

Appendix

Traveling Prophets

In 1837, Heber C. Kimball was one of the first two latter-day apostles to set foot on British soil. During his mission there, he recorded a profound spiritual experience:

...I was constrained to take off my hat, for I felt as if the place was holy ground. The Spirit of the Lord rested down upon me and I was constrained to bless that whole region of country....

After hearing this account in Nauvou, Joseph Smith responded,

Did you not understand it? That is a place where some of the old prophets traveled and dedicated that land, and their blessing fell upon you.⁶⁷

We are not told who these old prophets were. However, the Old English manuscripts include a few interesting accounts to suggest that at least one of them was a Nephite.

Dream of the Rood

One ancient English account is called the Dream of the Rood. For clarification, “Rood” is an Old English word meaning tree, or as the account itself clarifies, “the Savior’s tree”, an interesting parallel to Lehi’s vision of the tree of life. This account specifically describes “the very best of dreams which came...in the middle of the night”, just like Lehi’s dream.

The Wanderer

Another Old English manuscript account is titled “The Wanderer.” The author of this account describes his own “paths of exile over watery ways.”

⁶⁷ Journal of Discourses, 5:22. Cited in Truth Will Prevail, p. 4.

The Wanderer reflected frequently on “the fall of friends and family”, keeping his thoughts to himself, since there was no one left alive that would understand.

Often I have had to bewail my cares alone at each day's dawn. There is no one now alive to whom I dare confide the thoughts of my inmost mind...I have had to enclose my heart in fetters often afflicted with wretched cares, cut off from native land....

Just as we are not told who the ancient prophets were that Joseph referred to, we also are not specifically told who the author of The Wanderer is. However there was a wanderer from the Nephite record in need of solace and refuge. Shortly after 400 AD, Moroni deposited the sacred record of his people in the earth, apparently in what is now upstate New York. What became of him immediately afterward, we are not told. However his own comments about his journeys provide an intriguing counterpart to the Old English Wanderer's account. Moroni stated:

I had supposed not to have written more, but I have not as yet perished; and I make not myself known to the Lamanites, lest they should destroy me.

For behold, their wars are exceedingly fierce among themselves; and because of their hatred they put to death every Nephite that will not deny the Christ.

*And I Moroni, will not deny the Christ; wherefore, I wander whithersoever I can for the safety of mine own life.*⁶⁸

The Anglo-Saxon Wanderer made a similar statement:

⁶⁸ Moroni 1:1-3

Excellent is the man who maintains his faith...It shall be well for him who seeks grace and comfort from the Father in Heaven.

Although Moroni was a wanderer in his last days, we are not told where he wandered after Cumorah. However the Lord typically provides closure for the fulfillment of his prophecies. For example, Coriantumr lived to see the arrival of the Mulekites, and was buried by their hand in fulfillment of Ether's prophecies. Likewise, not long afterwards, the Nephites encountered the Mulekites, and thereby learned that Jerusalem truly had been overthrown in fulfillment of Father Lehi's previous prophecies. Moroni may have been the Wanderer remembered among the early English people. If so, what better place of consolation for Moroni to spend his last days, after witnessing the bitter destruction of his people, than to live among the Nephite remnant that would eventually rise up to fulfill prophecy.

Liahonas in Europe

Almost every nation in Europe has a precious object that is highly reminiscent of the Liahona. This may be mere coincidence. But it may be something more.

Any Nephite people arriving in Europe two thousand years ago would have initially retained a knowledge of what the Liahona both looked like and symbolized. Approximately twenty years before the voyages of Hagoth's ships, Alma the younger said the following to his son Helaman:

And now, my son, I have somewhat to say concerning the thing which our fathers call a ball, or director – or our fathers called it Liahona, which is, being interpreted, a compass; and the Lord prepared it.

And behold, there cannot any man work after the manner of so curious a workmanship....⁶⁹

Approximately twenty years later, shortly after Helaman's death, his son Corianton sailed north, and the Liahona was not mentioned again in the Book of Mormon.

The Liahona Passed Down From Ruler to Ruler

Long before Hagoth, the Liahona became part of the Nephite royal ascension. For example, about two generations before Hagoth, when the aging King Benjamin conferred the kingdom upon his son Mosiah, he also conferred four metal objects.

And it came to pass that after king Benjamin had made an end of these sayings to his son [Mosiah], that he gave him charge concerning all the affairs of the kingdom.

⁶⁹ Alma 37:38-39

And moreover, he also gave him charge concerning the records which were engraven on [i] the plates of brass; and also [ii] the plates of Nephi; and also, [iii] the sword of Laban, [iv] and the ball or director; which led our fathers through the wilderness....⁷⁰

This was approximately 125 BC.

From Lehi until Moroni, the plates and most of the other Nephite sacred items had been carefully passed down from generation to generation – in most cases, from father to son, presumably until they were buried in a hill around 410 AD.⁷¹ However, the Liahona was notably not among the objects Joseph Smith described in his account of locating the golden plates. Yet at some point after Hagoth, objects reminiscent of the Liahona surfaced all over Europe.



*Coronation of Harold Godwinson,
King of England in 1066 AD
at the time of the Norman Conquest.
From the contemporary Bayeux Tapestry.*

While exploring European parallels, it would be worthwhile to briefly reconsider the Liahona itself.

- 1) It was a metallic ball.
- 2) Writing occasionally appeared on it.

⁷⁰ Mosiah 1:15-16

⁷¹ Moroni, heir to all of these items except the Liahona, was a direct descendant of Nephi.

- 3) It showed the way they should go.
- 4) It symbolized the words of Christ (Alma 37).
- 5) It, along with the sword of Laban, the Interpreters, and the plates, came to be seen as objects rightfully belonging to those chosen by the people to be their leaders and rulers. For example, before the time of Christ, Lamanite rulers bemoaned the Nephite “theft” of these items, which along with the right to rule, they felt rightfully belonged to them. In other words, the Liahona and other objects in possession of the Nephites were apparently looked to, even by the Lamanites, as symbols of legitimate rule.

By the time of the early Middle Ages, most emerging nations in Northern Europe had an established ruling family – a seated dynasty. Central to the aura of these rulers’ legitimacy were visible and tangible emblems of office – passed down from king to king, from generation to generation, from father to son. Notable among these items was a curious metallic orb, which by the Middle Ages was in vogue among almost every country in Europe. Each of the Liahona features described earlier has its parallel in royal European orbs.

Occasional Writing

For example, most European orbs show no writing at all. But there are interesting exceptions. Sometimes, the royal orb is represented as showing the relations between different portions of the globe. Some orbs show regions of the earth clearly labeled, including Asia, Europe, Africa, and the Americas. The Swedish orb is a prime example.

However we choose to interpret this, sometime during the Christian era, European rulers adopted the use of an orb during their coronation ceremonies. This may be nothing more than a coincidence. Or if Nephites did plant a colony in ancient Europe, they would have brought at least a memory of the Liahona with them.

American Measures

As mentioned from the beginning, one of the cultural elements the passengers of Hagoth's boat would have brought along with them when they left the Americas would have been their system of weights and measures. If such a society transplanted in ancient Europe and survived through subsequent centuries, we would expect some of their culture to survive the passage of time. Something as central to their culture as their system of weights and measures, the hub of their entire economy, is thus something that we should at least explore. Fortunately, the Book of Mormon provides a clear description of the ancient Nephite system.

In ancient Europe, the regions ruled by the Roman Empire utilized Roman weights and measures for centuries. Meanwhile, many of the peoples and regions outside the Empire had measures of their own. Thus when Rome fell in the 400's AD, some of the northern tribes which swept in to inherit regions previously ruled by Rome, including England, they brought along their own system of measures.

The system of measures used in the United States has a chain of custody that traces directly back to England. More specifically:

- 1) By the time of Christ, a seafaring people had arrived in ancient Europe under the leadership of a certain Hagoth
- 2) A number of generations later, many of these people migrated again, leaving the European continent to take possession of portions of England.
- 3) Afterwards, for centuries, England retained and passed down a clearly defined system of measures.
- 4) The English system was officially adopted by the United States of America after the Revolutionary War.
- 5) England has since abandoned their time-honored system for the metric system. Thus the current repository for England's original system of measures is the United States of America.

English/American Measures

The American system is an apparently confusing combination of gallons, quarts pints, cups, and other such units. Although this system permeates every aspect of American society, the average American could not tell you how the units relate to one another. One of the reasons for this confusion is that some of the original units have fallen out of common use, leaving confusing gaps in what was originally a very logical and practical system.

Starting with the smallest unit of measure, here is the complete system. The italicised units are part of the original English system, but have mostly fallen out of use in America.

English Units
<i>gill</i>
cup
pint
quart
<i>pottle</i>
gallon
<i>bucket</i>

Nephite Measures

From Alma 11, we learn that the Nephite system was based on a specific measure of grain, in relation to precious metal. The silver Nephite measures of grain are as follows:

Nephite Units (Silver)
leah
shiblum
shiblon
senum
amnor
ezrom
onti

At first glance, we can see that both the ancient Nephite system and the modern English/American system consist of seven main units of measure, a correlation that is mildly interesting, but inconclusive. So let's look more closely.

In the American system, each unit of measure is twice the amount of the previous, smaller measure. Thus it takes two gills to make a cup, two cups to make a pint, two pints to make a quart, and so on.

Alma 11 tells us that precisely the same relationship existed among their ancient units of measure. Each of the seven silver Nephite units were twice the value/quantity of the previous measure. It took two Leahs to make a Shiblum, two Shiblums to make a Shiblun, two Shibluns to make a Senum, and so on.

Some might insist that this nested relationship in the Nephite measures only holds true with the first six of the seven Nephite units. Such an objection would be due to the *onti* being described as being "as great as them all", which appears to mean the combined measure of each of the previous, smaller units. Translating that into American terms, that means an ancient Nephite bucket (*onti*) would have consisted of a gallon (128 ounces), plus a pottle (64 ounces), plus a quart (32 ounces), plus a pint (16 ounces), plus a cup (8 ounces), plus a gill (4 ounces), for a total of 220 ounces – a miniscule 4 ounces (or one gill) shy of the bucket's modern 224 ounces.

That final miniscule difference between the largest Nephite unit and the largest English measure may actually contain additional evidence that the latter is related to, and likely derived from the former. As mentioned above, the ancient *onti* would apparently have been a tiny Leah (gill) shy of a full measure. In other words, the Nephite *onti* was not yet "packed to the gills".⁷²

⁷² This phrase is typically (and incorrectly) assumed to refer to a fish's gills merely because that's the only meaning of the term still in common use. However, our forefathers, had a better understanding of its meaning.

However, since providing a generous measure was central to both Hebrew and Christian tradition, the English may have adapted and simply topped off the ancient onti with the extra missing measure to complete the modern two-gallon bucket. Thus the common English phrase “packed to the gills”, which actually means “as full as possible”, may allude to this Jewish practice of adding the final measure to ethically top off and round out the final measure.

A Measure of Grain

As mentioned, America’s modern system of measures came from England. Likewise, the fractional relationships that exist between America’s seven modern measures correlate precisely with the fractional relationships between the seven ancient Nephite measures. To explore whether this fractional correlation is more than convenient coincidence, let’s conclude by closely examining the *senum*, the basis for the entire Nephite system.

According to Alma, a “*senum*” of silver (see above) was equal to a “*measure*” of grain (which was also equal to a “*senine*” of gold).

To provide a better idea of the amount of grain contained in such a measure, Alma tells us that this was the established daily wage for a judge.⁷³ However instead of imposing modern values and modern wages on the Nephite economy, we need to keep in mind that the reign of the judges was established by none other than the frugal King Mosiah, who had supported himself with his own labors rather than become a tax burden on his people. Based on that context, it would be reasonable to expect that this daily “*measure*” (or *senum* or *senine*) was instead quite modest. Alma elsewhere confirms this to be the case. For when he was accused of dishonest dealings, he swiftly rebutted the charge, saying, “...I have never received so much as even one *senine*...”⁷⁴ The implication is clear. This central measure of grain, this *senum* of silver, was a modest amount.

⁷³ verse 3

⁷⁴ Alma 30:33

A Jewish record written about a century after Hagoth suggests just how closely the Nephite and English/American systems align. The Book of Revelation refers to a “measure” of grain - apparently by Jewish reckoning. The Greek term John used in that passage is a Jewish amount of grain that is approximate to our modern “quart”. In other words, if we draw from John’s society to gain a general understanding of this term in Eastern thought, a “measure” was enough to bake a modest loaf of bread, which was enough to appease a modest appetite for one day. This modest and descriptive amount aligns very well with a sustenance-based public servant payroll we would expect in the generation after frugal King Mosiah.

Thus the senum, the main Nephite “measure”, aligns well with our quart. If so, a shiblon aligns with a pint, a shiblum aligns with a cup, and so on. Thus America’s units of measure correspond directly with the measures used by Nephite society in Hagoth’s day. This could be mere coincidence. Or, when the United States officially adopted these measurements from England in the late 1700’s, it may have marked the official restoration of Nephite measures on American soil.

So feel free to go next door and borrow a cup of sugar (as long as you eventually return that shiblum). It might even spark a faith-promoting conversation.