



The Printer's Manuscript of the Book of Mormon: Typographical Facsimile of the Entire Text in Two Parts: Part 1

By Royal Skousen



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A stray ink drop and a quirk of nineteenth-century script make the difference between retain that wrong and repair that wrong. More than a decade of meticulous research revealed such insights as Royal Skousen prepared transcripts of the original and printer's manuscripts of the Book of Mormon for publication.

Now published for the first time ever, the manuscripts help you discover the original phrasing of the Book of Mormon (including Hebrew-like expressions), provide surprising evidence on the process by which Joseph Smith translated, and show how editors and printers have modified the wording to make it conform to the expectations of contemporary English readers. The original manuscript is the text written down by scribes as Joseph Smith translated the Book of Mormon. Most of this manuscript was destroyed by mold and water seepage. Only 28 percent of the original is extant. The printer's manuscript is the handwritten copy that was made to take to the printer for typesetting. It is virtually 100 percent extant.

The book features: Typographic facsimiles of each manuscript (an exact reproduction of the text in typescript). A fragment showing what is considered the oldest existing sample of Joseph Smith's handwriting. Color and ultraviolet photographs of select parts of the manuscripts. A history and physical description of the manuscripts. Photographs of select parts of the manuscripts. A history and physical description of the manuscripts.



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Editorial Review

About the Author

Royal Skousen is Professor of Linguistics and English Language at Brigham Young University. In 1972 he received his Ph.D. in linguistics from the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana. He has taught linguistics at the University of Illinois, the University of Texas at Austin, the University of California at San Diego, and as a Fulbright scholar at the University of Tampere in Finland. In 2001 he was a research fellow at the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics in Nijmegen, Netherlands.

Skousen's work in linguistics has dealt chiefly with developing a theory of language called Analogical Modeling, a theory that predicts language behavior by means of examples rather than by rules. He has published three books on this subject: *Analogical Modeling of Language* (1989), *Analogy and Structure* (1992), and *Analogical Modeling: An Exemplar-Based Approach to Language* (2002). More recently, he has published on the quantum computation of Analogical Modeling, notably in his 2005 paper *Quantum Analogical Modeling*.

Skousen began working on the critical text of the Book of Mormon in 1988. In 2001 he published the first two volumes of the Critical Text Project, namely, typographical facsimiles for the original and printer's manuscripts of the Book of Mormon. From 2004 through 2009 he published the six books that make up volume 4 of the critical text, *Analysis of Textual Variants of the Book of Mormon*. This work represents the central task of the Critical Text Project, to restore by scholarly means the original text of the Book of Mormon, to the extent possible.

In 2009 Skousen published with Yale University Press the culmination of his critical work on the Book of Mormon text, namely, *The Book of Mormon: The Earliest Text*. The Yale edition presents the reconstructed original text in a clear-text format, without explanatory intervention. Unlike modern editions of the Book of Mormon that have added chapter summaries, scriptural cross-references, dates, and footnotes, this edition consists solely of the words dictated by Joseph Smith in 1828-29, as far as they can be established through standard methods of textual criticism. Later emendations by scribes, editors, and even Joseph Smith himself have been omitted, except for those that appear to restore original readings.

Anyone opening the Yale edition will immediately be struck by the sense-lines format of the Book of Mormon text -- that is, the way the lines of the text are broken up according to phrases and clauses. Joseph Smith dictated the book to scribes who wrote down his words. His dictation did not indicate punctuation, sentence structure, or paragraphing. These he left, ultimately, to the discretion of the printer. Consequently, the Yale edition constitutes a scholarly effort to present to the reader a dictated rather than a written text. To that end, Skousen decided to adopt the sense-line format. He makes no claim that the sense-lines adopted in *The Earliest Text* represent Joseph Smith's actual dictation breaks, but the first verbalization of the text would have sounded something like the result of reading the sense-lines out loud.

Users Review

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