

Translation Concerns

Problem Exists Between Chair and Seer Stone

This chapter rests on the assumption that the translation was iron-clad.

Translation Dice

Names of only interpretation “*We went to Salt Lake.*”

- And we did come to the land which we called **Bountiful**, because of its much fruit and also wild honey;
- And it bordered upon the land which they called **Desolation**, it being so far northward that it came into the land which had been peopled and been destroyed

Original names with interpretation “*We went to Salt Lake, which is, being interpreted, A Salty Lake.*”

- And we beheld the sea, which we called **Irreantum, which, being interpreted, is many waters.**
- And one of the king’s servants said unto him, **Rabbanah, which is, being interpreted, powerful or great king,**
- Now the place was called by them **Rameumptom, which, being interpreted, is the holy stand.**
- our fathers called it **Liahona, which is, being interpreted, a compass;**
- And they did also carry with them **deseret, which, by interpretation, is a honey bee;**
- And it came to pass that he came to the waters of **Ripliancum, which, by interpretation, is large, or to exceed all;**

Original names with no interpretation *We went to <insert reformed egyptian here>*

- And he laid a tax of one fifth part of all they possessed... a fifth part of their **ziff**, and of their copper, and of their brass and their iron; and a fifth part of their fatlings
- And we began to till the ground, yea, even with all manner of seeds, with seeds of corn, and of wheat, and of barley, and with **neas**, and with **sheum**, and with seeds of all manner of fruits; and we did begin to multiply and prosper in the land
- And they also had horses, and asses, and there were elephants and **cureloms** and **cumoms...**

Possible loanshifts “*We went to.. uhh uh Bitter Pond?*”

Horses¹, Cattle², Asses³, (Wild) Goats⁴, Elephants⁵, etc.⁶ have been described to be “plausible” loanshift.

- And they also had **horses**, and **asses**, and there were **elephants** and cureloms and cumoms; all of which were useful unto man, and more especially the elephants and cureloms and cumoms.
- And they said unto him: Behold, he is feeding thy **horses**. Now the king had commanded his servants... that they should prepare his **horses** and chariots, and conduct him forth to the land of Nephi... Now when king Lamoni heard that Ammon was preparing his **horses** and his chariots he was more astonished
- And it came to pass that the people of Nephi did till the land, and raise all manner of... **cattle** of every kind, and **goats**, and **wild goats**, and also many **horses**.
- And it came to pass that we did find upon the land of promise, as we journeyed in the wilderness, that there were beasts in the forests of every kind, both the **cow** and the **ox**, and the **ass** and the **horse**, and the **goat** and the **wild goat**, and all manner of wild animals, which were for the use of men.
- And also all manner of **cattle**, of **oxen**, and **cows**, and of **sheep**, and of **swine**, and of **goats**, and also many other kinds of animals which were useful for the food of man.

Schrödinger’s Deseret

When a word unfamiliar or awkward to the 19th century popped up, Joseph Smith either said the

- Meaning of the word: *Honeybee*
- the word and meaning: *Deseret, which, by interpretation, is a honey bee*
- just the raw word: *Deseret*
- a potential loanword: *Mosquito?*

If there was an ironclad translation, why would there be no uniformity when translating? For the word ziff, is there no word in English that this metal translates to? If horses and asses were potential loanwords from these Jews, were the words cureloms and cumoms just invented? Also, why would the authors translate and give the interpretation of their own native words in their own books? Hypothetically, there could always be a divine explanation for why the translation is as messy as it is despite being an ironclad translation- but the parsimonious conclusion is that this is not ironclad.

¹FairLDS: [Horse Loanshifts](#)

²FairLDS: [Cattle Loanshifts](#)

³FairLDS: [Ass Loanshifts](#)

⁴FairLDS: [Goats Loanshifts](#)

⁵FairLDS: [Elephants Loanshifts](#)

⁶FairLDS: [Book of Mormon Anachronisms](#)

Quotes are quotes!

Prophets often quote the same words from Isaiah. Sometimes they are not exact. The following examples are explicitly defined as quotes in the Book of Mormon.

Isaiah 52:1

- ...Awake, awake **again, and** put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments... (3 Nephi 20)
- Awake, awake, put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments... (2 Nephi 8)

Isaiah 52:7

- How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of Him that bringeth good tidings; that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good; that publisheth salvation; that **sayeth** unto Zion, Thy God reigneth; (Mosiah 12)
- How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings **unto them**, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings **unto them** of good, that publisheth salvation; that **saith** unto Zion, Thy God reigneth! (3 Nephi 20)

While unassuming at first, this poses some interesting problems. If the method of translation is “after the manner of their language that they may come to understanding”, this would imply that Joseph Smith’s understanding of the Bible would allow him to have creative liberties when quoting Jesus (compare Mosiah 12, 3 Nephi 16, and Isaiah 52) and other prophets. If the words appeared in an ironclad manner (see above section), we would expect the text to be the same.

Words of Isaiah- Not Plain unto You.

The Book of Mormon contains several chunks of Isaiah. “Quoted in the Book of Mormon are nearly all of Isaiah chapters 2–14, 29, and 48–54.”⁷ We learn in the Book of Nephi that these quotes originate from the plates of brass. The Book of Mormon dates the plates of Brass to have been created at least before 600 BCE.⁸ The Plates of Brass contains writing from both Proto-, or first, Isaiah and Deutero-Isaiah.

According to Encyclopedia Britannica:

⁷Ensign: Book of Mormon, Commentary on Isaiah See note 1

⁸1 Nephi 3 is the last date that the Plates of Brass could have been updated from the East

the Book of Isaiah is generally divided by scholars into two (sometimes three) major sections, which are called First Isaiah (chapters 1–39), Deutero-Isaiah (chapters 40–55 or 40–66), and—if the second section is subdivided—Trito-Isaiah (chapters 56–66)... First Isaiah contains the words and prophecies of Isaiah, a most important 8th-century BCE prophet of Judah, written either by himself or his contemporary followers in Jerusalem (from c. 740 to 700 BCE), along with some later additions, such as chapters 24–27 and 33–39.

Encyclopedia Britannica's [Isaiah](#)

If we give the most generous estimates, this would indicate that the record of Isaiah that Nephi possessed from the brass plates would have definitely been younger than 140 years old. When Nephi records Isaiah in the Book of Mormon, we should expect this to be an extremely well preserved copy compared to current translations.

If we assume the authors of the Book of Mormon were quoting ⁹ text from an ancient source of Isaiah, we would expect that the Book of Mormon text would be more original and not lean intensely towards the 1769 King James Version. It seems that the brass plates are extremely similar to the 1769 King James Version of Isaiah- a document that would not be organized until over two thousand years later.

KJV Italics

Italics in the King James Version of the Bible are included since these honest translators wanted to show the words that they added by their own discretion. Since the Hebrew source text may seem ambiguous and confusing if it were translated directly, the translators took liberties to better fit the source text of Isaiah to fit conventional English grammar practices.
¹⁰

The problem with this fact is that even if the Plates of Brass were translated into King James English, we wouldn't expect the two texts that had been separated from the source text throughout the course of over two thousand years to have the italicized words line up so similarly

KJV Mistranslations

Given that the King James translation of the Bible had its own unique processes and own unique errors, we would not expect to see the same errors from the King James translation to appear in the Plates of Brass, allegedly recorded over two thousand years prior. This inconsistency is written about in the works of some Latter-day Saints. Stan Spencer has noted that in every case where the Revised Version offers a “more accurate translation” the Book of Mormon follows the King James Version:

⁹2 Nephi 11:2

¹⁰Ensign: [Why are some words italicized in the Bible?](#)

“If the Book of Mormon’s rendering of Isaiah 6 and 7 constituted a more accurate translation than the KJV, it would be expected to differ from the KJV in ways that parallel at least some of these revisions. It does not. In every case it more closely follows the KJV.”

Similarly, Grant Hardy has suggested that the Isaiah in the Book of Mormon is not what we would expect from an ancient source at 600 BC. He wrote:

Latter-day Saints sometimes brush such criticism [that the Book of Mormon pulls from deutero-Isaiah] aside, asserting that such interpretations are simply the work of academics who do not believe in prophecy, but this is clearly an inadequate (and inaccurate) response to a significant body of detailed historical and literary analysis. Recent Isaiah scholarship has moved ... in favor of seeing the book of Isaiah as the product of several centuries of intensive redaction and accretion. In other words, even Isaiah 2–14 would have looked very different in Nephi’s time than it did four hundred years later at the time of the Dead Sea Scrolls, when it was quite similar to what we have today

While we may not know exactly what the ancient Hebrew was trying to convey or say with certainty, with increased scholarship and reason, we know what certain words do not say. In cases where scholars and translators must arbitrarily choose a word that they believe fits the source text, it may not be the case that another translator would choose the same word. The list below is a compilation of KJV mistranslations and translations that were arbitrarily chosen by the King James translators. If the Plates of Brass were a copy of Isaiah over two thousand years prior, we would not expect to see both the mistranslations and the arbitrarily chosen translations from the KJV translators to appear in the Book of Mormon

List of inconsistent translations

Proto-Isaiah

Deutero-Isaiah

Style and Grammar

Is the Book of Mormon in Appalachian English or King James English? Many apologetics explain the strange English in the Book of Mormon with two explanations: The grammatical structure and style in question is

- Joseph Smith's understandings of God was that of bad grammar which resulted in a volume of scripture in Appalachian English.
- Truly how the Nephite recorders recorded their records which were then translated into King James English.

It cannot be either. We know that the Book of Mormon was not written in the language that Joseph Smith was normally communicating with since we have documented the differences between his style and the style of the Book of Mormon- presumably he followed his understanding of King James English. We can assume that Joseph Smith's understanding of King James English was from the scriptures, which is definitionally a perfect text for this- however, the Book of Mormon cannot be King James English because of the many inconsistencies.