

## ***The Handwritten Book of Mormon and Book of Mormon Comparative – UPDATES.*** -Including new **OM** and **Chicago Leaves** data.

**Y**ears of anticipation were satisfied with the November 2021 release of *Revelations and Translations, Volume 5: Original Manuscript of the Book of Mormon* (JSPRT5) by The Joseph Smith Papers (JSP) and Church Historian’s Press. In similar fashion to what was done in 2015 for the *Printer’s Manuscript* (PM), this massive tome houses high-definition color scans of the surviving pages of the original handwritten manuscript of the Book of Mormon, as well as color-coded transcripts found on their partner pages. A truly Herculean effort.

The release of both *The Handwritten Book of Mormon* (THBOM) and *Book of Mormon Comparative* (BOMC) in 2017 were aided by the 2015 *JSP Revelations and Translations, Volume 3, Parts 1 & 2: Printer’s Manuscript of the Book of Mormon* as well as *The Original Manuscript of the Book of Mormon* by Royal Skousen, produced in 2001. Neither of the former two books could have been produced without the latter two.

It was exciting to learn that newly discovered **OM** fragments as well as the addition of the **Chicago Leaves**, two nearly complete **OM** sheets (4 pages), had become available for scholars and students alike. This new data required an update of my THBOM & BOMC digital files to be uploaded to BOMsource.com. There were a few other issues that needed some housekeeping as well. In general, here are the modifications:

Update of all **OM** data: Many corrections to Skousen’s seminal work in 2001 have come to light, requiring attention. Some of which were either errors or additional clarifications. As one of the main editors of JSPRT5, Mr. Skousen was able to incorporate these changes via the JSP. News of a few recently discovered **OM** fragments were also included. All modifications and previous data remain in the normal **BLUE** coding.

The **Chicago Leaves**: Donated to the University of Chicago in the 1920s, two leaves of the **OM** were acquired by the church in 1984. JSPRT5 co-editor Robin Scott Jensen advanced the inclusion of these four pages by making a convincing case for their authenticity, even though Royal Skousen was skeptical – a bias he has held since their acquisition. These unique pages address verses found in the Book of Alma – chapters three, four, and five. Their presence is indicated within these three chapters exclusively in **PURPLE** text.

BOMC hyphens and parenthesis: Hyphens from the OM/PM were previously indicated by “[**-**]” in the BOMC. If a hyphen was missing from the document (where one should have been) it was indicated by “()”. Both of these items were not included in THBOM and have been eliminated now from the BOMC – helping to minimize some of the busyness.

Superscript of inserted words: Another favorable technique utilized in THBOM was the use of turning inserted words (normally with a caret mark) into <sup>superscript</sup>. The BOMC indicated these words by putting them in (parentheses) in the left-hand column and highlighting them in **BOLD-RED** in the right. The left column has swapped these enclosed words with <sup>superscripts</sup> of them. The right column remains the same. This also helps cut back on syntax congestion, as well as adding congruity to THBOM and BOMC.

*Italics*: Because of JSPRT5, the use of *italics* in THBOM/BOMC is unnecessary. All instances have been removed, except for the *italics* used in **chapter headings** in the right column. Once again, this was originally incorporated in THBOM, and it reduces the clutter and makes the text easier to read.

Original text over corrections: Changes have been made to existing OM text to favor the original intent over the corrections. An example can be found in Helaman 14. Oliver Cowdery's OM days were plagued with spelling learning curves. By the time he made a copy of it (PM) a year later, he had made notable improvements. In BOMC Helaman 14:1, we see the word *which* written as *wech*. In the following verse, he wrote *geve* over *give*. This is a very common correction for Oliver – his spelling incessantly preferred the letter *e* over the letter *i*. Although he was quick to repair his indiscretions, these were honest spelling issues. At times his spelling missteps show *intent*, or perhaps a bit of confusion. I leave the interpretation to you. It is because of the possibilities of any sort of *intent*, that I offer any/all “same sitting” corrected letters in their original stroke in the left-hand column, and the corrected (and currently authorized) letters in the right-hand column. I'm sure you will find these original letters worth inclusion.

The entire editing process transpired between June and September 2022.