

CHAPTER 4

In the Court of Chief Justice John Marshall

John Marshall (1755-1835) published a five-volume history of the life of Washington between the years 1804-1807. (1) Marshall was a captain in the colonial forces and spent the winter at Valley Forge. He studied law and became Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. In 1838, a condensed version of his five-volume history was published in a single edition for schools. (2)

Marshall's introduction to his original five-volume *Life of George Washington* credits Bushrod Washington for preserving an immense amount of George Washington's private and public letters. The history is resourced from these documents, along with other authors. Marshall excuses himself early for appropriating their material.

"Doddesly's Annual Register, Belsham, Gordon, Ramsay, and Stedham have, for this purpose, been occasionally resorted to, and are quoted for all those facts which are detailed in part on their authority. Their very language has sometimes been employed without distinguishing the passages, especially when intermingled with others, by marks of quotation, and the author [Marshall] persuades himself that this public declaration will rescue him from the imputation of receiving aids he is unwilling to acknowledge, or of wishing, by a concealed plagiarism, to usher to the world, as his own, the labors of others." Vol. I
pg.xv

Marshall's style is closer to Ramsay's than that of Warren's. Marshall admits to weaving other sources into his narrative on occasion, without distinguishing the author. Marshall assumes it is understood that he is simply compiling and reporting on known resources, thus avoiding a tedious itemization of each one. He is engaging in a common practice that is shared by Ramsay, Warren, and the *Book of Mormon*.

Referring back to Washington's Canada letter, Marshall does not reprint the letter or offer it in a note. In his account of the arduous passage of Benedict Arnold and his men to Quebec, the trunk full of

Washington's letter to the people of Canada is mentioned.

“...and with a cargo of manifestoes
to be dispersed through Canada.” Vol. I
pg.96

Marshall repeats a small paraphrase from the letter, which contains even less verbiage than the short passage offered by Ramsay.

“...the address signed by General Washington was
published, and every assurance given to the people,
that they came to protect, and not to plunder them.” Vol. I
pg.98

“A manifesto subscribed by general Washington, which
had been sent from Cambridge with this detachment, was
circulated among the inhabitants of Canada.
In this they were invited to arrange
themselves under the standard of general liberty;
and they were informed that the American army
was sent into the province not to
plunder but to protect them.” Ramsay pg.
219-220

Marshall, like Ramsay and Warren, does not reproduce enough of the Canada letter to consider it as a source for Joseph Smith's *Book of Mormon*. Likewise, similar to Ramsay and Warren, the majority of the themes and verbiage from the letter can eventually be found throughout Marshall's five volumes.

In reference to the Canada letter, Washington's word string, “liberty, property, wives, and children”, is not reproduced in the entire five volumes of Marshall. Nor is it duplicated in the three volumes of Warren.

It is mentioned just once in the two volumes of Ramsay, in a note concerning a charter of New York.

Out of ten volumes of history on George Washington and the American Revolution, the word string, “liberty, property, wives, and children”, is mentioned only once. Coincidentally, it also appears in the *Book of Mormon* as,

“...their liberty, their lands,

their wives, and their children..."

Alma

48:10

Mormon apologists have attempted to prove the *Book of Mormon* is credible through the identification of supposed Hebraisms contained in the text. Ironically, the idea of finding similarities to Hebrew in the *Book of Mormon* is in direct opposition to what is stated by the character Moroni.

"And now, behold, we have written this record according to our knowledge, in the characters which are called among us the reformed Egyptian, being handed down and altered by us, according to our manner of speech."

"And if our plates had been sufficiently large we should have written in Hebrew; but the Hebrew hath been altered by us also; and if we could have written in Hebrew, behold, ye would have had no imperfection in our record."

Mormon

9:32-33

Apologists must make the case that a Hebrew influence survived the alterations by *Book of Mormon* prophets. Moroni claims that both the reformed Egyptian and Hebrew were altered, and imperfections occurred as a result. If this is truly the case, then no objective standard exists to prove that anything in the *Book of Mormon* is of Hebrew origin.

According to apologist logic, if it sounds Hebrew then it is Hebrew.

For instance, in a 1999 edition of the *Book of Mormon* (3) containing commentaries on the text, the editor offers an explanation of usage involving the phrase "altar of stones" found in the first book of Nephi.

"And it came to pass that he built an altar of stones, and made an offering unto the Lord..."

1 Nephi

2:7

The editor explains that the phrase "altar of stones", instead of "stone altar", is typical of the Hebrew that Nephi spoke. This is offered as evidence that Joseph Smith was translating by the gift and power of God.

By that reasoning, John Marshall was also Hebrew. Instead of saying “snow storm”, Marshall says,

“...storm of snow...” School edition pg. 32

Clearly, Marshall is not translating from Hebrew. Consequently, neither is the *Book of Mormon*.

In Hebrew, the conjunction “and” links compound numbers. The *Book of Mormon* is again credited as Hebrew because of the same usage.

“...twenty and second...” Alma 50:24

Mercy Otis Warren used the same style. She was not translating from Hebrew either.

“...one thousand seven hundred and eighty one...” Warren pg. 414

Marshall denotes dates as numerals.

“The summer of 1799 passed away...” School edition pg. 193

By combining the styles of Marshall and Warren, an identical form is found in the *Book of Mormon*.

“...the twenty and second year passed away...” 3 Nephi 5:7

When Mercy Otis Warren said,

“...to strengthen the hands of general Arnold...” Warren pg. 256

she sounds like Ezekiel in the Bible,

“...strengthen the hand...” Ezekiel 16:49

When the *Book of Mormon* says,

“...strengthen the hand of the Nephites...”
2:18

Alma

it is just as reasonable to conclude, based on the other parallels, that Joseph Smith was getting his Hebrew second hand through Warren. Bible verse was integrated in the language.

In his first inaugural address, Thomas Jefferson encourages his countrymen to be united in heart and mind. The *Book of Mormon* prophet Lehi preaches the same to his disobedient sons. Compare their words to the same in the Bible.

“...in mine heart and in my mind...”
2:35

1 Samuel

“Let us, then, fellow-citizens, unite with
one heart and one mind...”
Jefferson

“...be determined in one mind and in one heart,
united in all things...”
1:21

2 Nephi

Instead of being translated from an altered Hebrew, through an altered reformed Egyptian, there is far more evidence that the *Book of Mormon* is drawing from the histories of the Revolution, and common Bible verse floating in the vernacular.

Marshall and Ramsay provide reprints of Washington’s speeches and letters. Marshall reproduces the personal journal of Washington’s first command at age 21. Warren credits Washington’s fame as rising from this account of his trip down the Ohio as a young commander in 1753 to deliver a warning to French forces.

“In the late war between England and France, Mr. Washington had been in several military rencounters, and had particularly signalized himself in the unfortunate expedition under general Braddock, in the wilderness on the borders of the Ohio, in the year one thousand seven hundred and fifty-five. His conduct on that occasion raised an *éclat* of his valor and prudence; in consequence of which many young gentlemen from all parts of the continent,

allured by the name of major Washington, voluntarily entered the service, proud of being enrolled in the list of officers under one esteemed so gallant a commander.” Warren p. 129

Ramsay comments upon Washington’s journal.

“A journal of the whole was published, and inspired the public with high ideas of the energies both of his body and mind.” *Life* Chap. 1

Washington is easily identified by all of his contemporaries as the inspiration of a nation. His journal was first published in two installments by the Maryland Gazette, March 21 and March 28, 1754. The Gazette carries an extra advertisement by Washington explaining that he had no time to make corrections prior to its publication.

The *Book of Mormon* sounds more like Washington than Hebrew.

Moroni and Washington apologize for imperfections in their account.

“...for the numberless Imperfections of it...”
Washington

“...because of the imperfections which are in it...” *Mormon* 8:12

A detailed report is referred to in the same terms.

“...the following Account of my Proceedings...”
Washington

“...make an account of my proceedings...” *1 Nephi* 1:17

Military defenses are similar.

“...the Bastions are made of Piles driven into the Ground, and about 12 feet above,

and sharp at Top...”
Washington

“...upon those works of timbers there should
be a frame of pickets...” Alma
50:3

In the Maryland Gazette edition, the name “Cuscuscus” is mentioned. Marshall’s edition changes the spelling to “Kuskuskas”. Early maps of western Pennsylvania show the word “Kishkimentas” (4)

“...deserted from a Company at the Cuscuscus...”
Washington

“...deserted from a company at the Kuskuskas...” Vol. II pg.
469

“...behold, they sent one Kishkumen, even to...” Helaman
1:9

Using backward logic, Mormon apologists would probably explain that the similarity between Kuskuskas and Kishkumen is due to the ancient Lamanites passing down the name to modern American Indians.

Ethan Smith, in his 1825 *View of the Hebrews*, equates the Hebrew word “Kish”, meaning “hind part”, as “Kesh”, in his anecdotal American Indian language. (5) Given the previous examples, it is not necessary for Joseph Smith to possess the ability to translate Hebrew if he can find the same information in *View of the Hebrews*, Marshall, Warren, or Washington’s journal.

Apologists will fault the *Tories* research on the grounds that a finite number of words used in various combinations between two books will eventually result in unintended parallels. The problem in making the claim is that it also applies to their faith promoting parallels as well. Church publications tout Hebrew similarities in the *Book of Mormon* but are silent about the ones from colonial America.

Marshall in his history, and Ramsay in his *Life of Washington*, both quote identical excerpts from Washington’s general orders to the troops.

Washington was not speaking in Hebrew.

“We have therefore to resolve to conquer or to die.”
164

Vol. I pg.

Life

Chap.3

“Let us then rely on the goodness of our cause,
and the aid of the Supreme Being...”

164

Vol. I pg.

Life

Chap.3

“...to conquer in this place or die...”
56:17

Alma

“...a Supreme Being.”
11:22

Alma

Marshall omits the following segment quoted in Ramsay.

“Remember, officers and soldiers, that you are freemen,
fighting for the blessings of Liberty...”

Life

Chap.3

“...the blessings of liberty...”
46:13

Alma

“...the name of freemen...”
51:6

Alma

An example of Marshall borrowing from Ramsay is obvious in the immediate paragraphs following Washington’s general orders.

Ramsay *Life* Chap. 3

Marshall Vol. I pg.166

“ ‘...of this the officers are to
be particularly careful.’ ”

“ ‘...of this the officers are to
be particularly careful.’ ”

“He then gave the most explicit
orders that any soldier who
should attempt to conceal
himself, or retreat without

“He directed explicitly that
any soldier who should
attempt to conceal
himself, or retreat

orders, should be instantly shot down, as an example of the punishment of cowardice, and desired every officer to be particularly attentive to the conduct of his men, and report those who should distinguish themselves by brave and noble actions...”

without orders, should instantly be shot down; and solemnly promised to notice and reward those who should distinguish themselves.”

Referring back to Marshall’s introduction, he pardons himself ahead of time for the practice of borrowing from Ramsay and other authors.

“Their very language has sometimes been employed without distinguishing the passages, especially when intermingled with others, by marks of quotation, and the author persuades himself that this public declaration will rescue him from the imputation of receiving aids he is unwilling to acknowledge, or of wishing, by a concealed plagiarism, to usher to the world, as his own, the labors of others.”

If John Marshall can do it, then so can Joseph Smith. Pinpointing exact sources for material in the *Book of Mormon* would be impossible, and unnecessary. Smith was only as good as his sources, no matter which ones he selected.

“...flocked to his standard...” Marshall Vol. III pg. 104

“...multitudes flocked to the American standard...” Warren pg. 191

“...flock to their standard...” Ramsay *History* pg. 274

“...thousands did flock unto his standard...” BoM Alma 62:5

“Having defended the standard of liberty...” Marshall Vol. IV pg. 110

“Having defended the standard of liberty...” Ramsay *Life* Chap.9

“...standard of liberty...” Ramsay *History* pg. 646

“...the Standard of general Liberty...” Letter “...standard of liberty...” 46:36	Washington Canada BoM Alma
“...gained the point...” 230 “...to carry the point...” 108 “...gain their point...” 618 “...gain the point...” 46:29	Marshall Vol. III pg. Warren pg. Ramsay <i>History</i> pg. BoM Alma

The point is made over and over. Any resemblance to Hebrew in the *Book of Mormon* is accidental and far out weighed by the numerous examples of borrowings and common usage. Marshall, by his own admission lifts freely from various sources. Ramsay plagiarized the *Annual Register*. It is apparent that the author of the *Book of Mormon* is doing the same.

“The pen is mightier than the sword”, coined by Lytton in 1839, is a poignant reminder of the power of words. Words convey thoughts, and thoughts inspire action.

Marshall notes the sentiment of words being backed up by action. The same thought can be found in the *Book of Mormon*.

“...engaged first his pen, and afterwards his sword...” Vol. IV pg. 322

“...whatsoever evil we cannot resist with our words, yea, such as rebellions and dissensions, let us resist them with our swords...” Alma
61:14

It is ultimately a battle of words. The *Book of Mormon* fights with stolen ammunition, wearing Hebrew armor.

Notes to Chapter 4

The Life of George Washington, John Marshall, Volumes I-V, The Citizens Guild of Washington's Boyhood Home, Fredericksburg, Va., 1926 reprint. Page sequence from the reprint editions.

The Life of George Washington, John Marshall, Edition for Schools, 1838, Reprint edition by Liberty Fund. Page sequence from the reprint edition.

The Book of Mormon for Latter-day Saint Families, Bookcraft, Inc., 1999, pg.6.

Pittsburgh, the Story of an American City, Stefan Lorant, Authors Edition Inc., Lennox Mass., pg.22.

View of the Hebrews, Ethan Smith, Brigham Young University, Reprint edition, pg.64

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