Alma's distinctive use of the word state in the Book of Mormon is present in his unique concentration of state, his tendency to reword with state, and his treatment of a shared topic involving state.
NOTES AND COMMUNICATIONS

Alma's Use of State in the Book of Mormon: Evidence of Multiple Authorship

Philip A. Allred

Joseph Smith claimed the Book of Mormon was a product of multiple ancient authors. Recent studies of the words and phrases used in the book's various writers have provided evidence of this claim. The following notes on how the word state is employed in the Book of Mormon suggest that Alma_2 can be singled out as a distinct author within the record.

Statistical Significance

Eleven individuals in the Book of Mormon used the word state. Only Alma used the word to any degree of potential

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2 The condition of a person or thing, as with respect to circumstances or attributes; Webster's Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary of the English Language (1989), s.v. "state."

3 Abinadi, Alma_2, Amulek, Benjamin, Jacob, Lehi, the Lord, Mormon, Moroni, Nephi, and an angelic visitor to Nephi all employed the word state; cf. Eldin Ricks, Eldin Ricks's Thorough Concordance of the LDS Standard Works (Provo, UT: FARMS, 1995), 691–92.

4 An author must display at least 35 total words. Alma is the only author in a natural way (Alma used state 35 times in two instances per 1,000 words). The concentration of the word state four times in three verses with paradisiacal existence in 2 Nephi concentration of state appears in the forthcoming book by Keller entitled Mormon: An Aid to Interpretation.

5 For instance, even though Al in Alma 40:12–15, he is addressing which is unique to him in the Book of Mormon can be made between Alma and the Dr. John L. Hilton, BYU, for explanation.
The Book of Mormon: Multiple Authorship

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4 An author must display at least one use of the word per one-thousand total words. Alma is the only author whose use of state qualifies in this preliminary way (Alma used state 35 times in 19,137 total words, which equals nearly two instances per 1,000 words). The idea for this comparative figure is drawn from Roger R. Keller’s article entitled “Law and Commandments in the Book of Mormon” (Provo, UT: FARMS, 1991). The full methodology is spelled out in a forthcoming book by Keller entitled Author Uniqueness within the Book of Mormon: An Aid to Interpretation.

5 For example, even though Alma used state an unusual number of times in Alma 40:12–15, he is addressing the topic of the postmortal spirit world, which is unique to him in the Book of Mormon. Hence, no statistical comparison can be made between Alma and the other writers in this case. I am indebted to Dr. John L. Hilton, BYU, for explaining these critical points on statistical significance.
Now, concerning the state of the soul between death and resurrection.

. . . the spirits of those who are righteous are received into a state of happiness, which is called paradise, a state of rest, a state of peace. . . .

Now this is the state of the souls of the wicked, yea, in darkness, and a state of awful, fearful looking for the fiery indignation of the wrath of God upon them; thus they remain in this state, as well as the righteous in paradise, until the time of their resurrection.

Now, there are some that have understood that this state of happiness and this state of misery of the soul, before the resurrection, was a first resurrection. (Alma 40:11–12, 14–15)

Here in just five verses Alma employs the word ten times. Even more remarkable is the concentration in chapter 41 where in just two verses Alma uses state six times.

And now, my son, all men that are in a state of nature, or I would say, in a carnal state, are in the gall of bitterness and in the bonds of iniquity; they are without God in the world, and they have gone contrary to the nature of God; therefore, they are in a state contrary to the nature of happiness.

And now behold, is the meaning of the word restoration to take a thing of a natural state and place it in an unnatural state, or to place it in a state opposite to its nature? (Alma 41:11–12)

In chapter 42 Alma clusters his use of state again where it occurs six times in verses 10–13. In a work which claims to be written by multiple authors it certainly is consistent to find one of these authors displaying an unusual usage of a particular word when the other writers do not.6

6 Further evidence for this argument is found in the presence of another concentration of state approximately ninety pages earlier in Alma 12. Here again Alma clusters his use of the word nine times starting in verse 12. As John W. Welch has elsewhere noted, even though Alma’s words are found scattered among other’s writings over nearly one-fifth of the Book of Mormon, his words bear “the unmistakable imprints of a: the Book of Mormon, 153. For instance, appear between Alma 12 and Alma displays any concentration of the word state on one occasion respectively. It is also significant that in account in Mosiah 27 he used state twice.7

7 This is not to be equated with theologically employed for digressions with ‘Epanalepsis in the Book of Mormon’ 8 Another rewording with six occurrences in Alma 41:11—Alma writes nature of God; therefore, they are in a
Resumptive Rewording with State

In several instances Alma displays a tendency to reword with state. For example, in discussing the preparatory nature of mortal existence after the fall, Alma writes, “And thus we see, that there was a time granted unto man to repent, yea, a probationary time, a time to repent and serve God” (Alma 42:4). Resuming this thought six verses later, Alma renames this as a probationary state—“it became a state for them to prepare; it became a preparatory state” (Alma 42:10). Again three verses later he repeats this rewording with “Therefore, according to justice, the plan of redemption could not be brought about, only on conditions of repentance of men in the preparatory state, yea, this preparatory state” (Alma 42:13).

Another example of Alma’s tendency to reword with state is found approximately one hundred pages earlier. While visiting Gideon, Alma hoped to “find that ye were not in the awful dilemma that our brethren were in at Zarahemla” (Alma 7:3). Three verses later Alma defines the dilemma when he resumes the thought with, “I trust that ye are not in a state of so much unbelief as were your brethren” (Alma 7:6). After discoursing about the atonement he returns again to this topic and combines the two earlier phrases. “For as I said unto you from the beginning, that I had much desire that ye were not in the state of dilemma like your brethren, even so I have found that my desires have been gratified” (Alma 7:18). No other author in the Book of Mormon rewords with state—in this Alma stands completely unique.

bear “the unmistakable imprints of a single distinctive person,” in Reexploring the Book of Mormon, 153. For instance, both Ammon and Amulek’s words appear between Alma 12 and Alma 42—both employed state, but neither displays any concentration of the word; in fact, they only expressed their message with state on one occasion each; see Alma 26:17 and 34:35 respectively. It is also significant to note that in Alma’s initial conversion account in Mosiah 27 he used state twice (Mosiah 27:25).

This is not to be equated with epanaleptic repetition, which is specifically employed for digressions within a single sentence; see Larry G. Childs, “Epanalepsis in the Book of Mormon” (Provo, UT: FARMS, 1986).

Another rewording with state (though not necessarily resumptive), occurs in Alma 41:11—Alma writes that all men “have gone contrary to the nature of God; therefore, they are in a state contrary to the nature of happiness.”
When only one writer displays this kind of preference for a particular term when restating, especially a nonessential word like state, the reasonable reaction is to believe that this writer is distinct within the larger work authored by other individuals.

Shared Topic Comparison

As noted above, because of the varied topics that the different writers of the Book of Mormon address, it is difficult to make statistical comparisons of their use of any given word. On the other hand, a comparison is available between those passages where multiple writers address the same topic. One such topic is the concept of agency. It is here that Alma’s preference for state distinguishes him most clearly from the other writers of the Book of Mormon.

Because it is reasonable to expect that any given topic will generate some common language to describe it, it comes as no surprise that each of the four writers who addressed agency—Lehi, Jacob, Alma, and Samuel—all used some form of the words act and choose. Yet when each passage is further analyzed, Alma’s use of state again distinguishes him from other Book of Mormon writers.

Wherefore, he gave commandments unto men, they having first transgressed the first commandments as to things which were temporal, and becoming as Gods, knowing good from evil, placing themselves in a state to act, or being placed in a state to act according to their wills and pleasures.

... in the first place being left to choose good or evil; therefore they having chosen good, and exercising exceedingly great faith, are called with a holy calling. (Alma 12:31; 13:3)

It is significant to note that both Lehi and Jacob used state elsewhere in their writings, so their capacity to have done so in passages relating to agency is not in question. Further, the presence of state is not the only others. Lehi, Jacob, and Samuel word free when discussing age.

Of tangential interest, there and Joseph Smith when they prepared. In Doctrine and Co that “All truth is independent placed it, to act for itself, as all no existence. Behold, here is the with Alma’s passage in Alma sphere in which agency exists agency; their meanings are edly different. Further, Alma Joseph actually names it as a concerning the agency of marked with the words agency, the Book of Mormon these words. This suggests the Mormon was a feature of the deduced by Joseph Smith.

Certainly Alma’s distinct counterparts is clear in the display his preference for state but he also elected not to authors employed.

11 2 Nephi 2:26–27 (three times).

12 Comparison between the forth further suggest multiple authors the Book of Mormon contains the term cordance, 691–92), the books of Joseph Smith Translation of the Bit also, the Doctrine and Covenants 93:38; and 130:9) and the Joseph (Joseph Smith—History 1:29). In a Smith History 1:29—in which he is interesting because the word s Mormon and neither with stat.

13 See Doctrine and Coven 101:78. Moses 4:3 and 7:32 also refers to agents.

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10 See 2 Nephi 2:21–23 and 9:27 respectively.
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ence of state is not the only difference between Alma and the others. Lehi, Jacob, and Samuel each include references to the word free when discussing agency. Alma does not.

Of tangential interest, there is marked contrast between Alma and Joseph Smith when their writings about agency are compared. In Doctrine and Covenants 93:30–31, Joseph revealed that “All truth is independent in that sphere in which God has placed it, to act for itself, as all intelligence also; otherwise there is no existence. Behold, here is the agency of man.” In comparison with Alma’s passage in Alma 12:31, Joseph Smith writes about a sphere in which agency exists, while Alma writes of a state of agency; their meanings are the same, but the language is decidedly different. Further, Alma only describes the principle, while Joseph actually names it as agency. In fact, every major passage concerning the agency of man in the Doctrine and Covenants is marked with the words agency, agent, or agents. In direct distinction, the Book of Mormon does not have a single reference to these words. This suggests that the use of state in the Book of Mormon was a feature of the original text and not simply introduced by Joseph Smith.

Certainly Alma’s distinction from his Book of Mormon counterparts is clear in the context of agency. He not only displays his preference for state uniquely when addressing this topic, but he also elected not to use a key word that the other three authors employed.

11 2 Nephi 2:26–27 (three times); 2 Nephi 10:23; and Helaman 14:30 (two times).
12 Comparison between the four major works that Joseph Smith brought forth further suggest multiple authorship of the Book of Mormon. While the Book of Mormon contains the term seventy-seven times (Ricks, Thorough Concordance, 691–92), the books of Abraham and Moses, as well as the entire Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible lack even a single use of state. Of interest also, the Doctrine and Covenants contains the word only three times (71:1; 93:38; and 130:9) and the Joseph Smith History employs the word only once (Joseph Smith—History 1:29). In addition, Joseph Smith’s wording in Joseph—Smith History 1:29—in which he synonymously couples state with standing—is interesting because the word standing only appears twice in the Book of Mormon and neither time with state; see Mosiah 4:11 and Alma 13:5.
13 See Doctrine and Covenants 29:35–39; 58:27–28; 93:30–31; and 101:78. Moses 4:3 and 7:32 also contain references to agency and Moses 6:56 refers to agents.
Conclusion

Alma certainly stands distinct from the other authors in the Book of Mormon when his use of state is analyzed. Alma’s unique concentration of state, his tendency to reword with state, and his distinctive treatment of a shared topic involving state all point to him as a unique writer within the Book of Mormon. This is perfectly consistent with Joseph’s claims about the Book of Mormon. Also, the differences between the Book of Mormon and the other scriptures produced by Joseph Smith in relation to the use of state are also what one would expect to find in the various publications of a prophet who both translated other’s writings and received his own prophetic material.

The Iliad and

John

The Iliad, an ancient Greek epic, is the story of the Trojan War. The war began in 1200 B.C., but the date of the war itself is not accurately known. Consequently, Homer’s account of the battle tactics can be said to be late, perhaps earlier.

One of the results of the epic is the influx of Archaic Greece into the southeastern Mediterranean, known as the Trojan War, and then into Palestine. Known to the Egyptians,” they included such glorious weapons as swords, armor, and chariots: (13:5, 19–22; 17:5–7).

It is in this light that we may see the parallel sword with its sheath, go (1 Nephi 4:9) is reminiscent of Homer’s epic. Iliad (2.45; 3.361; 13.610; 11.129–30), and the silver-studded sword with its silver hilt (Iliad 1.219–20), the war, fought with a gold