

## Chapter Seven

# JARED'S TWO DAUGHTERS

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Readers often lament the paucity of female characters in the Book of Mormon. The volume is largely about men, with women appearing only in the margins of the story, often in unseemly ways. Careful reading, however, reveals a more complicated picture than this popular impression. One can argue that readers are intended to be devastated by women's plight in the Nephite context—as well as encouraged by the relative gender equality visible in the Lamanite context. Early in the book, in fact, the prophet Jacob ties the Nephites' coming destruction to the failure of their men to repent of their relationships to women, just as he ties the Lamanites' ultimate preservation to their characteristically equitable relations between the sexes. The consistency of Nephite misogyny confirms Jacob's predictions, as does the apparent lack of toxic patriarchy among the Lamanites. Given its implicit contrast between these two peoples, the Book of Mormon arguably builds into itself a critique of its own gender trouble.<sup>1</sup>

While one can thus account for patterns of misogyny among Lehi's children in a constructive fashion, it is more difficult to provide a redemptive gendered reading of the book of Ether, the account of a rather different New World people. The point of the history of Lehi's children may partly be to contrast the supposed "good guys" (the Nephites) with the supposed "bad guys" (the Lamanites), showing unexpectedly that God's covenant purposes are realized only among the latter. But the Jaredites are not part of the Abrahamic covenant that governs the Nephites and the Lamanites, and they never cleanly divide into productively contrasting peoples that have something to teach to careful readers. The text presents the Jaredites, rather, as a monolithic culture, and women do not fare well in it. Indeed, the one woman genuinely central to the Jaredite story—the nameless daughter of Jared—may be the most notorious female in the whole Book of Mormon. She is clever and well read, but the story regards her as a figure of unredeemed wickedness. One perhaps wonders, reading Ether, whether the author is threatened by clever and well-read women, especially those exhibiting sexual power.

I will not here offer a fully redemptive reading of gender in the book of Ether. If it is possible to read a critical impulse into the Jaredite narrative, I have not yet seen how to do so. One can nonetheless complicate the traditional understanding of the story in important ways. This I aim to do here, with my focus principally on the story of the daughter of Jared. My general aim is to show that this story, like the larger book of Ether, is more interesting as regards gender than might often be assumed. Further, I will argue that the story of the daughter of Jared may be composed of distinct textual strands that present the daughter of Jared—and thus the question of gender—in strikingly distinct ways.

## SOME PRELIMINARIES

The daughter of Jared is the only individual female character in the book of Ether. Outside of Ether 8, which contains her story, women appear only in collective terms (with two connected but passing exceptions in Ether 9:23–24).<sup>2</sup> Women appearing in Ether are thus "women" and "wives" and especially "daughters," generally on the margins of the story. There are, nonetheless, interesting things to say about the general patterns of the

references to women in the Jaredite narrative. These general patterns in turn help clarify the place occupied by the daughter of Jared in the larger flow of the Jaredite story.

It will prove useful to consider briefly the larger structure of the book of Ether. As Joseph Smith originally dictated the text of Ether,<sup>3</sup> it consisted of only six chapters:

Chapter I – Ether 1–4

Chapter II – Ether 5

Chapter III – Ether 6–8

Chapter IV – Ether 9–11

Chapter V – Ether 12

Chapter VI – Ether 13–15

The basic organization of these six original chapters is not difficult to discern. Chapters I and VI tell, respectively, of the first and last Jaredite generations, establishing the people's origins and ultimate fate. Each of these opening and closing chapters focuses, moreover, on a key prophet figure connected with producing a written record: chapter I on the brother of Jared, chapter VI on Ether. Chapters II and V then both consist of editorial asides by Moroni, abridger and editor of the Jaredite history. In each of these, Moroni reflects on latter-day Gentiles who will interact with the records he produces in connection with the two prophets in question. Finally, chapters III and IV rapidly tell the sweeping story of the Jaredites in two parts, from the final acts of the brother of Jared to the birth of the prophet Ether. Chapter III leads up to the founding of Jaredite secret combinations, while chapter IV proceeds from that point to the dawn of the last Jaredite generation.

The basic structure of Ether proves significant in light of the distribution of references to women in the book. If we ignore references to the daughter of Jared (and to the two individual women passingly mentioned in Ether 9:23–24), there are thirty-six references to women in Ether. Twenty-four—exactly two-thirds—of these occur in the original chapters III and IV, those providing the sweeping history of the Jaredites from the first generation to the last.<sup>4</sup> No women appear in the original chapters II and V, Moroni's editorial interruptions, so the remaining twelve

references to women—one-third of the book's total—appear in chapters I and VI, the stories of Jaredite origin and destruction. These details are not particularly surprising, but what one does not expect is that, generally speaking, the words used to refer to women in chapters III–IV differ from those used likewise in chapters I and VI. The sweeping history of chapters III–IV almost always speaks of “daughters,” while the stories of origin and destruction in chapters I and VI speak most consistently of “women” and “wives.” There are exceptions to the basic pattern, of course, but each exception can be explained, and the pattern is consistent enough to draw the careful reader's attention.

The first reference to actual Jaredite women does not appear until Ether 6, in the first paragraph of the original chapter III. The story of Jaredite origins in chapter I never refers to Jaredite women by any specifically gendered term, speaking instead only of the “families” of Jared, his brother, and their friends. Right at the outset of chapter III, then, these “families” are, as it were, analyzed into their basic composition. Moroni reports that “the Lord caused stones to shine in darkness to give light unto men, women, and children, that they might not cross the great waters in darkness” (Ether 6:3). From this point forward, Moroni never speaks again of “families” in the narrative.<sup>5</sup> One might say that in chapter III of Ether, women emerge from their anonymity within the family to be characters in the narrative in their own right. They are not, however, consistently *women* from the time they appear in the narrative. Although Ether 6:3 refers to “women,” Moroni does not again refer to women as “women” until Ether 14, in the original chapter VI. Except in the one passage just discussed, women are always “daughters” in Ether 6—throughout chapters III and IV, and even into the first part of chapter VI.

What introduces the motif of Jaredite “daughters” is a pericope in Ether 6 that reads like an etiologic tale—that is, like a story that explains the origins of a cultural formation. Ether 13 in turn contains a pericope where the motif of Jaredite “daughters” is brought to a definitive conclusion, after which no “daughters” appear at all in the text. These two pericopes therefore seem meant to justify in turn (1) the historical identification of Jaredite women as “daughters” and (2) the historical dissolution of the same identity for Jaredite women. As if they were meant to echo each other, each

passage—Ether 6:14–28 and Ether 13:15–17—refers exactly four times to “daughters.” Given the emphasis laid on the daughterhood of the clearly central daughter of Jared, these passages deserve peculiar attention.

Ether 6:14–28 describes the founding order of Jaredite society after the group’s arrival in the New World. It begins with a report about the four sons of Jared, and it ends with the same four sons being offered the newly created Jaredite throne (ultimately accepted by the youngest, Orihah). The story effectively explains the origins of Jaredite monarchy and especially its peculiar institution of ultimogeniture, the Jaredite practice of always bestowing the throne on the youngest (rather than the oldest) direct descendant of the dying king.<sup>6</sup> It is in the midst of this story that is of such obvious importance to the Jaredite history—its position at the outset of chapter III makes this clear—that the reader is introduced to Jaredite daughters for the first time.

Peculiarly, while Ether 6:14 opens the first pericope by referring only to Jared’s “four sons,” the next verse reports that “the brother of Jared also begat sons *and daughters*.” The next verse in turn reports that “the friends of Jared and his brother . . . also begat sons and daughters.” This triple report at first gives the impression that Jared had only sons among his progeny (unlike his brother and their friends), but then verse 20 reports the following: “the number of the sons and daughters of Jared were twelve, he having four sons.” This makes retroactively clear that verse 14 oddly mentions only Jared’s sons when his daughters might well have been mentioned too.<sup>7</sup> In verse 20 as well, there is a peculiar emphasis on Jared’s sons (rather than his daughters). The specification that his “twelve” sons and daughters included “four sons,” but without any actual report on the number of daughters (which the reader has to derive from the data), suggests a privileging of Jared’s sons over his daughters. Further, this report about Jared’s children appears alongside a less detailed report regarding the children of Jared’s brother: “the number of the sons and the daughters of the brother of Jared were twenty and two souls” (6:20). The narrator never indicates how many of the brother of Jared’s sons and daughters were male or female, as if it were only within Jared’s immediate family that such distinctions matter. There is in this pericope a repeated emphasis on the maleness of the four sons of Jared.

In all this traditional privileging of sons, however, what is striking is that the text does not speak *only* of sons. Jared's four royal sons *are* privileged in the text, but there is consistent reference to daughters: to the daughters of Jared, to the daughters of the brother of Jared, and to the daughters of these two brothers' many friends. Although it seems to have been assumed that the Jaredite throne would need to go to a male heir, there is *something* of gender egalitarianism about the text's consistent reporting regarding daughters alongside sons. Indeed, except in the immediate family of the ascendant king, there is *no* obvious privileging of sons over daughters. By contrast, with very few exceptions, Nephite historical narratives report only a man's sons, failing to mention his daughters in reporting the passage of generations. In the Jaredite narrative, the fact that, from the first generation of the Jaredites, daughters appear alongside sons in relatively egalitarian fashion seems to be deliberate. It establishes a pattern that continues through the historical narrative. Whenever it is mentioned that a king begets sons, it is always mentioned also that he begets daughters.<sup>8</sup> The story in which the basic family compositions of the founders of the Jaredite nation appear for the first time sets a pattern that organizes the passage of generations throughout Jaredite history.

Just as there is a moment in the text when this pattern of begetting sons *and* daughters begins, Ether contains a moment when the pattern definitively ends. After more than a dozen references over centuries of history to this or that king *begetting* sons and daughters, one encounters a passage (the book's final reference to daughters) in which sons and daughters appear in a situation of *non*-begetting. The text reports that the king, Coriantumr, "repented not, neither his fair sons nor daughters—neither the fair sons and daughters of Cohor, neither the fair sons and daughters of Corihor. And in fine, there was none of the fair sons and daughters upon the face of the whole earth which repented of their sins" (Ether 13:17). This final pairing of "sons and daughters," but not in a situation of begetting—rather in a situation of fateful failure to repent—marks the end of the Jaredite history. There is no new Jaredite generation after this point. These final "fair sons and daughters" prove to be the last Jaredite generation. They die, leaving behind them only an unconscious king and a lonely prophet who might, like Mormon at the end of his own

people's history, mourn for the "fair sons and daughters" of the "fallen" people (Mormon 6:19).

Ether 13:15–17 thus brings the history of Jaredite sons and daughters to a definitive end. It appears early in chapter VI, just as Ether 6:14–28 appears early in chapter III. Whereas the earlier passage marks the transition within the narrative from Jaredite prehistory into the actual flow of Jaredite history, the later passage marks the transition from the actual flow of Jaredite history into the apocalyptic disaster that brings Jaredite history to an end. The relatively egalitarian references to "sons and daughters" thus give basic shape to the Jaredite story, formulaically designating the passage of each generation. And the presence of "daughters" in each report of a generation's passing seems particularly significant. It suggests special Jaredite attunement to the role of daughters in their society.

Perhaps this should be unsurprising in a history that ultimately turns on the actions of *one* daughter in particular: the daughter of Jared. The many references to daughters in the historical narrative of Ether effectively clear a narrative space within which the daughter of Jared operates. That is, the repeated references to so many nameless but explicitly present daughters help keep the reader's attention on a role basically ignored in earlier portions of the Book of Mormon, a role that then comes to be occupied by a disturbingly complex woman.

Now this might be seen at first as unsettling, as if the social position of the daughter emerges only to establish a space within which a corrupted version of daughterhood can be put on display—as if all that the book of Ether has to say about women focuses on a wicked woman. But the text explicitly works against such a reduction. In fact, in the only reference to daughters *outside* the historical flow from Ether 6:14–28 to Ether 13:15–17, Jesus Christ says the following to the brother of Jared in a vision: "In me shall all mankind have life, and that eternally, even they which shall believe on my name, and they shall become my sons and my daughters" (3:14).<sup>9</sup> Here, in advance of the book's systematic references to Jaredite daughters, the Jaredite story explicitly sets forth the possibility of becoming daughters of Christ, making the role or position of being a daughter the exemplary one for Jaredite women. The book of Ether presents Jesus Christ as being gender-egalitarian from the outset of Jaredite history, and it suggests that

a certain kind of daughter-like relationship to Christ exemplifies ideal Jaredite womanhood. It thus offers first, before it turns to the vicissitudes of history, real theological possibilities for daughters and for sons.

It remains the case, however, that the daughter of Jared does not seem to exemplify much that is good. Without contesting such a claim, I wish here to argue that her story proves more complicated than is often assumed if it is given serious attention. In the light of the context already established, it is possible to read her story with new eyes.

## STRANDS OF NARRATIVE IN ETHER 8

As has just been noted, the consistent reference to daughters in the book of Ether—despite being formulaic—provides context for a key story, a story about one Jaredite daughter in particular. As if to ensure that readers see her *as* a daughter, she is without a particularizing name, presented in the narrative simply as “the daughter of Jared.” Of course, it is not obvious exactly how this namelessness should be interpreted, since the most remarkable male hero of the book of Ether is similarly nameless. Although tradition has bestowed the name of Mahonri Moriancumer on the brother of Jared, the book of Ether calls him only “the brother of Jared,” in a formula that suggests a parallel with “the daughter of Jared.”<sup>10</sup> Both “-of-Jared” figures serve as founders of major Jaredite traditions—esoteric traditions in both cases, although one figure lays the foundations of a *righteous* and the other of a *wicked* esoteric tradition. Whatever the implications of the possible parallels between the brother of Jared and the daughter of Jared, it is clear that her story is central to the logic of the book and that she is to be regarded first and foremost as a daughter.

But what more might be said about this daughter among Jaredite daughters? What I wish to show is that careful analysis of her story in Ether 8 suggests that she represents not *one* but rather *two* ways of understanding Jaredite daughterhood. As a result, the question of her relationship to evil is more complex than has been assumed. How might one discern two distinct portraits of the daughter of Jared in the text? Close reading suggests the likelihood that her story as found in the book of Ether contains distinct textual strata, each embedding its own tradition regarding this enigmatic woman. Thus there may be a complex compositional history of



the text, comparable to the complex compositional histories of many biblical narratives. Biblical narrative often presents distinct traditional tellings of its core stories to readers—tellings that, though often at odds with each other, the text nonetheless weaves into a single unified story.<sup>11</sup> Tensions within the story of the daughter of Jared suggest something similar, and the striking consistency of each separable strand of the story suggests remarkable stability within each reconstructible tradition.

The idea that the book of Ether contains multiple sources in potential conflict is not a new one. Scholars have attempted to discern various sources Moroni may have used in compiling the book of Ether.<sup>12</sup> Others have outlined the possible complexity of the relationship between Moroni's rendering of the Jaredite history and earlier Nephite renderings that may have been available to him.<sup>13</sup> And one scholar in particular—Grant Hardy—has provided a particularly fruitful analysis of the way that Moroni transforms the Jaredite history into something very much meant to serve his own theological and pastoral purposes.<sup>14</sup> All of these attempts to discern distinct sources in the book of Ether, however, give their attention to how *Moroni* (or other Nephites before him) might have used a variety of differing sources in constructing the Jaredite history available in the book of Ether. What I wish to investigate here is the possibility that one of Moroni's (or other earlier Nephites') key sources might *itself* have been, in part, already composite. Moroni makes perfectly clear that he is dealing with sources, and one sees relatively readily that he uses his sources creatively. Much more subtle are tensions within the narrative that might suggest that the Jaredite historical sources available to the Nephites were already woven of disparate strands of Jaredite tradition.

Less subtle tensions in the book of Ether—between Jaredite history and Moroni's theological interests, for example—are of course *also* relevant to the story of the daughter of Jared. Moroni editorializes on the story in a long aside at the end of Ether 8. The editorial comment begins at least with verse 20 (which tellingly begins with “And now I, Moroni . . .”) and clearly runs to the end of the chapter (the last verse similarly begins with “Wherefore I, Moroni . . .”).<sup>15</sup> Here the sorts of tensions highlighted in available scholarly literature on the book of Ether are at issue, with Moroni's editorializing providing an interpretive lens through which to view

the Jaredite historical narrative that appears immediately before it. The tension that interests me here, however, is internal to that Jaredite historical narrative that precedes Moroni's editorial interruption.

It must be noted that it is not entirely clear where Moroni's editorial remarks officially begin, and this must be decided if one is to analyze the historical narrative for its own internal tensions. It is clear, to be sure, that Moroni has fully interrupted the narrative with his own editorial reflections by verse 20 (since there he speaks in his own name), but are any of the preceding verses already a part of Moroni's editorializing, despite the fact that he does not refer to himself as editor until verse 20? It in fact seems reasonable to conclude that Moroni begins to editorialize in a preliminary way in verses 15b–16 (beginning with “which had been handed down”), and then again in verses 18b–19 (beginning with “which combination is most abominable”), before he names himself and provides the full editorial aside of verses 20–26. In both passages, 15b–16 and 18b–19, the historical narrative gives way to comments more akin to the subsequent editorial aside than to anything in the historical narrative.<sup>16</sup> Between these two passages, however, in verses 17–18a, one finds more strictly narrative elements and formulaic language native to the story proper.<sup>17</sup> It thus appears that Moroni at first intended to editorialize just for a couple of lines in the course of telling the story, returning to his narrative after a brief interruption—but then that his editorializing impulse overtook him, such that he returned to the narrative for only a couple of lines before giving way to the editorializing impulse entirely for the remainder of the chapter.

Assuming I have drawn the right conclusions about where the text is and is not of an editorializing nature, I would now like to set aside all of Moroni's interrupting discourse. As I have noted, I am not here interested in the tension between Jaredite historical narrative and Moroni's editorializing comments. Rather, I wish to ask whether the Jaredite historical narrative itself bears within it *further* tensions suggestive of distinct textual strands or traditions. Since the story requiring consideration here is contained in Ether 8:7–15a, 17–18a (its sequel begins after the first line of Ether 9:1), it is now to this more narrowly delimited text that attention

must be given. Is it possible to trace distinct textual strata within this narrative?

It might be noted right away that the strikingly formulaic nature of verse 14 suggests direct quotation of a particularly early source. Especially intriguing is the strict parallelism that concludes the verse:

Whoso should vary from the assistance which Akish desired of them should lose his head; and whoso should divulge whatsoever thing Akish made known unto them, the same should lose his life. (Ether 8:14)<sup>18</sup>

The repeated elements of these two lines (“whoso should,” “Akish . . . them,” “should lose his”), along with the distinct elements thereby set in parallel (“vary from the assistance which” and “divulge whatsoever thing”; “desired of” and “made known unto”; “head” and “life”), indicate either that Moroni (or another narrator) becomes uncharacteristically poetic just at this point in the narrative or, more likely, that here Moroni (or another narrator) draws directly on the formulaic language of an early source. It seems most likely that the text here bears a clear trace of the most ancient sources, relatively unmediated by subsequent textual developments and left in something like its original state by Moroni as well.

This first detail, however, does not get one far in sorting out textual strata. Although it seems likely that the text here bears a particularly clear trace of its most ancient stratum, it seems isolated, unhelpful in deciding what may be going on in the remainder of the story. More useful than looking for out-of-place poetic gestures is to search for clear tensions in the telling of the story. And it turns out that there *is* such a tension that makes itself apparent to the discerning reader of the text. It concerns, at the most basic level, the involvement of Jared in the unfolding drama.

The story opens with Jared sorrowing, depressed for having lost his kingdom (to his father, Omer). His daughter then enters the story, hoping somehow to “redeem the kingdom unto her father” (Ether 8:8). She lays out her infamous plan after mentioning her awareness of an ancient tradition about using secret plans to secure kingdoms and glory. According to the plan, Jared will send for Akish, before whom Jared’s daughter will dance. This, she is confident, will result in a request for marriage, in exchange for

which Jared is to ask Akish for Omer's head. Jared indeed sends for Akish, and the plan unfolds as projected. When Jared asks for Omer's head, Akish gathers his kinsfolk and binds them with ancient oaths—at which point Moroni's editorializing begins and the story ends. Where is the tension? It comes in the briefly resumed narrative of verses 17–18a, where the text says this: “And it was the daughter of Jared which put it into his heart to search up these things of old; and Jared put it into the heart of Akish. Wherefore Akish administered it unto his kindreds and friends, leading them away by fair promises to do whatsoever thing he desired.” These words attribute greater involvement to Jared than is justified by the narrative that precedes them. According to the story, Jared does no more than send for Akish and then, at the appropriate moment, request the head of his father. Verse 17, however, indicates both (1) that Jared himself in some way intended to seek out “these things of old” (it was put “into his heart” to do so) and (2) that he then actively “put it into the heart of Akish” to do the same. Verse 17, in other words, attributes a more central and active role to Jared than does the preceding narrative of verses 7–15a.

How might one explain this discrepancy? Naturally, there are several options. For example, one could argue that Moroni is an inconsistent storyteller. After all, he drastically abridges a long and complicated history. It may be that he is excusably sloppy with certain details. This is a real possibility.<sup>19</sup> Another option, slightly different, would be to argue that Moroni indeed summarizes the story of the daughter of Jared accurately and faithfully in verses 7–15a, but that he then misconstrues events slightly in verses 17–18a. Someone pursuing this second approach might well argue that verses 17–18a are *not* a temporary resumption of the narrative (as argued above), but rather a continuation of the editorializing begun in verse 15b. This second approach would therefore ultimately regard the tension between 7–15a and 17–18a as a more subtle example of the common and generally apparent tension between Jaredite sources and Moroni's editorial impositions. This, too, is a real possibility. Both of these first interpretive options fully recognize the tension between the detailed description of events in 7–15a and the summary description of events in 17–18a, and both provide genuinely plausible explanations of how such a tension might have arisen in the first place.

These first two attempts at explaining the narrative inconsistency in Ether 8 share a desire to lay the burden of the tension on Moroni's shoulders. It remains possible, however, that Moroni *inherits* rather than *introduces* the tension in the text. What if Moroni, rather than misrepresenting his original sources, accurately represents them—in fact, represents them so accurately that he *reproduces* a tension in the Jaredite story he finds before him? I do not mean that Moroni may have inherited a tension already introduced into the Jaredite story by a post-Jaredite translator like Mosiah<sub>2</sub>—although that is of course also a possibility.<sup>20</sup> I mean instead that Moroni (and other Nephite readers, translators, and editors before him) may have found in the completed Jaredite records themselves an important tension that he then reproduced directly in his abridgment. This tension, already within the Jaredite history found by the Nephites, would be representative of a weaving together of distinct traditions and sources. Presumably, the nearly complete reconciler of the traditions would have been Ether, who “wrote this record,” according to Ether 1:6.

As I have already noted, this phenomenon of narrative inconsistency is familiar from the Bible, although many have resisted the idea for a variety of reasons.<sup>21</sup> A quick example might illustrate what is at issue. Close readers of the story of Noah in Genesis soon note inconsistencies in the story. For instance, the story of the Flood seems to begin twice: first in Genesis 6:5–7 and again in Genesis 6:11–13. In both passages, God sees a problem with human beings on earth and decides to destroy all life. In one, however, God generally goes by the name “the LORD” (the small capitals designate the divine name YHWH, traditionally vocalized “Jehovah”); in the other, he is simply “God.” Further, in the first passage, the problem on the earth is “wickedness,” but in the other it is specifically “violence.” As the story continues, it seems again and again as if the story is being told twice over. At one point, Noah is told to place “two of every sort” of animal in the ark (Genesis 6:19), but then at a later point, he is told to take “of every clean beast . . . by sevens” and “of beasts that are not clean by two” (7:2). When the Flood begins to recede, Noah first sends out “a raven” from the ark, going “to and fro” (8:7), but then he later sends “a dove from him, to see if the waters were abated from off the face of the ground” (8:8). Throughout the story, one notices a kind of alternation of the title used for

the divine, at times “God” and at times “the LORD.” And one notices many elements of the story occurring twice, a kind of insistent repetitiveness in the narrative style.

Now, one might explain these details and discrepancies in a variety of ways—and certainly many explanations have been offered. The prevailing explanation offered by modern biblical critics is, however, simple and powerful. They reason that there developed in ancient Israel (at least) two different traditional ways of telling the story of Noah and the Flood. Eventually, these two traditions found their way, in written form, into the hands of an editor who decided to weave them together into the Flood story that one now finds in the book of Genesis. This proves an elegant solution. These Flood traditions can be separated into two distinct and separately consistent strands, each of which stands on its own and offers its own theological perspective on the Flood. It is true, of course, that one can devise other ways of explaining the textual data in Genesis 6–8, but this solution has a great deal of explanatory power.<sup>22</sup> It is most interesting that the editor who, according to this scholarly reconstruction, put Genesis together apparently felt that both traditions coming down through Israel’s history deserved to be included. That author or editor apparently stitched two distinct texts together to make one (not at all seamless) whole, thereby exhibiting an exemplary sort of honesty and fairness to the sources.

I propose that something like what scholars claim to find in Genesis 6–8 is at work in Ether 8:7–15a, 17–18a. It is possible to discern two distinct textual traditions in the story. Further, when one disentangles the two major strands of the text, the apparent inconsistency between verses 7–15a and verses 17–18a entirely disappears.

I will of course provide full arguments regarding the internal coherence of each strand of text. It seems best, however, first just to extract the two strands from Ether 8. The first strand (what I will call “the secret combinations strand” or simply “the SC strand”) is as follows, fully extracted from the text.

And now Jared became exceeding sorrowful because of the loss of the kingdom, for he had set his heart upon the kingdom and upon the glory of the world. Now, the daughter of Jared, being exceeding expert and seeing the sorrow of her father, thought to devise a

plan whereby she could redeem the kingdom unto her father. And it came to pass that she did talk with her father and saith unto him, "Whereby hath my father so much sorrow? Hath he not read the record which our fathers brought across the great deep? Behold, is there not an account concerning them of old—that they by their secret plans did obtain kingdoms and great glory? And now, therefore, let my father send for Akish the son of Kimnor." And now, when Jared had sent for Akish, it came to pass that Akish gathered in unto the house of Jared all his kinsfolks and saith unto them, "Will ye swear unto me that ye will be faithful unto me in the thing which I shall desire of you?" And it came to pass that they all sware unto him by the God of heaven, and also by the heavens, and also by the earth, and by their heads, that whoso should vary from the assistance which Akish desired should lose his head—and whoso should divulge whatsoever thing Akish made known unto them, the same should lose his life. And it came to pass that thus they did agree with Akish, and Akish did administer unto them the oaths which was given by them of old, who also sought power. And it was the daughter of Jared which put it into his heart to search up these things of old, and Jared put it into the heart of Akish—wherefore, Akish administered it unto his kindreds and friends, leading them away by fair promises to do whatsoever thing he desired. And it came to pass that they formed a secret combination, even as they of old.

The second strand (what I will call "the dancing woman strand" or simply "the DW strand") is then as follows (with ellipses marking an apparent gap in what remains of this source)

"And behold, I am fair, and I will dance before him, and I will please him, that he will desire me to wife. Wherefore, if he shall desire of thee that ye shall give unto him me to wife, then shall ye say, 'I will give her if ye will bring unto me the head of my father the king.'" . . . The daughter of Jared danced before him, that she pleased him, insomuch that he desired her to wife. And it came to pass that he said unto Jared, "Give her unto me to wife." And Jared said unto

him, "I will give her unto you if ye will bring unto me the head of my father the king."

It should be noted that I have left out any passages where Moroni's unmistakable editorial voice breaks into the text (vv. 15b–16 and, of course, from v. 18b onward). Also, though, as I will clarify further along, I have eliminated what I believe are two brief interpolations on the part of some editor (presumably within Moroni's Jaredite source) that seem to have been introduced into the text to smooth over the interlinking of the two strands.

The internal coherence of each of these two isolated strands of text deserves emphasis. As regards the secret combinations (or SC) strand, it should be noted first that part of what holds the whole of it together is the repeating phrase "of old" ("them of old," "these things of old," "they of old"). Such phrases appear in verses 9, 15, 17, and 18—in three distinct fragments that are, in the final form of Ether 8, separated by interwoven portions of the dancing woman (or DW) strand and by the interpolating editorial comment of verses 15b–16. Further and more strikingly, the name of Akish appears only in the SC strand, never in the DW strand (where the person before whom the daughter of Jared dances is only referred to as "he" or "him"). In fact, Akish's name appears with remarkable frequency in the SC strand; only once does a personal pronoun replace his name ("they all sware unto him" in v. 14—although one finds the possessive pronoun *his* once also in v. 13). Moreover, as with the repeating "of old" formulas, Akish's name appears in four distinct fragments of the combination source that are separated by the other interwoven sources. Yet another point of internal coherence for the SC strand concerns the form of address the daughter of Jared uses in speaking to her father. Within the SC strand, she addresses him only in the third person: "Whereby hath my father so much sorrow? Hath he not read the record . . . ? . . . Let my father send for Akish" (vv. 9–10). The DW strand will find her using a distinct form of address with equal consistency.

It should be underscored that the daughter of Jared is integral to the SC strand. One might at first be inclined to think it possible to extract a strand of text focused only on Jared and Akish, perhaps with the guiding idea that *all* of the material concerning the daughter of Jared was a later addition to the text.<sup>23</sup> However, the first "of old" formula (in v. 9) occurs within the



daughter of Jared's speech, as does the first reference to Akish by name (v. 10). Two unifying motifs for the SC strand are thus both introduced into the story by the daughter of Jared herself. Moreover, a close consideration of verses 7–9 shows that the introduction of the story of Jared and Akish has close textual ties with the introduction of the story of the daughter of Jared. Verse 7 reports that "Jared became exceeding *sorrowful* because of the *loss of the kingdom*, for he had set his heart upon the *kingdom* and upon the *glory* of the world." As the daughter of Jared enters the story in verse 8 and begins to introduce the idea of secret combinations in verses 8–9, she repeats all these italicized items from verse 7, and in the same order: "Now, the daughter of Jared, being exceeding expert and seeing the *sorrow* of her father, thought to devise a plan whereby she could *redeem the kingdom* unto her father. And it came to pass that she did talk with her father and saith unto him, 'Whereby hath my father so much sorrow? Hath he not read the record which our fathers brought across the great deep? Behold, is there not an account concerning them of old—that they by their secret plans did obtain *kingdoms* and great *glory*?'"<sup>10</sup> This confirms in a still-deeper way the internal coherence of the SC strand, as well as the unlikelihood of the alternative source-critical proposal.

What is most impressive about the coherence of the SC strand, however, is simply that it can be extracted in its entirety *while still telling a perfectly fluent story*. Especially interesting is the fact that the extracted SC strand resolves the problem of inconsistency between verses 17–18a and verses 7–15a. With the DW strand separated out from the SC strand, the summary statement of verses 17–18a perfectly describes the flow of events. This means that the narrative inconsistency of Ether 8 appears to be ultimately rooted in a tension between verses 17–18a and the DW strand. Extracting the DW strand from the text renders the larger SC narrative perfectly consistent, as well as narratively coherent and fluid. The daughter of Jared puts it into the heart of her father to search out secret plans, and she provides him with the name of someone (Akish) who seems already to be connected to such things; Jared then sends for Akish, putting the same intentions into his heart, and Akish forms the secret combination. There is, in the SC strand of the text, no need for any dance scene and no need for any persuasion of Akish.

One other point regarding the SC strand is worth noting. It seems important that the poetic presentation of the oath in verse 14, identified above as particularly indicative of an early source, falls within the SC strand. It might be that one finds here a still-earlier source than the SC strand, either inserted at some point into the latter or deployed from the start by the author of the SC strand as a kind of narrative foundation. Alternatively, it might be that the presence of the oath-poem in verse 14 is integral to the SC strand and indicates the whole strand's particularly ancient provenance, poetically presented only at the moment of the oath. This remains an open question.

What can be said now regarding the internal coherence of the DW strand? I have already mentioned a first point. While the SC strand consistently finds the daughter of Jared addressing her father using deferential third-person language ("my father," "he"), the DW strand finds her addressing her father with simple second-person pronouns: "ye shall give"; "then shall ye say." This suggests both independence and internal coherence. It is, however, only a first and relatively minor point. The coherence of the DW strand is, in fact, more striking—and far simpler—than that of the SC strand. As can be seen from a quick glance at it, what exists of the DW strand naturally divides into two parts, one made up of the daughter of Jared's own words (in the form of a direct quotation) and one made up of narrative report. The two mirror each other perfectly, however, with five phrases repeated (with slight variations) in each, and significantly repeated in the same order: "dance before him," "please him," "desire me to wife," "give unto him me to wife," and "say, 'I will give her if ye will bring unto me the head of my father, the king.'"<sup>24</sup> The narrative report of events in the second half of the DW strand thus perfectly reproduces the daughter of Jared's spoken proposal in the first half of the DW strand, yielding unmistakable internal coherence. Moreover, it should be noted that the name Akish never once appears in the DW strand, a further point of internal coherence. Rather than referring in any specific way to Akish by name, it refers always to an unspecified "him" as the third party to the father-daughter pair. This confirms the internal coherence of the DW strand. Whereas the SC strand only once refers to Akish with a pronoun, the DW strand refers to him only with pronouns.

This last point deserves more attention. The fact that a perfectly coherent and internally consistent strand can be extracted from the larger narrative (thereby producing consistency in the other textual strand) and that the extracted strand never uses a proper name for its third-party *him* suggests other possibilities. It is possible—and even likely—that the DW strand did not originally concern Akish at all. It may in fact represent an independent and originally unrelated story about the daughter of Jared's marriage, but her marriage to some here-unnamed man whose request for marriage became part of a bargain to kill Jared's father. In the SC strand, the daughter of Jared is aware of Akish as someone on whom Jared could draw to access the secret plans of the ancients, but she never seeks to marry him. In the DW strand, the daughter of Jared offers herself in marriage to some unnamed man in exchange for a simple act of murder, but she never refers to secret plans or the ancients.<sup>25</sup> It seems likely, therefore, that the DW strand in fact concerns an entirely independent tradition, one in which the daughter of Jared may have married an entirely different person than Akish.<sup>26</sup>

The internal coherence of each strand in Ether 8, then, is clear. The separation of the two textual strands allows especially the SC strand to reveal its narrative consistency, eliminating the tension that otherwise holds between the story of verses 7–15a and the summary in verses 17–18a. If the hypothesis defended here is correct, then a skilled redactor wove the two strands together, such that seams in the text are difficult to discern. They are there, but they do not draw attention to themselves.

Moreover, the hand of a redactor might be seen in two further instances. Two clauses from Ether 8 appear in neither of the two strands as I have isolated them above. The first opens Ether 8:9: "Now, the daughter of Jared was exceeding fair." The second occurs at the outset of Ether 8:11: "Now, Omer was a friend to Akish." These, I surmise, are redactional insertions meant to smooth over the weave of the two strands.<sup>27</sup> The insertion of "Now, the daughter of Jared was exceeding fair" early in the SC strand prepares the reader for the way that the daughter of Jared's speech in the SC strand simply continues in the combined text with her speech drawn from the DW strand. In other words, the combined strands make one continuous speech for the daughter of Jared in verses 9–10, and the anticipatory note

about the daughter of Jared's beauty helps to cover over the seam between two direct quotations. As for the insertion of "Now, Omer was a friend to Akish," it seems necessary in the redactor's eyes because the addition of the DW strand to the SC strand effectively eliminates the relevance of Akish to the daughter of Jared's stated plans. In the SC strand Akish seems to be a known assassin, someone ready to be involved in murder. But when the SC strand is augmented with the DW strand, Akish becomes simply some man interested in the daughter of Jared who might be persuaded to do something drastic simply out of desire for marriage. The addition of "Now, Omer was a friend to Akish" provides motivation for Akish's being singled out in the daughter of Jared's plan; he has connections to Jared's father, the king, which might be exploited.<sup>28</sup>

Now, I have pursued this long source-critical discussion in order to provide a full account of the possibility that what one finds in Ether 8 is not *one* story about the daughter of Jared but perhaps *two*. It is possible to explain the narrative tension in Ether 8 in other ways, to be sure, but this explanation seems to me the most likely—and certainly the most interesting. With this hypothesis in hand, it is now possible to return directly to the question motivating this essay. What can be said about the status and presentation of women in the book of Ether? And what, in particular, can be said about the peculiar story of the daughter of Jared, the exemplary Jaredite daughter in a long narrative that often refers to Jaredite daughters?

## TWO DAUGHTERS, ONE WOMAN

If, as I have argued, it is possible to discern in Ether 8 two distinct Jaredite traditions regarding the daughter of Jared, it becomes important to ask how each tradition understands this most central female character in the book of Ether. The two stories represented by the two textual strands are clearly different, but how does the daughter of Jared fare in each story as a specifically female character? How does the daughter of Jared function in the larger context of the book of Ether, from the respective perspectives of the SC and DW strands of the text? And how does the combination of these two strands into one unified story in Moroni's Jaredite source affect the reader's implicit understanding of the status of women in the book of Ether?

Because it is arguably the DW strand that most impacts readers of Ether 8, it is worth beginning with the SC strand. There one finds the following story, as has been shown: Jared's sorrow at losing his kingdom spurs his daughter to "devise a plan" (Ether 8:8); she reminds him of ancient writings that speak of "secret plans" (v. 9) and recommends that he seek out Akish—apparently a man connected to such affairs; Jared follows her advice, putting it into Akish's heart to seek out such plans, and Akish draws together "all his kinsfolk" (v. 13), binding them with a grisly oath to join him in undertaking dark deeds. Such is the story found in the SC strand, in which, really, the daughter of Jared plays a relatively minimal role. Her only action in this strand of text is to suggest seeking out Akish in the hopes of renewing or utilizing ancient secret combinations, which she recommends directly to her father. This is all. Much can nonetheless be said about the presentation of the daughter of Jared in this strand.

The very first thing that must be said about her is that she is presented as well-read and well-connected. The narrator informs the audience at the moment of her entrance into the story that she is "exceeding expert" (Ether 8:8), and her "plan" suggests that she has herself "read the record which [the Jaredite] fathers brought across the great deep" (vv. 8, 9). Further, she is apparently acquainted with the dangerous figure of Akish—perhaps a professional assassin, but at any rate certainly someone she knows would be willing to gather a secret band and seek the life of the king. It is the daughter of Jared's so-called expertise that draws the interest of the narrator,<sup>29</sup> since she is made the ultimate source of the trouble with Jaredite combinations: "it was the daughter of Jared which put it into his [Jared's] heart to search up these things of old" (v. 17). At the same time, this woman's role in the development of secret combinations is presented in this particular textual strand as relatively minimal. She is, ultimately, only the *source of the idea*, never a full actor in the story in her own right. In some sense, she is exhausted by her expertise. She has a familiarity with texts and with people, but we neither witness her actively studying nor see her interacting with anyone beyond her family.

In fact, it must be said that in the SC strand the daughter of Jared remains strikingly and exclusively within her role as *daughter*. With the DW strand removed from the text, the remaining narrative never

emphasizes any quality of hers that would serve anyone apart from her father; she is not, as in the DW strand, effectively on her way out of her father's household because she anticipates marriage. She is *only* her father's daughter. One must therefore emphasize that within the strict boundaries of the SC strand the daughter of Jared's age and social status are unclear. For all the reader knows, she is extremely young, not yet approaching marriageable age—perhaps aware and thinking of Jaredite traditions because she is involved with tutors and texts. Might one therefore read the story as containing a tragic view about learning, with an innocent young girl learning the wrong things and making ignorant suggestions to the wrong person? But again, for all the reader knows, the daughter of Jared is already a fully grown woman in the SC strand, already a mother even, married and well-connected—perhaps aware of Akish and his services because of the wider social networks that come with age. Might one therefore read the story as reflecting on the world-weary cynicism of an aging former princess, willing to suggest dangerous things in the hopes of recovering her own former glory? There are, it turns out, a good many ways the story might be understood if one looks squarely to the SC strand alone. The image readers naturally develop of the daughter of Jared has everything to do with the DW strand and its implication that the woman is ripe for marriage, as well as advantageously “exceeding fair” (Ether 8:9). The SC strand, however, leaves much more indeterminate the matter of the woman's age and status, since it highlights only the fact that she is Jared's daughter.

As a result, the relationship between Jared and his daughter is ambiguous in the SC strand. By contrast, as will be seen in a moment, her relationship to her father in the DW strand is unequivocally dutiful, even self-sacrificial. But in the SC strand, it is unclear whether the daughter of Jared ultimately aims to serve her father's interests. She of course provides him with a solution to his dilemma, but her motives for doing so are uncertain. One might well wonder why she knows Akish well enough to recommend that her father seek out such a person. And does she make her suggestion fully aware of what Akish might do? As the story goes on in Ether 9, once Jared has in fact taken the throne of his father, Akish receives Jared's daughter as his wife and then seeks the life of his father-in-law. Does the woman anticipate this? Does she seek “kingdoms and great glory”

as well (Ether 8:9)? Or does she simply make a tragically foolish suggestion, genuinely hoping to assuage the depressed feelings of her father—of which she is keenly aware—but dangerously recommending involvement with someone who will prove more dangerous than she imagines? In short, while in the SC strand the woman *appears* to be a dutiful daughter concerned for her father's welfare, it is possible to read the situation in other ways. The ambiguity is strengthened by the deferential form of speech used by the daughter of Jared in the SC strand. Is this a sign of her genuine respect, her solicitous concern for her father's welfare? Or is it an indication of wily flattery, a careful deployment of respectful language that allows the woman to secure her father's trust while she hopes to use Akish to be rid of her father?

In the last analysis, the SC strand presents an underdeveloped image of the daughter of Jared, intriguing but unclear. In a history that consistently recognizes the place of daughters in Jaredite society, she exemplifies daughterhood, but she embodies it ambiguously. Is the exemplary Jaredite daughter a dutiful daughter, classically managing her father's emotions and providing clever (but ultimately foolish) solutions to his difficulties? Or is the exemplary Jaredite daughter a conniving woman with dangerous plans, putting on a show of filial duty in order to accomplish perverse designs for power? Is she a girl, a young woman, or a fully mature woman—unmarried or already married, perhaps even a widow? Even as the SC strand leaves all such questions unanswered, however, it provides clear points of orientation that distinguish it from the portrayal in the DW strand. In the SC strand, the woman is subsumed by her intelligence and her social standing. She is intelligent and aware, resourceful and connected, well-read and willing to take risks.

What, in turn, is the portrait of the daughter of Jared in the DW strand? Of course, the DW strand is fragmentary enough that one cannot straightforwardly discern much of the larger context of the event described. Regardless, much can be said about the portrayal of the daughter of Jared. She is, for instance, presented within this strand as wily, but not necessarily as well-read or socially aware. In addition, she is here unmistakably portrayed as a figure of beauty. The daughter of Jared's intelligence in the SC strand concerns her investment in written records and her recognition

of who in her father's social network might be willing to seek out the secret plans of the ancients. In the DW strand, by contrast, her intelligence concerns an awareness of her own sexual power—a frank recognition of her charms and a social awareness of what can be accomplished through the use of those charms. She is resourceful, as in the SC strand, but her resources are now aspects of her own person, and these are subsumed in her physical attractiveness.

There is, moreover, a self-sacrificial gesture central to the portrayal of the daughter of Jared in the DW strand, a gesture absent from the SC strand. When in the latter the woman provides her father with ideas, they all concern actions her father might undertake. She might offer those ideas out of a kind of filial duty, but she in no way offers her own services, so to speak. In other words, in the SC strand, she draws her father's attention to a man who might assist, but she does not apparently plan to become involved with that man herself. In the DW strand, however, the woman's submissive relationship to her father is not only perfectly apparent, it is extreme. She sacrifices herself to an irreversible situation. It might be that she desires the man before whom she will dance, but it might also be that she aims in any possible way just to escape from her father's house. Such details are not obvious, however, and so the brief outline of her plan suggests that the daughter of Jared is willing to offer her future to her father in the hopes of helping him to secure his aims. At the same time, it is clearer in the DW strand that the daughter of Jared assists in the assassination of her own grandfather. Although she presents as a figure of filial duty, she expects no such filial duty from her father toward *his* father. The self-sacrificial gesture is therefore complex. It is not clear why the daughter of Jared should feel the obligation she does toward her father when he feels nothing of the same toward his father in turn. This might suggest something about gender status in Jaredite society, with women (unlike men) bound by expectations of submissive or duty-driven piety. This, though, remains unclear.

There is, at any rate, a kind of intimacy between Jared and his daughter in the DW strand that is lacking in the SC strand. Whereas she speaks to her father only with the deferential but distant third person in the SC strand, she speaks to him in the second person in the DW strand,



suggesting familiarity and even closeness, something missing in the SC strand. Whatever the circumstances under which the daughter of Jared in the DW strand is supposed to have produced the plan to secure the head of her grandfather, she has a closer and more intimate relationship with her father in that tradition. There is thus a boldness about her plan that is lacking in the other tradition. She states her intentions, explaining her reasons and confidence, and then she tells her father what he “shall” do (8:10). Significantly, the reader is told nothing about Jared’s actual response to his daughter’s plan—except that he does exactly what she tells him to do. The DW strand thus combines with the self-sacrificial gesture of the daughter of Jared an implicit control of daughter over father.

Such, in outline, are the respective portraits of the daughter of Jared in the two reconstructed sources for the story in Ether 8. In both, the woman is resourceful, but the nature of her resourcefulness is distinct in each strand. Is she well-read and socially connected, or is she beautiful and socially savvy? In both strands, moreover, she is complexly related to her father, but this relationship takes on a different cast in each tradition. Is she deferential and distant in her filial relationship, or is she bold and commanding? Still more, both strands present the daughter of Jared as seeking her father’s interests, but each positions her distinctly with respect to those interests. Are her motivations ambiguous and potentially at odds with her father’s aims, or are they so completely identical to her father’s interests that she offers her social status to him in a self-sacrificial gesture? All of these alternatives orbit around the meaning of Jaredite daughterhood, but the two strands of text in Ether 8 portray that meaning in strikingly distinct ways. If women are in Jaredite history primarily *daughters*, then what does *the* Jaredite daughter tell the reader about what it means to be a woman in Jaredite society? The two strands of the text suggest radically different images.

In the end, then, there is reason to think that the book of Ether’s presentation of women in Jaredite history is highly ambiguous. Jaredite women are daughters first and foremost, but the most exemplary Jaredite daughter is presented through distinct intertwined portraits, portraits arguably irreducible to one another. Are Jaredite daughters inventively independent, intelligent and learned, deferential toward men but perhaps

with ulterior motives? Or do they exhaust their creativity in seeking the interests of the men around them, savvy in their sexual self-awareness but in some way trapped by it, thanks to their filial duty to the fathers they know intimately? Are these two alternatives that were always on offer in Jaredite society two images of what women were like? And what happens when the two images of the Jaredite daughters are fused into one almost seamless narrative, as in Ether 8? What happens when the highly sexualized figure of the one strand is combined with the learned and plotting figure of the other strand? Are readers done a disservice when it seems that the daughter of Jared was a well-read and resourceful woman who gave all of her ingenuity to seeking her father's interests and then sacrificed her future by using her sexual power to achieve her father's aims? Does such a composite portrait eliminate the complexity of Jaredite women's history, or does it enrich it?

There are many questions here that require closer attention. This much, however, is clear, by way of a minimal or preliminary conclusion: The daughter of Jared is more complex than has generally been recognized. A closer analysis of her story, perhaps especially with a source-critical eye, might allow for far more nuanced readings of the gendered data in the text. Where in this text might someone in the twenty-first century concerned about the portrayal of women in ancient scripture find the resources for a better and more thorough treatment of gender? It seems that, at the very least, Ether 8 provides more to work with than has been assumed.

## NOTES

1. For a preliminary outline of such a reading, see Joseph M. Spencer and Kimberly M. Berkey, "Great Cause to Mourn': The Complexity of the Book of Mormon's Presentation of Gender and Race," in *The Book of Mormon: Americanist Approaches*, ed. Elizabeth Fenton and Jared Hickman (New York: Oxford University Press, forthcoming).
2. Ether 9:23–24 tells the story of Coriantum, who "had no children even until he was exceeding old." Described as a righteous king, Coriantum went childless until "his wife died, being an hundred and two years old." At that point, though, he "took to wife in his old age a young maid and begat sons and daughters." The singular first wife of Coriantum and the singular "young maid" he

- marries late in life are the only two individualized women in the book of Ether outside of the story of the daughter of Jared. This has, incidentally, drawn the attention of conservative feminist readers. See Jerrie W. Hurd, *Our Sisters in the Latter-day Scriptures* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1987), 49–50; and Francine R. Bennion, “Women and the Book of Mormon: Tradition and Revelation,” in *Women of Wisdom and Knowledge: Talks Selected from the BYU Women’s Conferences*, ed. Marie Cornwall and Susan Howe (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1990), 171.
3. Royal Skousen has shown that the chapter divisions of the 1830 first edition of the Book of Mormon were not a modern editorial device imposed on the text, but rather part of what Joseph Smith actually dictated to his scribes. For some discussion, see Royal Skousen, *Analysis of Textual Variants of the Book of Mormon, Part 1: 1 Nephi–2 Nephi 2*, 2nd ed. (Provo, UT: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 2017), 45–48. Throughout this study, I use as a base text Royal Skousen, ed., *The Book of Mormon: The Earliest Text* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009)—although I feel free to alter the punctuation where it seems appropriate.
  4. Incidentally, all references to individual female characters also appear in chapters III and IV.
  5. Two *individual* families are mentioned in Ether 9:3 when King Omer removes with his family and all his household—except the usurper Jared and his family—to a new settlement near the sea. But after the original chapter I, Moroni never uses “families” as a way of designating the general structure or pattern of Jaredite society.
  6. Astonishingly, the scholarly literature on the book of Ether contains no serious discussions of the fact that the Jaredite society is oriented by the practice of ultimogeniture, or the fact that the practice seems to be intentionally linked in the text to the story of Jared’s four sons and their responses to the offer of the throne.
  7. Presumably, the reason for this is that Jared’s four sons will be successively offered the throne in the last verses of the pericope.
  8. There is only one exception, Ether 9:10, where Akish is said to have begotten “other sons” beyond the one he starved to death in prison (see v. 7). In this single exceptional case, however, it seems that sons alone are mentioned because they are sons specifically in addition to the starved son mentioned earlier. Or it is also possible that Akish had only male children at this point in his life.

9. This teaching echoes that of King Benjamin in Mosiah 5:7. It may be significant that the story of Benjamin's sermon also opens with a clear emphasis on the familial composition of his hearers, consistently noting "daughters" alongside "sons" in those families (see Mosiah 2:5).
10. According to George Reynolds, Joseph Smith had the name Mahonri Moriancumer revealed to him as he provided a name and a blessing for the child of Reynolds Cahoon. See the account in George Reynolds and Janne M. Sjodahl, *Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, ed. Philip C. Reynolds (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1955), 6:69.
11. For a good review of the history of source criticism, along with a careful defense of its aims in response to traditional critique of its methods, see John Barton, *The Nature of Biblical Criticism* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007). I will provide an illustrative example of biblical source criticism further along in this study.
12. See John W. Welch, "Preliminary Comments on the Sources behind the Book of Ether" (Provo, UT: FARMS, 1986); Valentin Arts, "A Third Jaredite Record: The Sealed Portion of the Gold Plates," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 11, no. 1 (2002): 50–59, 110–11; and Frederick W. Axelgard, "More Than Meets the Eye: How Nephite Prophets Managed the Jaredite Legacy," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 26 (2017): 135–64.
13. See, for instance, Brant A. Gardner, *Second Witness: Analytical and Contextual Commentary on the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2007), 6:152–54.
14. See Grant Hardy, *Understanding the Book of Mormon: A Reader's Guide* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 228–46; see also, in a similar vein, Joseph M. Spencer, "Christ and Krishna: The Visions of Arjuna and the Brother of Jared," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 23 (2014): 68–72.
15. The first verse of Ether 9 begins with a clear formula of transition from editorial comment to resumed narrative: "And now I, Moroni, proceed with my record."
16. One should consider (1) the reference to Cain in verse 15b, referred to again more obliquely in verse 25 ("murder from the beginning"); (2) the reference to "the power of the devil" early in verse 16, which anticipates the direct discussion of "the devil" in verse 25 ("the devil, which is the father of all lies") and talk of "Satan" in verse 26; (3) the use of the word *people* in verse 16, which never appears in the narrative of the daughter of Jared, but multiple times in verses 20–26; (4) talk of "power" as the aim of combinations in verse 16, in contrast with the

narrative's repeated emphasis instead on "kingdoms" and "glory" (see especially verse 9), but in line with references in verses 22–23 to getting "power and gain"; and (5) the use of the word *murder* in verse 16, which describes what one finds in the narrative but is not used in the course of the narrative, although it appears in verses 23 and 25 in different forms. All these details suggest strongly that verses 15b–16 are in Moroni's editorializing voice, rather than being continuous with the narrative. Verses 18b–19 are more obviously editorial, transitioning to Moroni's explicit editorial comments in verses 20–26.

17. Here one should consider (1) the anaphoric *his* early in verse 17, which seems to refer back to Akish at the beginning of verse 15 (rather than to anything in verses 15b–16); (2) the phrase "these things of old" in verse 17, which echoes not only "them of old" in verse 15a but also "them of old" in verse 9; and (3) the use of the verb *to administer* later in verse 16, matching the use of the same verb in verse 15a (in contrast to *handed down* in the editorializing language of verses 15b–16). These details, combined with the fact that verses 17–18b are more straightforwardly narrative in nature than editorial, suggest a temporary return from editorial to continuing story line.
18. The parallelism is obvious, and its formulaic nature is suggestive. It is worth noting that this marks the only instance of parallelistic poetry in Donald Parry's analysis of the narrative in Ether 8:7–15a, 17–18a. See Donald W. Parry, *The Book of Mormon Text Reformatted according to Parallelistic Patterns* (Provo, UT: FARMS, 1992), 464–65.
19. A variant of this same approach would be to argue, beginning from what is sometimes called a "loose control" model of translation, that Joseph Smith is himself the source of the narrative unevenness, despite his having produced a translation of a genuinely ancient record. For an articulation and a defense of the model of loose control, see Brant A. Gardner, *The Gift and Power: Translating the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2011). Obviously, in a still more naturalistic vein, one could simply but in some ways similarly argue that Joseph Smith is the real author of the Book of Mormon and that the narrative unevenness is a function of his poor storytelling. Neither of these slight variations appeals to me—the first because I am unconvinced of the loose control model of translation, and the second because I fully believe the Book of Mormon to be an ancient text.

20. Brant Gardner argues that Moroni's portrayal of Jaredite history is shaped by the translation made by Mosiah<sub>2</sub> according to Mosiah 28:11–19. See Gardner, *Second Witness*, 6:152–54.
21. For a classic critique of the scholarship aimed at disentangling sources in biblical narrative, see Umberto Cassuto, *The Documentary Hypothesis and the Composition of the Pentateuch* (Jerusalem: Shalem Center, 2006).
22. For a classic detailed commentary that attempts to discern all the relevant textual sources, see Claus Westermann, *Genesis 1–11: A Continental Commentary*, trans. John J. Scullion (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994).
23. One would then extract a “Jared-Akish strand” made up of verses 7, 11a, 13–15a, and perhaps part of verses 17–18a. The resulting remainder, a “daughter of Jared strand,” would be made up of verses 8–10, 11b–12, and perhaps part of verses 17–18a.
24. The slight variations all concern verb tenses (the daughter of Jared's future-tense verbs become in the narrative report past-tense verbs) and pronoun changes (the daughter of Jared's references to herself in the first person become the narrator's references to her in the third person).
25. It is true that in Ether 9:4 it is reported that Jared “gave unto Akish his daughter to wife” after being “anointed king over the people.” This seems to indicate that, in the SC strand, the daughter of Jared eventually marries Akish. But in the SC strand, this seems to have nothing to do with Akish's delivery of the king's head to Jared; in fact, the king escapes and Jared simply becomes king in his absence.
26. One could experiment with the possibility that the DW strand, in its earliest version, was not even about Jared and his daughter—that the single reference to “the daughter of Jared” in verse 11 and the two references to Jared in verses 11 and 12 are additions made by the editor who wove the two strands together at some point. This is a real possibility. The consequence would be that the DW strand would represent a legend of sorts that may have had nothing to do with the particular time and place of the situation concerning Jared's family and friends. In a certain way, this is similar to a proposal and analysis made by Hugh Nibley. See Hugh Nibley, *Lehi in the Desert, The World of the Jaredites, There Were Jaredites*, ed. John W. Welch et al. (Provo, UT: FARMS, 1988), 210–13. Such an approach, however, remains entirely uncertain, and for the purposes of this study, I see the references to Jared and his daughter within the extracted DW strand as integral to the story.

27. One notices immediately the shared interruptive style of the two clauses: "Now, ..."
28. It seems significant that Omer's name otherwise does not appear anywhere in either of the two textual strands. This itself suggests the possibility of an interpolation in the first part of verse 11.
29. Noah Webster's *American Dictionary of the English Language*, first published in 1828, provides relevant entries on *expert* that help clarify the meaning of the text. The first definition reads: "Properly, experienced; taught by use, practice or experience; hence, skillful; well instructed; having familiar knowledge of." The second definition: "Dextrous [*sic*]; adroit; prompt; having a facility of operation or performance from practice." See Noah Webster, *American Dictionary of the English Language*, 2 vols. (New York: S. Converse, 1828), s.v. "expert."