;
To know just when to hold our peace,
And when to intercede,
When mercy should indeed prevail
Or justice take the lead—
'Tis a difficult thing, it is indeed,
To fully adopt the Mormon creed.²³

Brigham Young began citing the Creed as early as 1846.²⁴ Indeed, the Creed became so strongly associated with President Young that by 1855 he seemed to have been credited with coining it. George Taylor’s elaborate and ornate masthead for his father John’s apologetic newspaper *The Mormon* rather prominently displayed a scroll with the words “Mormon Creed: Mind your own business. —Brigham Young.”²⁵ President Young explained his understanding of the Creed in an address given on 16 March 1856, in which he discussed a Brother Vernon, who was not well known in the community but who “has been quietly and industriously practicing the principles of our religion”:

He is not known except by a few of his associates, who have been laboring with him at the Sugar Works. But, suppose he had been guilty of swearing in the streets, of getting intoxicated, of fighting and carousing, he would have been a noted character. . . . But brother Vernon is almost entirely unknown, because he has lived his religion, kept the commandments of God, and minded his own business. So it is with many in this City, they are known by few, they live here, year after year, and are scarcely known in the community, because they pay attention to their own business.

They live their religion, love the Lord, rejoice continually, are happy all the day long, and satisfied, without making an excitement among the people. This is "Mormonism."²⁶

Samuel W. Richards summed up this philosophy of the Creed in a Fourth of July toast that same year: "Every man in his own place, minding his own business—that's Mormonism."²⁷

Nevertheless, the "party feeling" was so strong among the Utah Saints that outsiders got just the opposite opinion of their ability to stay clear of one another. Richard Burton noted after his 1860 visit that in Salt Lake City "every man's concerns are his neighbour's" then ironically added that among the Mormons "no one apparently ever heard of that person who 'became immensely rich'—to quote an Americanism—by 'minding his own business.'"²⁸

After the death of President Young, his successor as Church President, John Taylor, kept the Creed alive. To those who persisted in probing the intrigues and rumors of the "barbarous" marriage practices in Utah, President Taylor wielded the Creed, at the same time encouraging the Saints to cultivate anew a sense of privacy about polygamy, which he called "the secret of the Lord":

I was lately called upon as a witness . . . I was required to divulge certain things. I did not know them to divulge. Perhaps some of you have had some people come to you with their confidences. I have. But I don't want to be a confidant. Why? Because if they made a confidant of me and I was called before a tribunal, I could not, as an honorable man, reveal their confidences, yet it would be said I was a transgressor of the law. . . . Therefore I tell them to keep their own secrets, and remember what is called the Mormon Creed, "Mind your own business."²⁹

In the same year that John Taylor gave this advice, he dedicated the Logan Temple, in which an ornate backpainted glass fixture preserved the Creed in a unique form for future generations:

Mormon Creed
Mind
Your Own Business
Saints
Will
Observe This
All Others Ought To.³⁰

In 1883 a *Juvenile Instructor* article ruminated at length on the Creed, reminiscing that “in the earlier days of the Church the Saints kept cards posted up in their houses containing the ‘Mormon’ creed, ‘Let every man mind his own business!’ ” The article went so far as to claim that Joseph Smith had once taught that the Creed was “a key by which [the people] could get back into the presence of God,” though no particular source to that effect was cited.³¹ Similar *Juvenile Instructor* editorials appeared in succeeding years, advising the young to remember the Creed. These editorials, written by George Q. Cannon, noted that “our elders are frequently asked for our creed, and people wonder when they are told . . . that the only creed we have is: ‘Mind your own business.’ ”³² Indeed, Cannon wrote on another occasion, the phrase was “the only creed that I have ever known the Church to publish as such. . . . Only think of the happiness and peace and good feeling that would prevail everywhere among the Saints if they would live up to this simple yet comprehensive creed!”³³

Yet despite its comprehensiveness, the Creed began to fade from the Mormon idiom. In the early twentieth century, it was occasionally cited by the elderly to the young, as in this 1903 observation by President Joseph F. Smith: “The ‘Mormon’ creed: ‘mind your own business,’ is a good motto for young people to adopt who wish to succeed, and who wish to make the best use of their time and lives. . . . Let it be remembered that nothing is quite so contemptible as idle gossip.”³⁴ But the young Apostle John W. Taylor sadly noted the waning of the phrase: “I sometimes think it would be very well for us Latter-day Saints to attend to one motto that used to be very prominent among us, that is the Mormon Creed—‘Mind Your Own Business,’ and let other people’s alone.”³⁵ About the same time, in the surrounding culture, the phrase underwent a change in status, slipping from eleventh to twelfth commandment in the cynic’s law of Moses—the new eleventh being “Thou shalt not be found out.”³⁶

In the face of the phrase’s devaluation, Mormon “fundamentalists”—ardent preservers of polygamy after the body of the Church did away with the practice—continued to cite the Creed, in part by using it as an occasional source for fillers in an underground publication, *Truth*, whose editors and subscribers saw themselves as continuing the underground marriage practices of John Taylor’s days or even of Nauvoo. Wishing by the Creed to bolster the common secrecy, the fundamentalists published notices such as this:

“The Mormon Motto”

Nosey—Say, it is none of my business, but how does your husband keep his wives?

Lucy—That’s right, it is none of your business.³⁷

One of the ironies of Mormon history is that would-be preservers of plural marriage began to take up the Mormon Creed as their own, aiming it squarely at the institutional Church.

Among the English-speaking Saints at large, the phrase is now barely a memory, though its substance, the ideas of stewardship and of "creed" itself, continues to provoke discussion.³⁸ The saying seems to have taken its place in a dim corner of Church history. One encounters it, if at all, in reprint anthologies of quotations from early Church leaders, where it probably strikes contemporary observers as little more than a rhetorical curio—a fit subject for a scholarly note. But with its comic touch and common sense, the Mormon Creed embodied much of the spirit of quintessential Mormonism, which, perhaps not surprisingly, has shown itself the great leveling machine of even its own creed.

Notes

¹*Times and Seasons* 5 (1 January 1844): 758.

²Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook, eds., *The Words of Joseph Smith*, vol. 6 of *The Religious Studies Monograph Series* (Provo: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1980), 238, 256.

³Joseph Smith, Jr., *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 2d ed. rev., 7 vols. (reprint; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1970), 5:215 (hereafter cited as *History of the Church*).

⁴See Minutes of the New York Conference, 4 September 1844, Journal History of the Church, Library-Archives, Historical Department, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah.

⁵For the text of the circular and a commentary by Roberts, see *History of the Church* 4:479–80.

⁶"The Mormons," *Alton Telegraph and Democratic Review*, 9 July 1842.

⁷"Introductory," *Wasp*, 16 April 1842. For the background of this newspaper, see Jerry C. Jolley, "The Sting of the *Wasp*: Early Nauvoo Newspaper—April 1842 to April 1843," *Brigham Young University Studies* 22 (Fall 1982): 488–89.

⁸*Wasp*, 11 June 1842, emphasis in original. This appears to be the Creed's first publication as such; its private origins and evolution remain unknown.

⁹"Mormon Creed," *Alton Telegraph and Democratic Review*, 2 July 1842, emphasis in original. The *Warsaw Signal*, the *Wasp*'s best-known rival, no doubt would have commented on the Creed, but it temporarily suspended publication from 4 May to 9 July 1842.

¹⁰"Rising in the World," *New York Herald*, 13 August 1842, emphasis in original. The article was reprinted in John C. Bennett, *The History of the Saints; or, An Exposé of Joe Smith and Mormonism* (Boston: Leland and Whiting, 1842), 159–61.

¹¹"Mormon Creed," *Latter-day Saints' Millennial Star* 3 (October 1842): 112. It is conceivable that the *Star* editors were alluding to a Boston paper publication that antedated Smith's *Wasp* notice. My research has so far failed to confirm this hypothesis.

¹²*Millennial Star* 4 (June 1843): 29.

¹³"Recipe," *Nauvoo Neighbor*, 10 January 1844.

¹⁴Ehat and Cook, *The Words of Joseph Smith*, 322. See also 24 September 1843, 250, for an earlier articulation of the same principle: "In Nauvoo every one Steward over their own." When, in early summer, Joseph received a request to return to Nauvoo and face the law, he may have been alluding to the Creed when he burst out, "I know my own business." Stephen Markham alluded more obviously to the Creed when, several days earlier, a committee of Mormons conspiring to get Joseph back to Nauvoo invited Markham to join them: "Mind your own business, brethren," he said, "and let Joseph alone." See Linda King Newell and Valeen Tippetts Avery, *Mormon Enigma: Emma Hale Smith, Prophet's Wife, "Elect Lady," Polygamy's Foe, 1804–1879* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1984), 187–88.

¹⁵Orson Pratt, *Prophetic Almanac for 1845* (New York: Privately printed, 1845), 5.

¹⁶*Times and Seasons* 6 (15 January 1846): 1103. This was reprinted from Samuel Brannan's *New York Messenger*. Compare the more genteel notice published in *Times and Seasons* 5 (15 May 1844): 542: "An excellent rule for living happy in society, is never to concern one's self with the affairs of others, unless they desire it."

¹⁷See *Ludus de Morte Claudii*, sec. 10: "I always mind my own business." Paul the Apostle may have had a similar thought in mind in 1 Thes. 4:11, which is found in some modern translations as "mind your own business."

¹⁸*Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. "Business": "to mind one's own business." See also Burton Stevenson, comp., *The Home Book of Proverbs, Maxims and Familiar Phrases* (New York: Macmillan, 1948), 263–64.

¹⁹Asael Smith's letter reads, in part, as follows:

Give my best regards to your parents, and tell them that I have taken up with the eleventh commandment, that the Negro taught to the minister, which was thus:

The minister asked the Negro how many commandments there was; his answer was, "Eleben, sir." "Aye," replied the other: "What is the eleventh? That is one I never heard of." "The elebenth commandment, sir, is mind your own business."

So I choose to do, and give myself but little concerns about what passes in the political world. (Asael Smith to Jacob Towne, 14 January 1796, Essex Institute, Salem, Massachusetts. Published in Richard L. Anderson, *Joseph Smith's New England Heritage: Influences of Grandfathers Solomon Mack and Asael Smith* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1971], 119)

²⁰*Autobiography of Peter Cartwright, the Backwoods Preacher*, ed. W. P. Strickland (New York: Carleton and Porter, 1857), 218; see also Albert D. Richardson, *Beyond the Mississippi: From the Great River to the Great Ocean . . . 1857–1867* (Hartford, Conn.: American Printing Co., 1867), 289. A Utah Mormon gave a toast on 24 July 1854 to "The Mormons—They know how to keep the eleventh commandment, viz.:—Mind your own business." See *Deseret Weekly*, 3 August 1854.

²¹All quoted from the *Deseret Weekly*: "Signs of the Times," 7 February 1852; "States," 6 November 1850; "Facts and Suggestions," 17 June 1858; and "Whose Business Is It?" 20 January 1858. See also "Mind Your Own Business," 3 October 1855.

²²This Mormon Creed song is mentioned in the report of the New Year's ball at the Salt Lake Social Hall (*Deseret News*, 22 January 1853) and in the report of Fourth of July festivities (*The Mormon*, 11 July 1857). Willes published the song's text in his *Mountain Warbler* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1872), 42–43. I have been unable to locate the tune.

²³*Deseret Weekly*, 25 March 1857. See also the mention of this song's performance at the Fourth of July celebration of that year, *The Mormons*, 11 July 1857. The best known setting of Dickens's "The Ivy Green" was that by Henry Russell; Emily Hill's lyrics, however, do not seem to fit that setting.

²⁴See the Twelve to Orson Hyde, 16 March 1846, in Eldon J. Watson, *Manuscript History of Brigham Young* (Salt Lake City: Privately printed, 1971), 88. See also Brigham Young's discourse of 6 February 1853, "Organization and Development of Man," in *Journal of Discourses* 2:92.

²⁵A facsimile of the masthead is found in B. H. Roberts, *The Life of John Taylor, Third President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1963), opposite 247. See also "The Mormon," *St. Louis Luminary*, 10 March 1855.

²⁶*Journal of Discourses* 3:254–55; see also 3:152 and 5:292.

²⁷*Deseret Weekly*, 9 July 1856.

²⁸Richard F. Burton, *The City of the Saints*, ed. Fawn M. Brodie (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1963), 257.

²⁹*Journal of Discourses* 25:355 (19 October 1884). See also Charles W. Penrose, "The 'Mormon Creed,'" *Deseret Weekly* 38 (30 March 1889): 430–31, directed at critics of the Church.

One wonders if this 1882 statement by H. H. Almond, made during the government's antipolygamy campaigns, might have any particular reference to the Mormons: "The devil has got a lot of maxims which his adherents . . . are not slow to use," including "Mind your own business" (see *The Oxford Dictionary of English Proverbs*, 3d ed. rev. [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970], 533).

³⁰This piece is in the possession of the Museum of Church History and Art, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah.

³¹"Mind Your Own Business," *Juvenile Instructor* 18 (15 August 1883): 250–51.

³²"Editorial Thoughts," *Juvenile Instructor* 21 (15 December 1886): 376. Here and elsewhere, Cannon seems particularly troubled that the Mormon children were growing up ignorant of the Creed.

³³*Ibid.* 20 (1 May 1885): 108–9. An interesting account of how the Creed was used by parents against their children appears in Charles L. Olsen, *Autobiography*, 27, microfilm of typescript in Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

³⁴*Improvement Era* 6 (March 1903): 388; reprinted in *Gospel Doctrine: Selections from the Sermons and Writings of Joseph F. Smith*, 2d ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1919), 136. President Smith's statement was also reprinted in the "Two-Minute Sermon" section of the *Deseret News*, 24 November 1934. See also "The Mormon Creed—Special Services at Hanley," *Millennial Star* 71 (28 January 1909): 54; and "Mind Your Own Business," *Improvement Era* 10 (July 1907): 812.

³⁵Quoted in *Truth* 7 (January 1942): 190. I have been unable to locate the original publication of this statement. Since Taylor was excommunicated in 1911, it undoubtedly was prior to that date.

³⁶See Stevenson, *Home Book of Proverbs*, 264; "The Eleventh Commandment," *Contributor* 15 (October 1894): 765.

³⁷*Truth* 4 (January 1939): 160.

³⁸See, for example, Michael Hicks, "Do You Preach the Orthodox Religion?: Thoughts on the Idea of Heresy in the Church," *Sunstone* 6 (September–October 1981): 32, and the response to it in Mark C. Dangerfield, "Do You Teach the Orthodox Religion?" *Sunstone* 10, no. 11 (1986): 19–20.

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Compiled by Gary P. Gillum

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Brigham Young University Studies
1102 JKHB
Brigham Young University
Provo, Utah
84602

Brigham Young University Studies is abstracted in *Current Contents: Behavioral, Social, and Management Sciences*; indexed in *Religion Index One: Periodicals* (articles) and *Index to Book Reviews in Religion*; and listed in *Historical Abstracts*, *Arts and Humanities Citation Index*, *American History and Life Annual Index*, and the *MLA International Bibliography*. Member, Conference of Editors of Learned Journals.

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