

INDISPUTABLE

Evidence That the Sealed Portion of Mauricio Berger's "Golden Plates" Include Convicted Murderer/Counterfeiter Mark Hofmann's 1980 "Anthon Transcript" Forgery Symbols & That His "Sword of Laban" Is Fake Because His Pictures Show Three Completely Different Objects, None of Which Match Nephi's Description

By David M. Price

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New Evidence Shows Mauricio's Story Is a Hoax

Since at least 2007, a group of ex-LDS and others in Brazil, led by Mauricio Berger, have alleged they were given the Book of Mormon plates (including the sealed portion), the Interpreters, and the Sword of Laban by the angel, Moroni. On January 8, 2018, Price Publishing Company published a letter describing the *scriptural and historical reasons* we disbelieve the claims of this group. Now, we offer *empirical and forensic evidences* that also show their claims are untrue. They have produced photos of three entirely different swords represented as the "Sword of Laban." They have also claimed to "translate" portions of what they say are the ancient sealed Book of Mormon plates which, in fact, include fake characters invented in 1980 by Mark Hofmann when he concocted his Anthon Transcript forgery.

Mark Hofmann's Crimes

Wikipedia's webpage on Hofmann states he "is an American counterfeiter, forger and convicted murderer. Widely regarded as one of the most accomplished forgers in history, Hofmann is especially noted for his creation of documents related to the history of the Latter Day Saint movement. When Hofmann's schemes began to unravel, he constructed bombs to murder two people in Salt Lake City. . . .

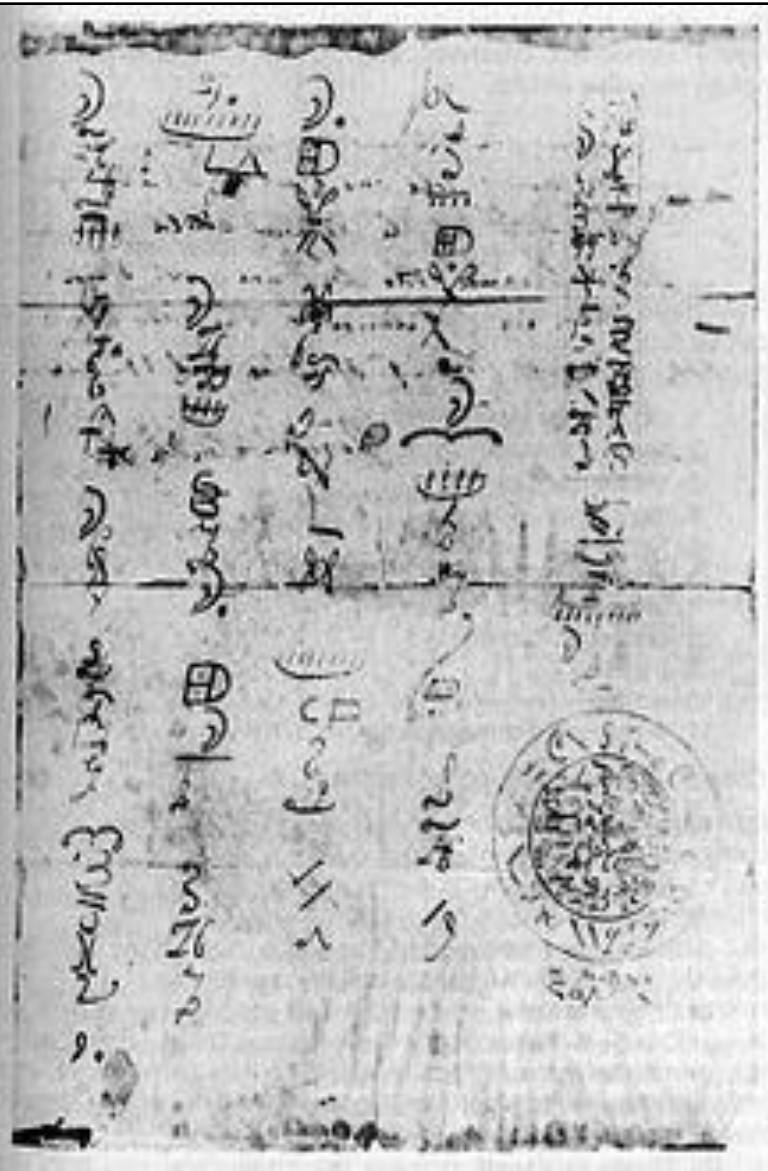
"Anthon Transcript forgery

In 1980, Hofmann [forged, then claimed] . . . he had found a 17th-century King James Bible with a folded paper gummed inside. The document seemed to be the transcript that Joseph Smith's scribe Martin Harris had presented to Charles Anthon . . . in 1828 . . . copied by Smith from the golden plates from which he

translated the Book of Mormon. [Editor's Note: This does not refer to the smaller, informal script of "Anthon characters" historians are familiar with, but to a supposed new, full page of inscriptions.] Hofmann constructed his [counterfeit] version to fit Anthon's description of the document, and its discovery made Hofmann's reputation. . . . The LDS Church . . . purchased it from Hofmann for more than \$20,000. . . . He soon fabricated other historically significant documents. . . . These deceived not only members of the First Presidency [of the LDS Church] . . . but also document experts and distinguished historians. According to Richard and Joan Ostling, Hofmann was . . . motivated not only by greed but also by 'the desire to embarrass the church by undermining church history' . . .

“Murders

Despite the considerable amounts of money Hofmann had made from document sales, he was deeply in debt, in part because of his increasingly lavish lifestyle. . . . Those to whom Hofmann had promised documents or repayments of debts began to hound him. . . . In an effort to buy more time, Hofmann began constructing bombs. On October, 15, 1985, he first killed document collector Steven Christensen. . . . Later the same day, a second bomb killed Kathy Sheets. . . .



**EXHIBIT 1—HOFMANN’S
“ANTHON TRANSCRIPT” FORGERY**

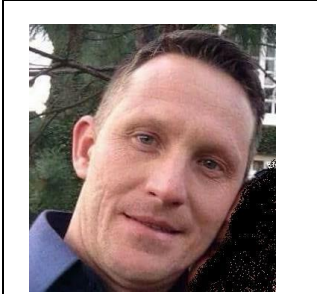
“Trial and Sentencing. . . .

Hofmann was . . . charged on four indictments totaling 27 counts, including first-degree murder, delivering a bomb, constructing or possessing a bomb, theft by deception, and communication fraud. . . . An additional five counts of theft by deception was added later in January. . . . Hofmann . . . was [also] indicted on federal charges of possession of an unregistered machine gun. . . . Hofmann agreed to confess his forgeries in open court, in return for which prosecutors . . . dropped additional charges against him” (see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mark_Hofmann).

At the referenced *Wikipedia* website, a picture of Hofmann’s Anthon forgery (at left) appears with the caption: “Hofmann forgery of Reformed Egyptian document, LDS archives. Note the columnar arrangement and the ‘Mexican Calendar’ described by Anthon.”

As a rare documents dealer, some artifacts Hoffman sold were genuine, but the RLDS Church agrees with the Courts and the LDS Church’s warning that the so-called “Anthon Transcript” (at left) is not genuine, but is one of Hofmann’s “Fraudulent Documents” (see <https://www.lds.org/ensign/1987/10/news-of-the-church/fraudulent-documents-from-forger-mark-hofmann-noted?lang=eng>). Hofmann’s invented fake characters have now been found on Mauricio’s plates!

Mauricio Berger Claims Moroni Gave Him the Book of Mormon Plates and Sword of Laban



Mauricio Berger posted this photo of himself on his Facebook page. We altered it slightly by removing the image of a member of his family in order to protect their privacy.

In e-mails (of which we have copies and transcripts) to Church of Christ leaders, Mauricio Berger stated that he was originally a Catholic, then a Jehovah's Witness, and then he joined (but is no longer a member of) the Utah LDS Church.

Brother Joseph F. (Frederick) Smith, who is a great-grandson of Joseph Smith Jr., was originally a member of the Church of Christ (Temple Lot). However, now he is associated with Zarahemla Branch. He, Brother Bob Moore (a Restorationist), and others have visited Mauricio's group in Brazil. They have heard their allegations, accepted their alleged artifacts, and are now promoting their story. Smith and Moore have also baptized several of the group and ordained at least three of their men into the Melchisedec priesthood.

The Brazil group's stated intent is to publish a part of the translation of the alleged sealed portion of the Book of Mormon plates, to unite all believers in the Restoration movement, and to build the Temple on the spot previously designated by Joseph Smith Jr. in Independence, Missouri. (For more information about their claims, see their <https://secondinvitation.wordpress.com>.)

Mauricio Introduced "Sword of Laban" #1—Now Denies It

Mauricio has produced three completely different objects he claims are the one and only Sword of Laban. The following is an account of the coming forth of the first version thereof. Before finding followers among RLDS Restorationists, Mauricio first attempted to enlist members of the Church of Christ (Temple Lot), who generally dismissed his claims. In our possession are correspondence and photos that Mauricio petitioned them with between January 26, 2010, and September 2, 2013. Included was the photo of Sword #1 with his name as a part of the picture received (see page 5 of *Indisputable*). The photo was accompanied by multiple claims by Mauricio that it was indeed the Sword of Laban as delivered to him by the angel, Moroni. Mauricio addressed his various messages to the Church of Christ apostles, or elders and apostles, or Mr. Alvin Mosler. He sent a follow-up message to a "Mr. Alvim" (whom we suspect is probably Mr. Alvin Mosler).

In the "Alvim" correspondence, Mauricio provided extensive information about himself and his experiences. In addition, he insisted that the pictured Sword #1 was indeed Laban's sword. The translation reads, "the angel Raphael . . . lit the way with a lot of energy he produced as he rubbed his hands. . . . The angel Moroni . . . gave me the plates, the Interpreters and the **sword of Laban**. . . . And now, to prove that I am not lying, I have enclosed in this e-mail some photos that I tapped from my cell phone on the occasions when I was in contact with celestial beings; and which, have never been shown [to] the LDS, being you, the first person outside these events to see. . . . I will put here a picture of the **sword of Laban** to give you certainty that I really possess such objects which I am referring to. I want [you] to remember that the photos were taken with a cell phone, so it has low resolution. [He stated that the photo shown in his e-mail] . . . is the angel Rafael [*sic*], illuminating the path inside the woods, in the dawn of April 6, 2007, the moment I went up the sharp hill to receive the plates of the angel Moroni" [bolding added].

Three blurry photos accompanied the above text (all shown on page 5). One showed a glowing apparition designated as the angel, Raphael. Another purportedly depicted Mauricio with Moroni and "several prophets of the past" (including "a very special spirit" he was forbidden to identify) hovering over him. Mauricio elaborated that the photo of multiple floating apparitions "shows them, strangely enough, returning to a sort of

celestial vehicle that led them there and then drove them away.” Of other glares of light in the blurry photo, Mauricio explained: “These bubbles [of light] that accompany them, is what surrounds them and carries them, like a bubble of soap, only made of light.” Regarding the picture of the **sword**, Mauricio declared: “See in your Book of Mormon . . . Nephi describes the shape of Laban’s sword hilt and [so you should] enlarges [*sic*] the picture . . . to realize that Nephi was referring to **this sword**, which was given to me along with the other objects I spoke about” [emphasis added]. Note: Nephi does NOT describe the shape of Laban’s sword hilt!

After compiling these materials from the Internet, from researchers who forwarded their work to us, and from the writings and photos Mauricio Berger sent to both the Church of Christ (Temple Lot) and to Brother Jim McKay, we examined the evidence. We then sent this evidentiary report to an ex-LDS person familiar with Mauricio’s group and to *another* RLDS Restorationist—both of whom had also received photos from Mauricio. They compared the photos in this report to the photos they had received from Mauricio, and both verified that our photos were either exactly like, or appeared to show, the very same artifacts as they appeared in photos Mauricio had sent *them*. This verification by multiple sources assures us of the genesis of the photos in this report, and will do much to quell any rumors that the photographs we here publish are invalid.

Regarding the Photos Used in This Report

- Exhibit 1: From referenced *Wikipedia* site—public domain.
- Exhibit 2: Photos bearing Mauricio Berger’s cell phone origination were provided by members of Church of Christ (Temple Lot).
- Exhibits 3 and 4: Images of authentic Anthon Script and Hofmann’s forgery are public domain. Photo of plates were sent by Mauricio Berger by e-mail to Brother Jim McKay, November 7, 2017. Jim forwarded them to us and granted permission for this disclosure, including publication of the following e-mail header showing date and time of receipt. (The e-mail addresses are sanitized to protect their privacy.)

From: Mauricio Berger ma■■■■@■■■■.com

Sent: Tuesday, November 7, 2017 9:27 AM

To: j■■■■@■■■■.com

Subject: Fwd: Caracteres pictures

Note that in the subject line above, the e-mail was forwarded from an e-mail Mauricio previously sent. According to the following header, Mauricio sent the original e-mail with the same photos in June to Joseph F. Smith and Bob Moore:

De: "Mauricio Berger" <ma■■■■@■■■■.com>

Data: 06/11/2017 11:30 PM

Assunto: Caracteres pictures

Para: "Joseph Smith" <old■■■@■■.com>, "Bob Moore" <bob■■■@■■.net>

- Exhibits 5 and 6: Photos of plates and Sword #2 were sent by Mauricio Berger via Facebook Instant Messenger to Brother Jim McKay on Saturday morning, March 10, 2018. Jim forwarded them to us and granted us permission for disclosure.
- Exhibit 7: Image from https://secondinvitation.files.wordpress.com/2018/04/anthon_transcript.pdf.
- Exhibits 8–23: Images are from previously referenced Exhibits (as cited), or were provided to us by a multi-national/church investigation team who were given access to Mauricio’s artifacts (as cited).

EXHIBIT 2—PHOTOS MAURICIO SENT TO CHURCH OF CHRIST LEADERS, 2010–2013



Witness Samuel Gould Revealed His Church of Christ (Temple Lot) Dismissed Mauricio's Claims Years Ago Because His Story Kept Changing!

One of the new eight witnesses to Mauricio's claims is Church of Christ (Hedrickite) member Samuel Gould. At the Colbern Road Restoration Branch on March 31, 2018, a member of the audience asked why his church had, years ago, dismissed Mauricio's claims.

[Unidentified man]: "My question is, if I'm understanding, and I want to clarify and make sure I understand correctly, he [Mauricio] first got these [plates, sword, and Interpreters] eleven years ago, and over this eleven-year period of time, he also offered it or presented it to the LDS Church, and they turned it down, and the Temple Lot Church, and they turned it down. Is this correct, and why did they turn it down?"

[Dale Godfrey]: "I'm going to answer that for you. First, these gentlemen [the new eight witnesses] have no firsthand knowledge about that, and would not know the motivation of anyone who turned it down, so I'm gonna ask them to not to try to even answer that because it couldn't be anything but speculation. Sam, do you have a response? [Samuel Gould indicates he does have a response.] Then I'm wrong [laughter]!"

[Samuel Gould]: "Having been in the Temple Lot Church, and I was in the Ministries meeting where we discussed it briefly, back I think it was 2014, it might have been 2013, but it was quite a few years ago. And the reason given at the time [to disregard Mauricio] is that our budgets had already been allocated and so that there were not really, not really funds to expend and it would have been an expensive endeavor. And also, the next statement was that it seemed like **the story out of Brazil had changed over the three years . . . over the three-year period** [bolding added]. And for those two reasons, that's to the best of my recollection" (see <http://www.ustream.tv/recorded/113956329> video time markers 02:02:44–02:04:32).

The Challenge Before Us

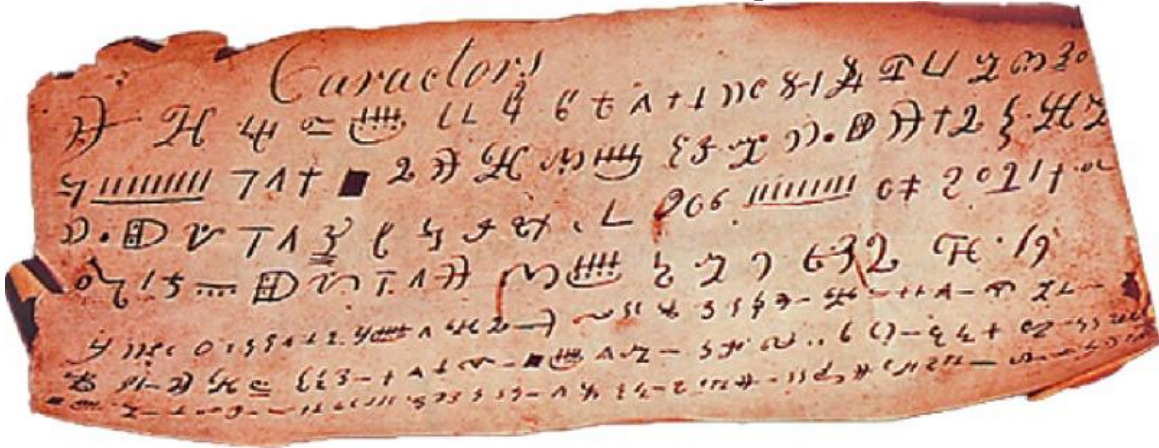
The following report will present evidences that Mauricio's Book of Mormon plates are fabrications by persons who have counterfeited plates. Many of those inscriptions were invented in 1980 by convicted forger and murderer Mark Hofmann. No wonder witness Brad Gault revealed on March 31, 2018, that during their visit to Brazil earlier that month, Mauricio asked that no more pictures be taken of the characters (see <http://www.ustream.tv/recorded/113956329> video time markers 2:17:10–2:17:42)! In addition, this report displays and analyzes photos of three completely different swords that have been alleged by Mauricio to be the one and only "Sword of Laban." These empirical and forensic evidences, along with the scriptural and historic proof provided in the Price Publishing Company letter on this subject dated January 8, 2018, will hopefully guide the reader to the conclusion that all alleged events and artifacts related to Mauricio Berger's story are false.

As Mauricio's story continues to produce inconsistencies, conflicting versions, falsehoods, technical impossibilities, and counterfeits, the wrong response would be to become so invested in the tale that one denies the existence of those fatal flaws. Equally dangerous is the default assertion that just because one feels the comfort of the Holy Spirit, that such should be interpreted as God's confirmation that everything in sight is His will. The Holy Spirit may very well envelop a person who views Michelangelo's *Pieta* statue in the Vatican, but such should not be construed as a sign from Heaven to convert to Catholicism! We are enjoined to "seek learning even by study, and also by faith" (RLDS DC Section 85:36a; LDS DC Section 88:118). We must ensure that our faith leads to truths, not falsehoods.

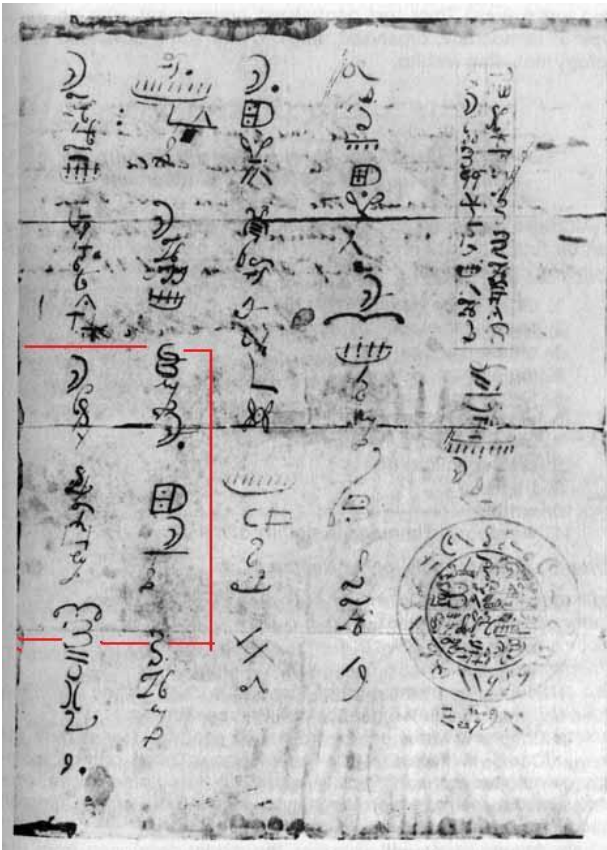
It has always been the purpose of Price Publishing Company to defend the Restored Gospel against those who wish to destroy it or lead people away from it. In addition, we feel a responsibility to warn the Saints of deceptions that would lead them away from the truth of His Gospel and His Church. We ask the reader to give honest and prayerful consideration to the following indisputable facts. May we not be deceived by the things of man, but may we be guided only by the things of God—those things that will eventually fulfill His promise of Zion.

EXHIBIT 3—AUTHENTIC ANTHON SCRIPT vs. HOFMANN’S and MAURICIO’S FRAUDULANT CHARACTERS

The Authentic Anthon Script

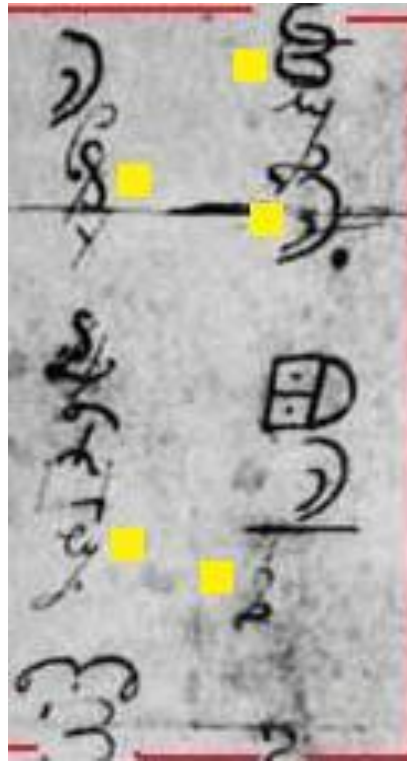


HOFMANN’S “ANTHON” FORGERY



Hofmann made the above-forged document in 1980 by realigning some authentic Anthon symbols into vertical columns, re-arranging them, and adding additional fraudulent symbols he invented.

CLOSE-UP of HOFMANN’S



The yellow squares show fake “Anthon Transcript” symbols Hofmann invented that do not appear in the authentic Anthon Script, but *do* appear on Mauricio’s plates. Mauricio’s plates cannot possibly be the ones Moroni gave to Joseph Smith in 1823, if they contain symbols invented in 1980 by a felon forging an artifact!

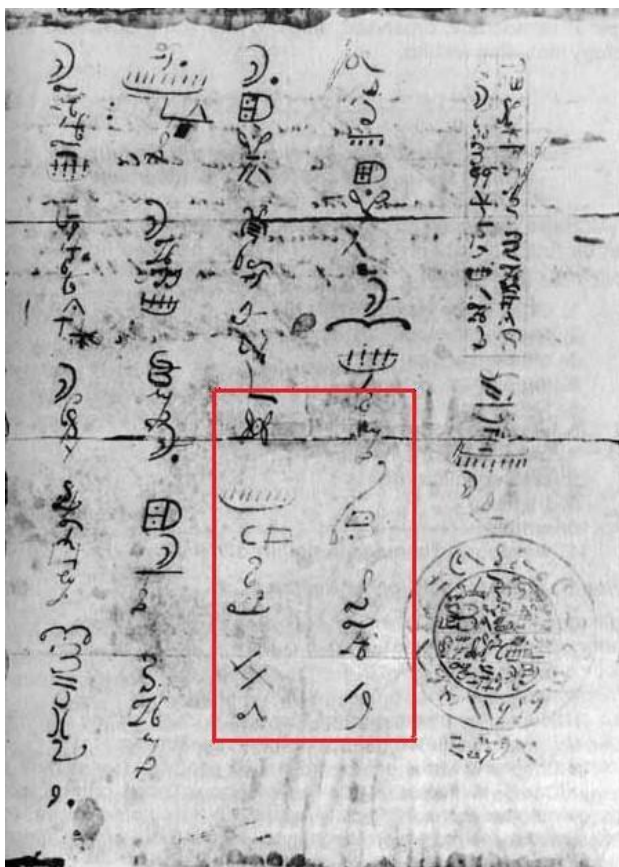
MAURICIO’S PLATES



Mauricio sent this photo of his plates to Brother Jim McKay on November 7, 2017. Note how it mirrors Hofmann’s “Anthon Transcript” hoax (at left), including reproduction of Hofmann’s vertical columns and rearrangement scheme, and the obvious copying and placement of symbols Hofmann invented in 1980.

EXHIBIT 4—HOFMANN’S and MAURICIO’S FRAUDULANT CHARACTERS

HOFMANN’S “ANTHON” FORGERY



Hofmann made the above-forged document in 1980 by realigning some authentic Anthon symbols into vertical columns, rearranging them, and adding additional fraudulent symbols he invented.

CLOSE-UP of HOFMANN’S



The red squares show the fake “Anthon Transcript” symbols that Hofmann invented in 1980 that do not appear in the authentic Anthon Script but *do* appear on Mauricio’s plates. Thus, Mauricio’s plates cannot possibly be the ones Moroni gave to Joseph Smith in 1823 if they contain symbols invented in 1980 by a felon forging an artifact!

MAURICIO’S PLATES



Mauricio sent this photo of his plates to Brother Jim McKay on November 7, 2017. Note how it mirrors Hofmann’s “Anthon Transcript” hoax (at left), including reproduction of Hofmann’s vertical columns and rearrangement scheme, and the obvious copying and placement of symbols Hofmann invented in 1980.

EXHIBIT 5—MAURICIO’S PLATES and SWORD OF LABAN #2

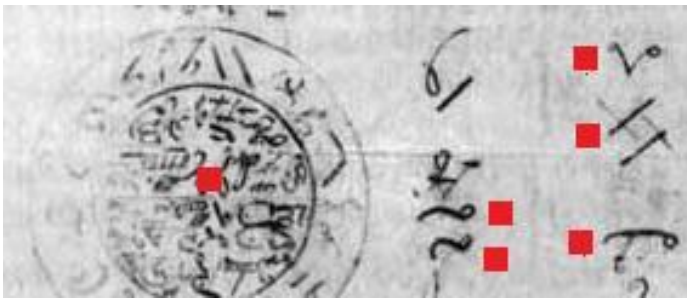


Mauricio sent this photo to Brother Jim McKay on March 10, 2018, via Facebook Messenger. This first plate of Mauricio’s sealed portion includes exact reproductions and placements of many of Hofmann’s “Anthon Transcript” forgery symbols, including symbols Hofmann invented in 1980 that do not appear on the authentic Anthon Script.

When Mauricio’s sword of Laban #2 (at left) is brightened and enlarged (below), inspection reveals it does not appear to be made of “the most precious steel” and “pure gold” as RLDS 1 Nephi 1:109 and LDS 1 Nephi 4:9 describe. Instead, it appears to have been carved from damaged wood.



EXHIBIT 6—HOFMANN’S “ANTHON TRANSCRIPT” FORGERY & MAURICIO’S PLATES



Symbols marked with red squares do not appear on the genuine Anthon Script, but were contrived by Hofmann as additions to his 1980 forgery. This image was cropped from the bottom right corner of Hofmann’s “ANTHON TRANSCRIPT” forgery on the previous page. It was *then inverted by us* to match the corresponding portion on Mauricio’s plates shown at right. We were obliged to do this because, evidently, the counterfeiter who made the plates literally did not know which end of Hofmann’s forgery was “up,” so he assembled the first plate of their sealed portion upside down!



The first plate of Mauricio’s sealed portion significantly matches Hofmann’s (up-side down) “ANTHON TRANSCRIPT” forgery. Note especially the shared use of the “Mexican Calendar” wheel (so called by Anthon) at left, and an exact match of the three uniquely odd symbols at the far right, which do not appear on the authentic Anthon Script, but only on Hofmann’s 1980 forgery and on the sealed portion of Mauricio’s plates. Photo is from Exhibit 5.

Brother Moore Admits First Plate of Mauricio’s Sealed Portion Mirrors Hofmann’s Forgery

Less than forty-eight hours after *Indisputable* was first published, in a meeting held on March 31, 2018, at Colbern Road Branch in Lee’s Summit, Missouri, Brother Moore was asked to explain why the unique appearance and placement of fake Anthon symbols Hofmann invented for his 1980 forgery appear on the first plate of Mauricio’s sealed portion. He replied: “I will respond to the Hofmann transcript or forgery we’ve prepared a statement on that. . . . The Hofmann transcript does not match the *entire* back plate of the golden plates that we examined. We compared the two and testify that some portions are the same, and some are very different. Since the Hofmann transcript agrees with only a portion of the back plate, it does not prove that the golden plates of which we testify are forged. We will place a copy of the transcript marking the characters that are the same as the back plate on the site, <http://secondinvitation.org>. Note that the seal [circular ‘Mexican Calendar’] at the bottom right [of Hofmann’s forgery] looks the same, but is significantly different than the seal on the back plate” (see <http://www.ustream.tv/recorded/113956329> video time markers 1:40:40–1:41:42). Note: The back plate Brother Moore referred to can appear as the first plate if the plates are rearranged as Mauricio did so in the photo shown in Exhibit 5.

Soon thereafter, Mauricio’s group published the above admission on their website (originally at <https://secondinvitation.org/faq/> but site disabled as of this writing). They also published a copy of Hofmann’s Anthon forgery with a red box drawn around the characters they admit appear on the first plate of Mauricio’s sealed portion, along with Talking Points clearly intended to protect them from being dragged down by the nefarious undertow of Hofmann’s fraud (see https://secondinvitation.files.wordpress.com/2018/04/anthon_transcript.pdf).

Mauricio’s group is now in the unenviable position of not only having to explain *how* their supposed thousands-of-years-old sealed plates could *possibly* include Hofmann’s fake characters and unique formatting, but also explaining *how* their seer—Mauricio Berger—could represent Hofmann’s fraudulent characters as the writings of the ancient prophets. They must also explain how the sacred Interpreters could have been used to translate Hofmann’s meaningless characters into the most profound scriptures ever to be revealed from Heaven!

Analysis of the Eight Witnesses’ Admission That Most of the First Plate of Their Sealed Portion Mirrors Hofmann’s Forgery

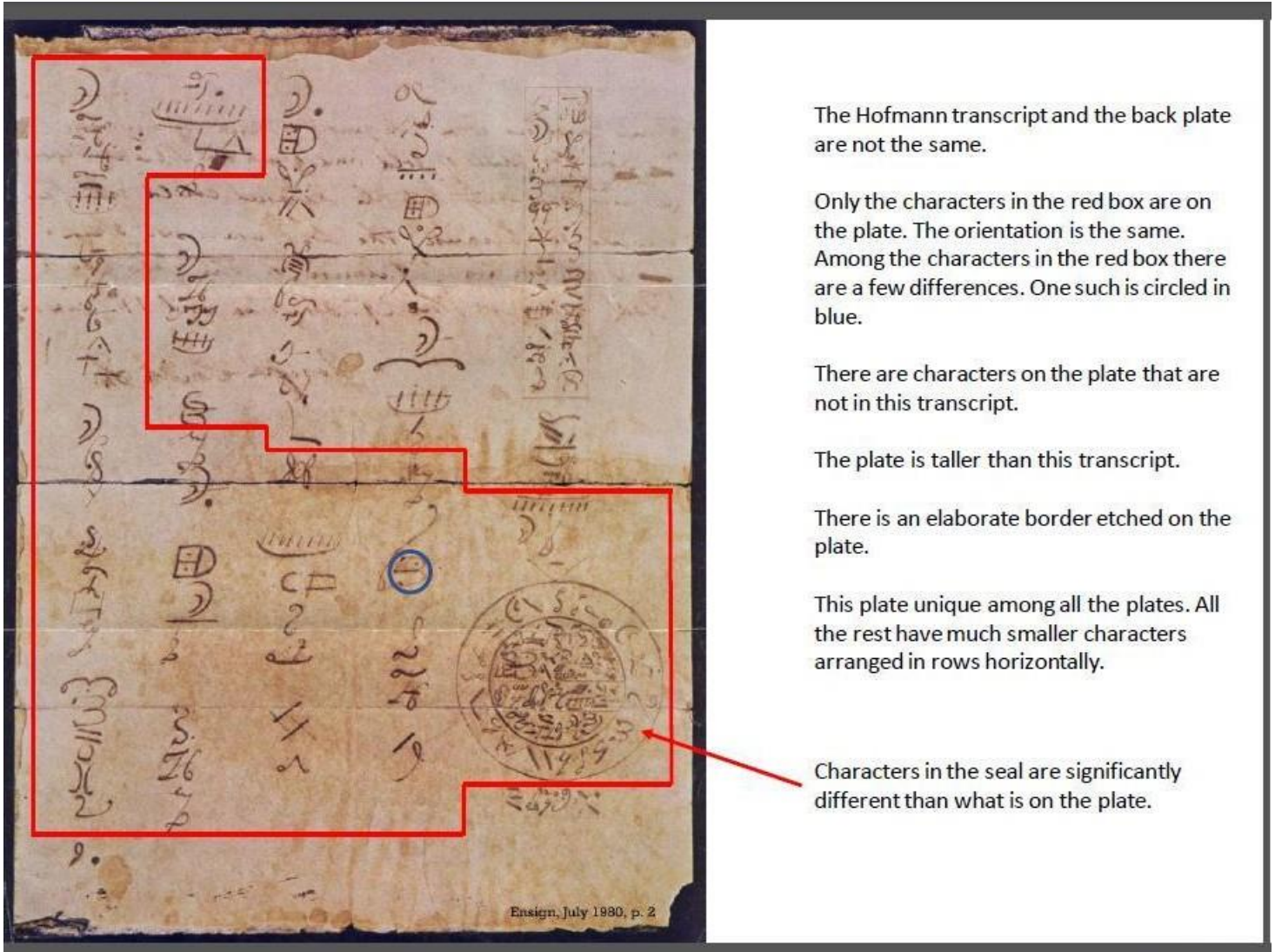
In accessing their webpages cited in the previous section, or viewing the screenshots we reproduced on the next several pages, the reader will note that Mauricio’s witnesses did not publish a picture of *their* corresponding sealed plate, but only a picture of Hofmann’s forgery, which they admit closely matches their own. Justice demands that they also now publish a picture of the entire first plate of *their* sealed portion so the Saints can compare it to Hofmann’s forgery—especially since Mauricio himself has circulated a partial photo of that first plate (see Exhibit 5). It will be insufficient for Mauricio’s witnesses to merely assert to what degree *they feel* their sealed portion matches Hofmann’s counterfeit. It would be well for them to release a clear photograph of the entirety of that plate so the Saints may judge for themselves.

Note: At their above website, Mauricio’s witnesses state in the Talking Point that *not all* of the characters on their first plate appear to be drawn and placed just like Hofmann’s forgery—*just most of them*. And in the big red block of Hofmann’s forgeries that they admit their plate also shows, it is definitely not helpful to their cause to point out—by means of a tiny blue circle—that a single Hoffman character differs from the noted characters on their plate.

**EXHIBIT 7—EIGHT WITNESSES' TALKING POINTS ADMITTED
THEIR SEALED PLATES CONTAIN HOFMANN'S FORGERIES**

*Image and Talking Points in black box, below, were not produced by PPC,
but by the eight witnesses' website promoting Mauricio's claims*

(see https://secondinvitation.files.wordpress.com/2018/04/anthon_transcript.pdf)



Note: In their above Talking Points, the witnesses confirm that *many* of the characters on the front plate (or back plate, depending which way the plates are displayed) of their sealed portion contain *dozens* of Hofmann's unique Anthon forgery characters. They also think it important that the tiny blue circle shows a Hofmann character that does *not* appear on their plate.

EXHIBIT 8—MAURICIO’S “MEXICAN CALENDAR” ALSO SHOWS HOFMANN CHARACTERS—RIGHT WHERE HOFMANN DREW THEM

Years after viewing the real characters, Professor Anthon seemed to recall the sample also included what he referred to as a circular “Mexican Calendar.” On a previous page in their prepared statement, Mauricio’s witnesses maintained that, “Characters [in their ‘Mexican calendar’] are significantly different than what is on . . . [Mauricio’s] plate.” While that may be true, it is also true that their calendar has significant *similarities* with Hofmann’s hoax. The fabricator of Mauricio’s plates evidently did not know which end of Hofmann’s forgery was up, so assembled their counterfeit upside down. So when Mauricio’s calendar from Exhibit 5 or 6 is inverted, it is discovered to be notably similar to Hofmann’s contrivance!



Hofmann’s “Mexican calendar” from Exhibit 7



Mauricio’s “Mexican calendar” (from Exhibits 5-6), inverted by us to correct for Mauricio’s mistaken up-side down placement of it.

Note the red squares on Mauricio’s (up-side down) sample and compare those symbols to Hofmann’s. Red squares, left to right, show what we will name “Ball on a Stick,” “Sloppy A,” “Front of Roof,” “Back of Roof,” “Y & Y,” and “Three Wing.” Blue square shows “Z-snake” on both calendars. Black squares show “Curley X,” and at center of both calendars, “Right Hook catching three Short Sticks in a Capsule.” The witnesses told a half-truth when they said Mauricio’s calendar was *significantly different* from Hofmann’s. They hid the fact that Mauricio’s calendar is also *significantly similar* to Hofmann’s! Mauricio’s calendar appears in the same place as does Hofmann’s counterfeit and is surrounded by many of Hofmann’s contrived characters and arranged just as Hofmann placed them in 1980.

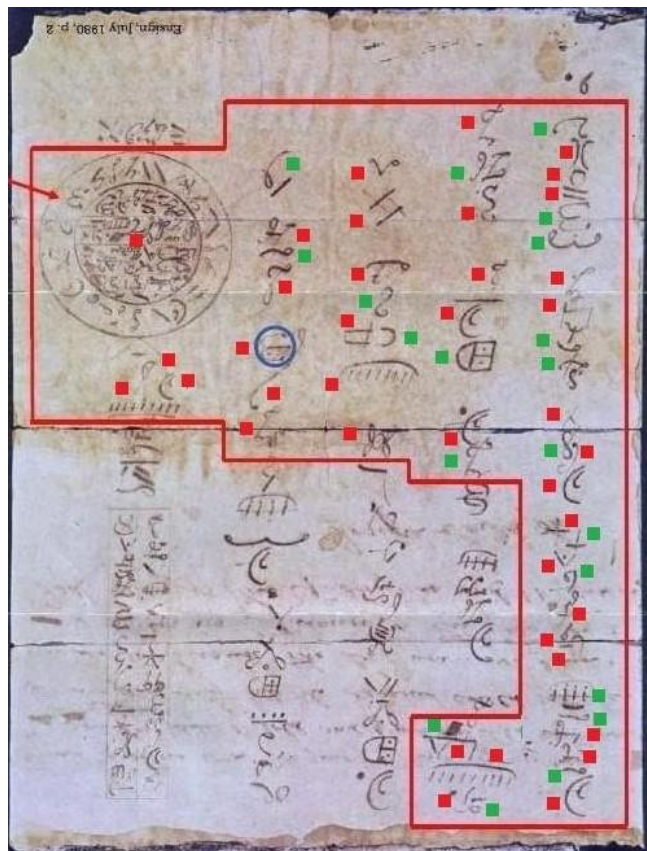
Mauricio’s Sealed First Plate Reveals Hofmann’s 1980 Forgery Characters Beneath Sealing Straps Moroni Supposedly Fastened 1,600 Years Ago

Since at least when Moroni sealed the plates about AD 400, the sealed portion has been inaccessible to humanity. Not even Joseph Smith Jr. was allowed to open the seals. Yet Mauricio has been opening them since at least October 2017. In Joseph F. Smith’s sermon on October 29, 2017, Mauricio’s sealing straps had already been loosed, revealing an additional sealing mechanism within—locking pins inserted through each sealed plate (see www.ustream.tv/recorded/109371953 video time markers 1:06:30–1:06:40 for strap removal; 1:07:09–1:07:18 regarding pins). On the very first page (beneath the straps that had supposedly remained intact for 1,600 years) were found at least *fifty-nine characters Hofmann had either plagiarized and rearranged, or invented*—many placed just as Hofmann had arranged them on his forgery. If Mauricio’s plates are genuine, how could symbols under their ancient seals include either Hofmann’s unique rearrangements of the real characters, or fake new characters Hofmann invented in 1980 to enhance his counterfeit? The most reasonable answer is that *either Hofmann counterfeited Mauricio’s plates, or Mauricio copied Hofmann’s forgery!*

EXHIBIT 9—FAKE CHARACTERS HOFMANN INVENTED FOR 1980 FORGERY FOUND BENEATH MAURICIO’S SUPPOSED 1,600-YEAR-OLD SEALS



Mauricio’s Sealed Plates—Compare position of sealing straps on first plate of Mauricio’s sealed portion (above, from Exhibit 5) to witnesses’ confession (at right) with red box they placed around Hofmann’s symbols they admit also appear on their plate (even evidently under the seals). If the sealing straps have been intact for 1,600 years since Moroni affixed them, how could Hofmann’s unique forgery symbols be found beneath them, arranged like Hofmann’s forgery? Did Hofmann make Mauricio’s plates, or did Mauricio copy Hofmann’s forgery?



Hofmann’s Anthon Forgery—Red box drawn on Hofmann forgery (above) by eight witnesses to disclose which characters on forgery also appear on first plate of Mauricio’s sealed portion (at left). They confess that all the characters in the box (both red and green dots) appear on Mauricio’s depicted plate!

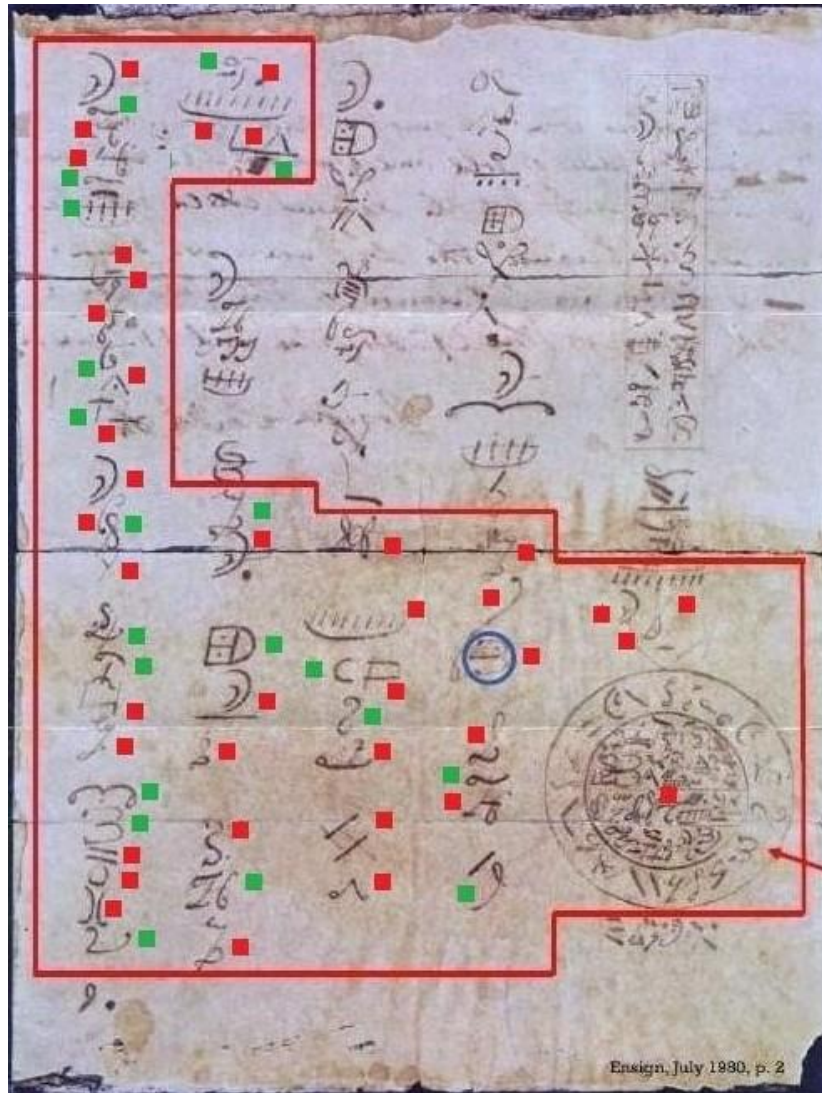
Photo above is their image from Exhibit 7, inverted by us to match up-side down orientation of their plate.


On their image, above right, we added green dots to identify the *real* Anthon characters Hoffman copied and rearranged, and red dots to show the *fake* characters Hofmann invented, which only appear on his forgery (above right) and Mauricio’s sealed first plate (above left). We count twenty (34%) green dot real Anthon characters Hofmann copied and rearranged, and thirty-nine (66%) new Hofmann characters he invented in 1980, which Mauricio’s witnesses admit appear on Mauricio’s sealed first plate (evidently including *under* the supposed 1,600-year-old sealing straps)!

***If Moroni’s sealing straps have been intact for 1,600 years,
how could Hofmann’s unique 1980 forgery symbols be found beneath them?
Did Hofmann make Mauricio’s plates, or did Mauricio copy Hofmann’s forgery?***

EXHIBIT 10—ENLARGED VIEW OF EIGHT WITNESSES’ DISCLOSURE of HOFFMAN SIMILARITY to THEIR PLATES (PROPERLY ORIENTED, AND COLOR CODED)

(see https://secondinvitation.files.wordpress.com/2018/04/anthon_transcript.pdf)



In the above exhibit, in the Red Box (which the eight witnesses admit are the characters their first sealed plate shares with Hofmann’s forgery), we added a green dot at all recognizable genuine Anthon characters that Hofmann copied and rearranged, and a red dot at all the new characters Hofmann invented for the above forgery. Note that they did not bother boxing *all* of the characters they actually share with Hofmann, which appeared multiple times, such as , but instead just boxed one example thereof of how their plate matched Hofmann’s *choice and placement* of those characters (especially those which were similar to Anthon’s but slightly different). We counted twenty genuine but rearranged Anthon characters that Hofmann’s forgery and Mauricio’s sealed plate share (green dots), as well as thirty-nine new characters Hofmann invented that likewise appear on Mauricio’s front sealed plate (red dots). So of the fifty-nine *Anthon-style* characters (real and fake) *reflecting Hofmann’s invention or unique placement*, Mauricio’s witnesses *admit* their front sealed plate shares with Hofmann’s forgery, apparently thirty-nine (or 66%) were evidently fabricated by Hofmann in 1980!

Mauricio Evidently Claimed to “Translate” Hofmann’s 1980 Forgery Characters

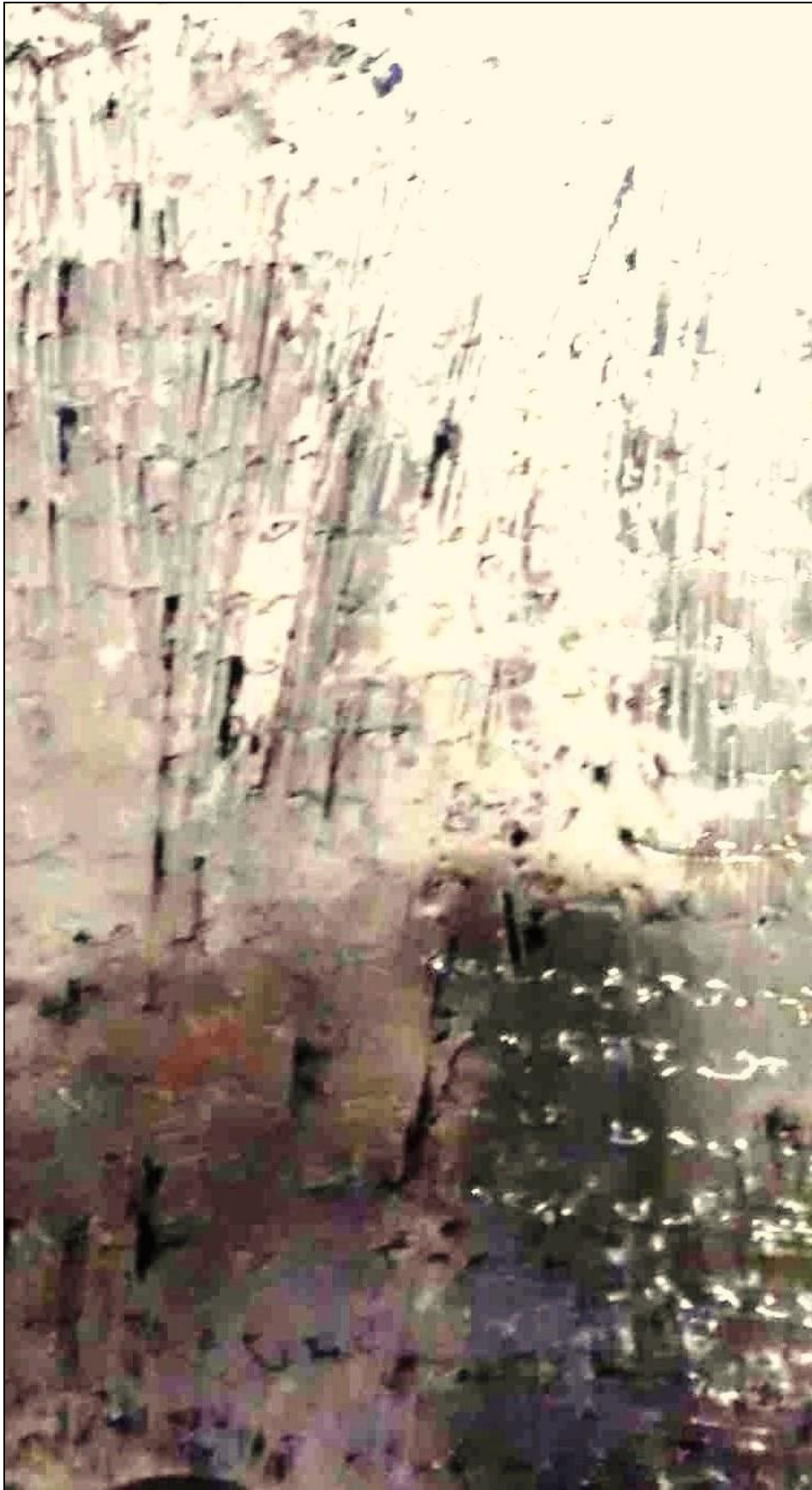
Witness Tyler Crowell stated, at Colbern Road Branch, March 31, 2018: “So yes, we learned when we were there [in Brazil the first week of March 2018] that, as was mentioned, **after Mauricio translated the title page** [first plate of sealed portion] of the portion that is going to be translated, then the plates swelled, and yes so that, before, it was compact like one solid brick, when Joseph and Bob were down there in October [2017]. When we were there [March 2018], you could, the [air] space had come in between the [sealed] plates” [bolding added] (see <http://www.ustream.tv/recorded/113956329> video time markers 02:15:07–02:15:38).

The subject of translating the first plate of the sealed portion was revisited later on in the presentation when another (unidentified) witness on the rostrum confirmed that Mauricio had translated the first plate (or first page as another on the rostrum preferred it be called) of his sealed portion. It was then announced that the characters on that page had produced some *seven pages* of new scripture text which would soon be revealed to the world (see <http://www.ustream.tv/recorded/113956329> video time markers 2:24:50–2:25:40)! That is to say, the eight witnesses asserted that Mauricio claims to have translated the first plate of his sealed portion into seven new pages of scripture, but that very plate has been shown to be riddled with dozens of fake symbols that Hoffman confessed to forging in 1980 to enrich himself, and because of his “desire to embarrass the church by undermining church history!” (See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mark_Hofmann.)

EXHIBIT 11—MULTIPLE PAGES OF IMAGES OF MAURICIO’S PLATES



Close-up view of characters appearing in the center of the first plate of Mauricio’s sealed portion, as can be seen in Exhibits 5 and 9. The eight witnesses admit this plate definitely includes Hofmann’s fake characters.



Mauricio Berger sent this photo of one of his plates to Brother Jim McKay on November 7, 2017. This photo, like many others that will follow, shows what Brother Bob Moore describes as a “black sludge” that had to be cleaned off of the plates (see www.ustream.tv/recorded/109386345, video time markers 1:15:55–1:17:35). In that video, note how Brother Moore explains that while the “black sludge” was so irksome that much of it had to be removed, that it was also determined that leaving a little bit of it smeared on the plates provided a contrast that aided them in seeing the characters.

The “black sludge” on Mauricio’s plates differs from the promise in the Book of Mormon that, “These plates of brass which contain these engravings, which have the records of the holy scriptures upon them . . . they must retain their brightness; yea, and they will retain their brightness: yea, and also shall *all* the plates which do contain that which is holy writ” (RLDS Alma 17:32, 34; LDS Alma 37:3, 5; italics added).



Mauricio Berger sent this photo of one of his plates to Brother Jim McKay on November 7, 2017.

A close-up view (below) of the photo at the left appears to reveal these characters were made with a modern, powered rotary milling device (such as an electric Dremel tool). Our red marks identify apparent swirl flaws where the rotating cutter head skipped and bounced as it was dragged too rapidly across the plates. Our yellow marks appear to show unequal depths and widened side gouges where the machinist misapplied pressure and misjudged feed speeds. Our blue marks show apparent galling and spalling damage to the edges of the characters and their adjacent surfaces due to the spinning grinder being allowed to dwell too long at those points.





Photo released by a multi-national/church investigation team



Note the very large blank spaces between the lines of characters on the above plates, as well as the big characters that are used. This is in opposition to the lamenting of Nephi regarding the scarcity of space on the real Book of Mormon plates: “a full account . . . cannot be written upon these plates, for I desire the room that I may write of the things of God” (RLDS 1 Nephi 2:3; LDS 1 Nephi 6:3).

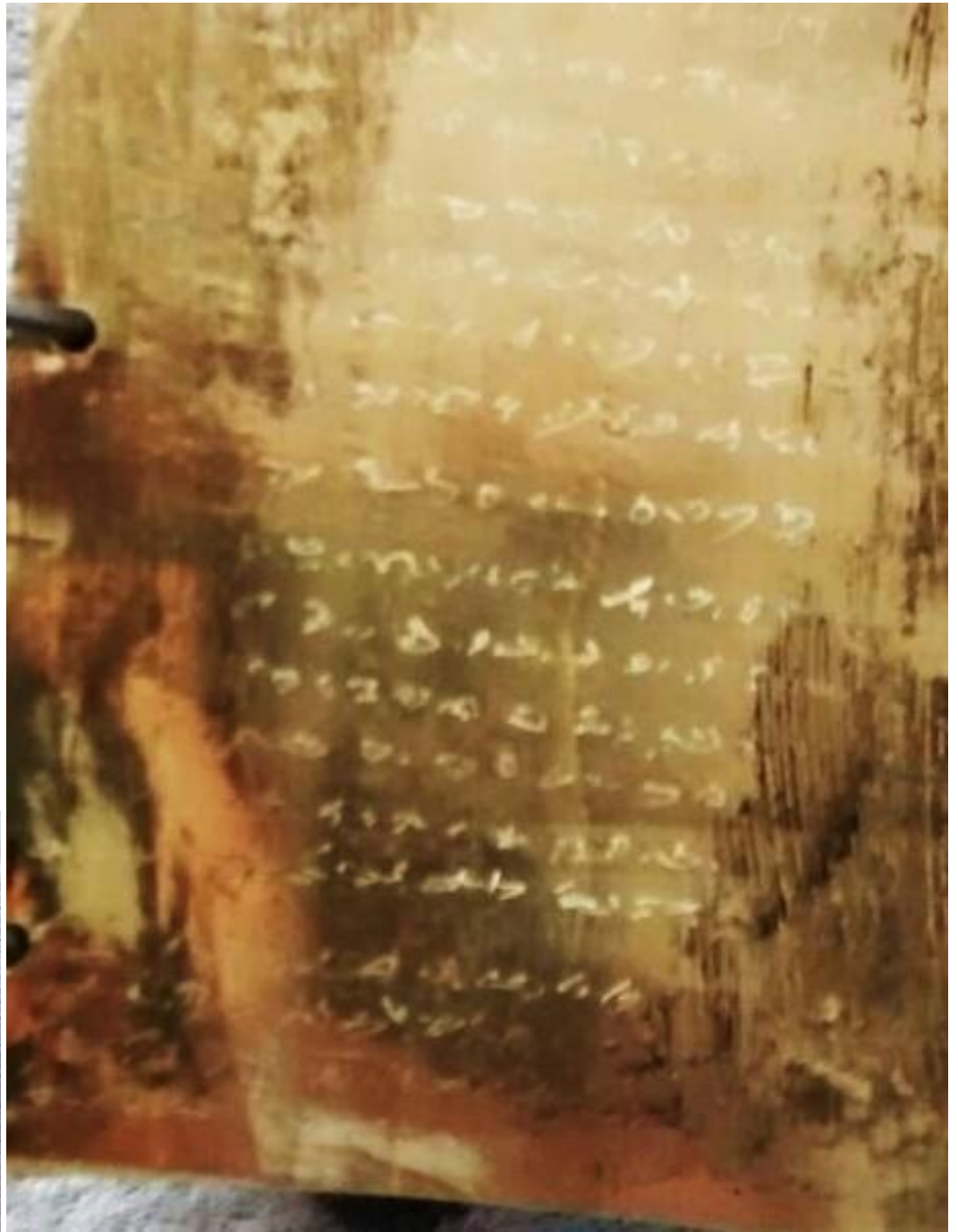
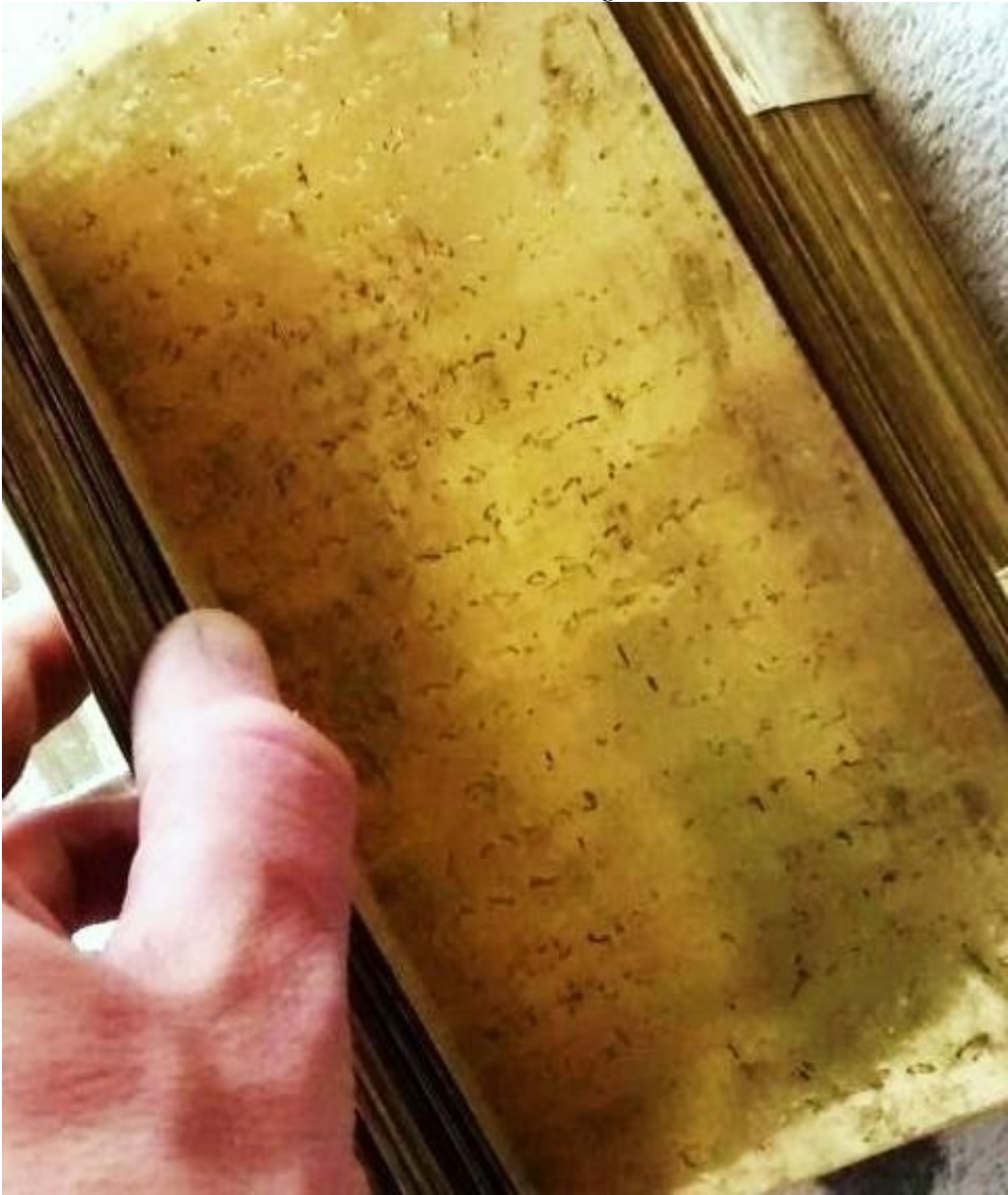


Photo released by a multi-national/church investigation team



Photo released by a multi-national/church investigation team



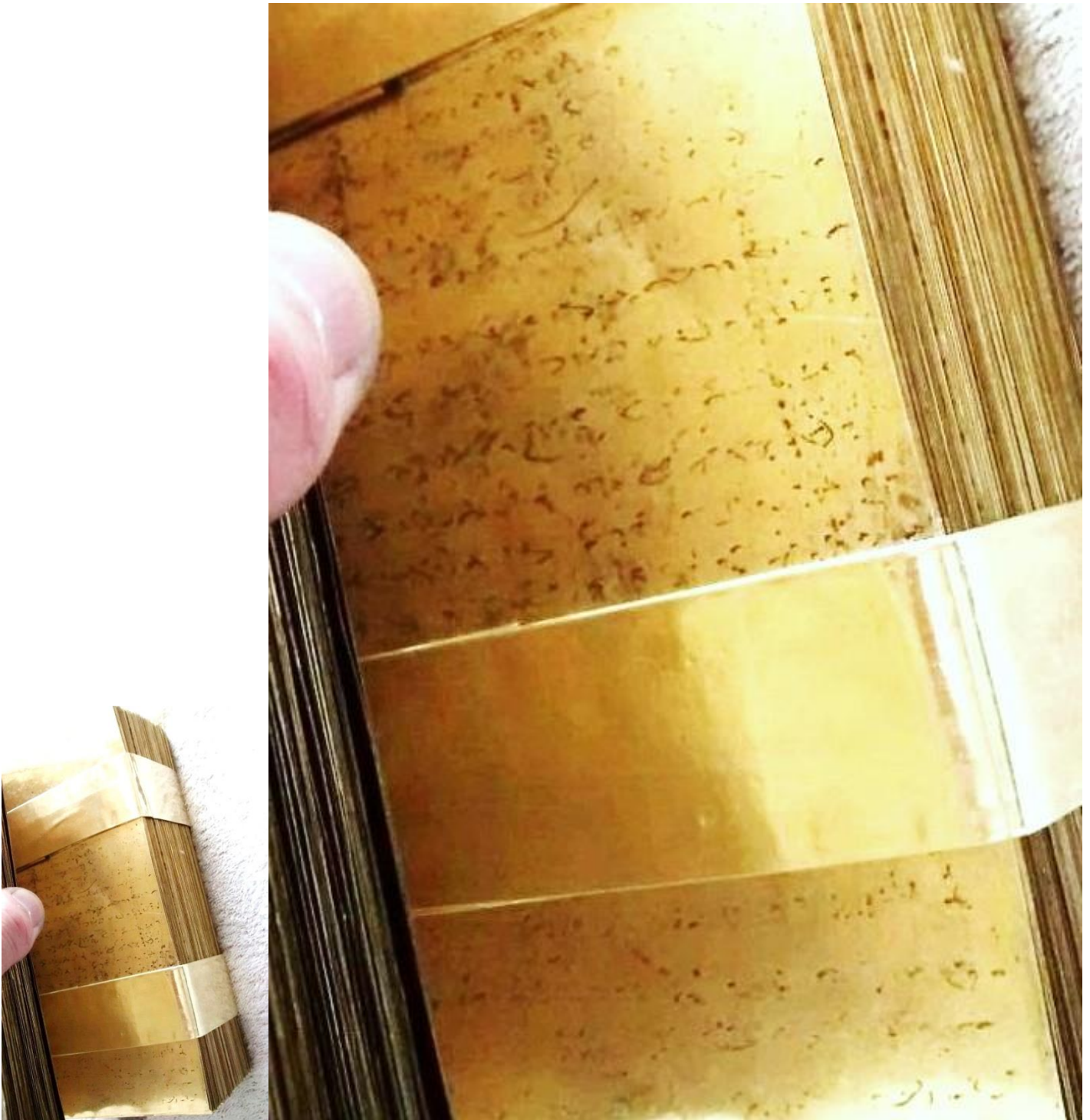


Photo released by a multi-national/church investigation team

Broken Interpreters, Lost Book of Lehi, Phone Calls from the “Three Nephites,” and an Ex-Friend Who Warns That Mauricio Is a Liar and Cult Leader

EXHIBIT 12— MAURICIO’S “INTERPRETERS” SEER STONE



Photo released by a multi-national/church investigation team

This photo is reportedly part of the *seer stones* or “Interpreters” which Mauricio used to translate some of his plates before the Devil purportedly tricked him into smashing them. Note the sawtooth top edge and decorative flourishes throughout, such as fancy candy dishes or crystal goblets often show. This item looks more like a dirty piece of a smashed punch bowl than a holy, trans-dimensional artifact.

Mauricio evidently does not want you to see this photo, for a week after he opened his new Facebook page on April 6, 2018 (with a large picture and quote comparing himself to Joseph Smith Jr.), the following public discussion regarding the Interpreters transpired:



Regarding exactly what Mauricio is supposed to have already translated from his sealed portion (as was referred to in the testimonies preceding the last several pages of photographs), some have wondered if the eight witnesses were referring to the Book of Lehi (included in the lost 116 pages of the Book of Mormon referred to in RLDS Sections 2 and 3; LDS Sections 3 and 10) which Mauricio has *also* reportedly translated. Such could not be, however, because Joseph Smith translated the Book of Lehi. And because Joseph was not allowed to open the sealed portion, the Book of Lehi which he translated (which was included with what Martin Harris lost) *cannot* be part of the sealed portion! When Mauricio’s witnesses testified on March 30, 2018, that they had viewed portions of Mauricio’s translations, they were asked specifically if that included the Book of Lehi, their answer was a curt, “No!” (see <http://www.ustream.tv/recorded/113956329> video time markers 1:27:20–1:27:30). So the witnesses insisted that not only did they not wish to elaborate on the Book of Lehi story, but that the *only* translations they had viewed were of the sealed portion—including the plate with Hofmann’s forgery symbols!

In a March 11, 2018, version of this event, Brother Moore explained how, during Mauricio’s LDS excommunication trial, Mauricio’s then-friend, Jader, ostensibly received a phone call from, “one of the Three Nephites”; the one named “Pedro,” in fact! But such is an impossibility, for all twelve of the Nephite apostles chosen by Jesus in AD 34 are identified, by name, in the Book of Mormon (RLDS 3 Nephi 9:3; LDS 19:4), and *none* of them were named Pedro! Furthermore, “Pedro” is Spanish—a European language that was not even invented until about AD 500 (see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_Spanish_language); and the first Spaniard did not set foot in the Americas until Columbus arrived in 1492. So none of the Nephite apostles were named Pedro, nor could they have been! Three of those apostles were transformed by Jesus into immortal beings, but anyone claiming to know any of their names is a false prophet, for the Book of Mormon declares: “Behold, I was about to write the names of those who were never to taste of death; but the Lord forbade, therefore I write them not for they are hid from the world” (RLDS 3 Nephi 13:38; LDS 3 Nephi 28:25). So this

claim is ridiculous in that the name “Pedro” was not invented until some 500 years after the Nephite apostles were chosen by Christ, and identifying them by name violates the scripture which forbids the same.

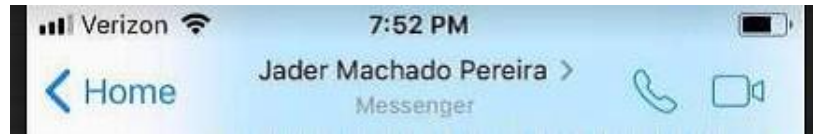
Nevertheless, Brother Moore stated that “Pedro” (speaking over the phone) purportedly directed Jader to defend Mauricio during his church trial, but that Jader refused. The phone was then reportedly passed to Mauricio, who received last-minute counsel by Nephite apostle, “Pedro,” even as his LDS Church court trial began. According to Brother Moore, Jader’s disobedience of “Pedro” was just the beginning of his rebellion against the Lord, and as Jader’s downfall progressed, diabolical manifestations caused by his rebellion were so great that Mauricio fell victim to them and crushed the Interpreters in a moment of weakness (see <http://www.ustream.tv/recorded/113557945> video time markers 0:59:40–1:02:56).

In another version of the same event, Brother Moore stated: “A close friend of Mauricio, the [other] man who has the Interpreters and is appointed to translate part of the sealed portion, became angry with him for not ordaining him to the Melchizedek priesthood. Mauricio had not yet received that priesthood and could not ordain him. This friend began to accuse Mauricio of being led by the Devil, which caused Mauricio to doubt. He said that all the artifacts were of the Devil. At the time, Mauricio was using the Interpreters to read the beginning of the Book of Mormon plates, which is the Book of Lehi and part of the 116 pages that were lost. The doubt that was growing in his mind gave the Devil access to his mind. He saw things from the Evil One, along with the interpretation of the characters. His mind grew confused and darkened. In a moment of despair, Mauricio said that his doubt caused him to believe it was all of the Devil. He hammered on the Interpreters and broke them” (originally at <https://secondinvitation.org/faq/> but site disabled as of this writing).

Brother Moore again affirmed the above assertions—that both the Book of Lehi is found in the unsealed portion of the plates, and that the Devil prevailed upon Mauricio to smash the Interpreters (see <http://www.ustream.tv/recorded/109386345> video time markers 1:31:25–1:32:20). So there should be no confusion, when Mauricio stated that he translated the first plate of the sealed portion, he was referring to the plate that has Hofmann’s fabrications on it. He was *not* referring to the unsealed plates (including the Book of Lehi) that he also claims to have read. By the way, Mauricio is in error to claim he is authorized to retranslate the Book of Lehi, for such has been forbidden of God! (See RLDS DC 3:6a; LDS DC 10:30–34.)

Note in the preceding quote it is divulged that *another person* had also supposedly been in possession of the Interpreters and was also to act as seer with Mauricio in translating the plates: “A close friend of Mauricio, the man who has the Interpreters . . . is appointed to translate part of the sealed portion.” As has been previously alluded to, according to Brother Moore, that person is named “Jader.” And although originally called to the high post of counselor to Mauricio and assistant seer, he rebelled. He is not only responsible for so inflicting the Devil upon Mauricio that Mauricio smashed the Interpreters, but Jader also coveted and demanded priesthood. When Mauricio humbly replied that none of them were yet authorized to be ordained, he abandoned his call to serve as assistant seer and joined the LDS Church in order to enjoy priesthood status. (See <http://www.ustream.tv/recorded/109386345> video time markers 1:30:10–1:31:25.)

That is quite a story! But this “Jader” tells quite a different story than what Brother Moore has said. In the next two pages is a dialogue between someone who wishes to remain anonymous (whom we shall refer to as Mr. Restorationist), and Jader Machado Pereira (the very “Jader” discussed above). This dialogue transpired between 3/19/2018 and 3/31/2018 on Facebook Private Messenger. After obtaining Jader’s permission, it was posted on a private Facebook discussion group to which PPC was granted access. It is printed on the next two pages, verbatim:



3/19/18

Mr. Restorationist: Hello . . . I was told that you do not believe in [Mauricio's] claims We've been trying to expose this here in the United States Are these (photos of plates and swords) the "artifacts" that you have seen or have photos of? Bob and Joseph told everyone about you and how you were originally involved with it there, but you rejected it and joined the LDS church and I was wondering if all this was true or not?

First response back from Jader on 3/24/18

Jader: Good evening! I just saw your message. My account is as follows: I have not seen such plates and nor broke the Urim and Thummim as Mauricio is telling everyone!! This is all a lie!! He's fooling everyone!! I am a member of the LDS church for 10 years!! I have a strong testimony of the Book of Mormon and that Joseph Smith was the Prophet of the Restoration!!! Do not get in that cold [cult]!!!!

Jader: . . . I have never seen these interpreters and I do not think Mauricio got them!! Bob [Moore] was in Caxias do Sul at the end of last year [2017] with the great-grandson of Joseph Smith. A Latter-day Saint missionary who went through Caxias also came to me through social networks and I also explained to him that Mauricio is deceiving and lying.

Mr. Restorationist: Thank you so much for talking to me about it. Many of us know that this is a lie of the devil!

Jader: Yes . . . This is all a lie!! Mauricio is deceiving everyone with the help of someone who does not know [we do not know] who it is!! Maybe satan and other people!! He was my friend!! He wanted me to testify to my leaders four years ago that I had witnessed the delivery of the plates by the Moroni Angel to him!! But I said I would never do that! For the lie does not come from God!! Since that day the holy spirit has confirmed to me all this falsehood!!!

3/26/18

Mr. Restorationist: Is it okay if I share this information you told me with my friend [PPC] who is writing an article to help expose the lies and misunderstandings of Mauricio?

3/27/18

Jader: Good Morning , You can share.

3/28/18

Mr. Restorationist: Have you climbed the mountain with Mauricio? And were you there when Moroni gave the plates to Mauricio? This is the story that Bob Moore told us about this in a service recently and I just want to hear your side of the story. . . .

3/29/18

Mr. Restorationist: And also, were these two men already members of the LDS Church, Valdeci Machado and Joni Carlos Rodrigues Batista? Bob Moore told us that they were never LDS.

3/31/18

Jader : . . . Joni and Valdeci were already members of the LDS church!! I know them personally!!! From what I know the two were excommunicated from the LDS church!!

Mr. Restorationist: . . .Bob Moore said that Joni and Valdeci were never members of the LDS church. . . . Why were Mauricio, Joni and Valdeci excommunicated from the LDS church?

Jader: Mauricio by Apostasy. Valdeci and Joni can not tell you exactly!! Because I'm not living in the same city as them!! But I think it's for the same reason that Mauricio was excommunicated!

Mr. Restorationist: Was Mauricio excommunicated because of this sealed portion thing?

Jader: Yes

Mr. Restorationist: Bob told us that "Pedro," one of the three Nephites, called you on a cell phone, asking that you be a witness to support Mauricio when the LDS church took him to ask questions. Is this true or accurate?

Jader: This is a lie !! This never happened!! Lots of lies !! Are being cheated !!!

Mr. Restorationist: Did Mauricio try to present this sealed portion thing to the LDS church? Bob [Moore] told us that Mauricio never tried to present this to the LDS church.

Jader: . . . Of course. He says [he's] the new prophet!!!!

Mr. Restorationist: Wow. Bob had a service today and we were told that Mauricio anointed Joseph F. Smith as their prophet! And that Mauricio was the "Seer".

Jader: Where this?? In the USA??

Mr. Restorationist: . . . Yes, they told us that Joseph is now their prophet, but it only applies to Brazil and not to the US, at least for now. I think you should talk to your LDS leaders about this to warn them!

Jader: Anyway, They are no longer part of our LDS church! But I will comment with the leaders of Caxias do Sul ! . . . I have testimony from the Book of Mormon and the Restoration of the Gospel and the LDS Church!! Who has not read the book of Mormon with real intent is seriously risk of falling into this trap!! For lies do not come from God!!!!

Removal of Sealing Straps *and* Sealing Pins

Mauricio's sealed plates evidently had two mechanisms sealing them. On the outside were two wide metal straps wrapping the sealed plates together. Beneath the straps were two long pins inserted through matching holes that were punched through each plate at the edge opposite the edge with the binding rings. The ends of the pins had reportedly been deformed to prevent any plates from passing them—until Mauricio bent up their ends to release his sealed portion.

EXHIBIT 13—SEALING STRAPS OFF

Photos released by a multi-national/church investigation team

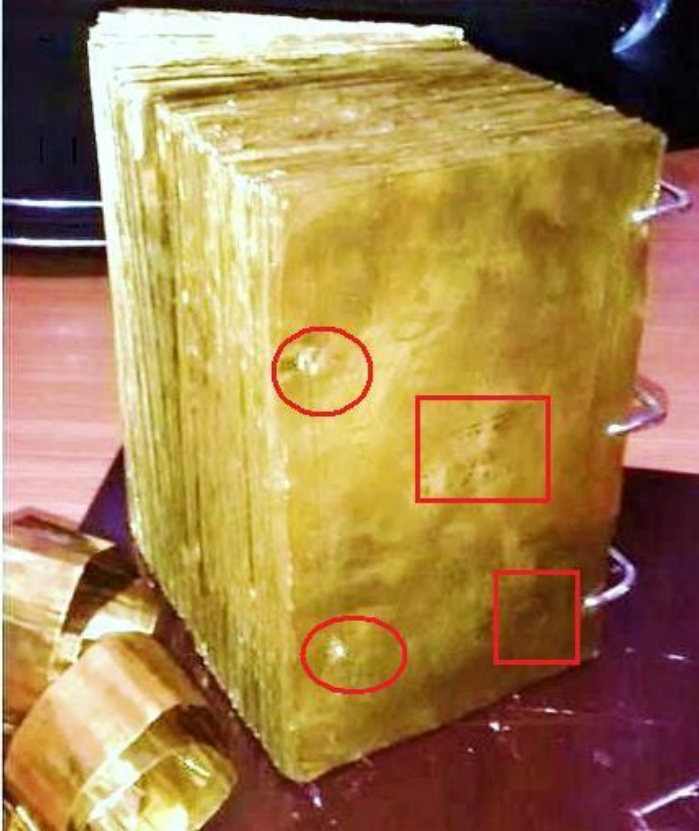


Photo above shows first plate of Mauricio's sealed portion (also referred to as the back plate). Red rectangle at center highlights the same slashes and dots that appear on same plate shown in Exhibits 5 and 9. Red square is "Mexican Calendar" on same plate. When sealing straps were removed, the pins that fastened the plates together became visible, as indicated by red circles.



Another view showing straps off, revealing the pins that fastened the sealed plates together. When the "ancient" sealing straps were loosed, scores of Hofmann's fake Anthon Transcript symbols appeared—both *real* Anthon characters, and new ones Hofmann invented (generally placed like they also appear in Hofmann's 1980 forgery).

***Did Hofmann make Mauricio's plates,
or did Mauricio copy Hofmann's forgery?***

Witness Tyler Crowell revealed that Mauricio reported he translated the title page [first plate] of the sealed portion well before the witnesses' March visit. Brother Crowell explained: "So, yes, we learned when we were there [in Brazil the first week of March 2018] that, as was mentioned, **after Mauricio translated the title page** [first plate] of the portion that is going to be translated, then the plates swelled, and yes so that, before, it [the sealed portion] was compact like one solid brick, when Joseph and Bob were down there in October [2017]. When we were there [March 2018], you could, the space had come in between the [sealed] plates" (<http://www.ustream.tv/recorded/113956329> video time markers 02:15:07–02:15:38; emphasis added).

Photos of the plates reveal that before the two sealing straps were removed, approximately 32.6% of the front page of the first plate of Mauricio's sealed portion was completely covered by the straps. So for Mauricio to view and translate all the characters, the straps had to be removed.

Even with the straps initially removed, only the first (and last) plate would have been viewable, because the second sealing mechanism (the two long pins swaging all the sealed plates together) had not yet been compromised. Witness Kelvin Henson attests that only in March 2018 were the pins under the straps removed to allow the interior sealed plates to be freed and viewed. Mauricio announced to all eight witnesses that, "for the first time" the sealed portion was to be opened—that he had even delayed that momentous event until the witnesses could arrive to witness it. Brother Henson testifies: "Mauricio announced that he was going to open the sealed portion for the first time. He had told us the day before that they were just recently loosed [evidently referring to the pins that had "miraculously" deformed themselves] by the power of God about a week earlier [late February or early March] while he had them out, but he waited for us to be there to open it [remove the final loosed barrier—the two pins]. Using pliers, he pulled off the head of the pins holding down the sealed portion, and turned the first page. I watched as an expression of excitement and awe came to his face" (see <https://secondinvitation.files.wordpress.com/2018/04/brazil-testimony-kelvin.pdf>, pp. 3–4). . . . After lunch we were discussing the picture in the gold plates [on an interior plate] and began to speculate about what it all means. Mauricio quietly stood and got the Interpreters out of his bag. He went into the back room where the plates were and locked the door. We realized that he was going to translate the [interior picture] plate, so we gathered together and David offered a prayer. As he prayed we heard the rustling of the plates being turned in the other room. After a short time, Mauricio invited us into the room where the gold plates were open to the [plate with the] picture. He explained to us what each part represents. Bob immediately typed up everything that was given to us, which is as follows" (ibid., p. 5). . . . I testify . . . to all the people of the Earth [of] the gold plates, which I saw in Mauricio Berger's home on March 4, 2018" (ibid., p. 6).

Witness Tyler Crowell Repeated Mauricio’s Claim that the Sealed Portion Had Recently “Swelled”

On March 24, 2018, Brother Moore reported a supernatural change in the sealed plates that had occurred the last week of February, just before the eight witnesses had arrived. The plates had reportedly “swelled” upwards so much that they had elongated, deformed, and pushed past the top of the interior pins that had previously mashed them down to keep them sealed together (see <http://www.ustream.tv/recorded/113557945> video time markers 0:13:35–0:14:55).

The next week, on March 31, 2018, at Colburn Road, the eight witnesses concurred with the above. Brother Moore introduced Brother Tyler Crowell to explain the phenomenon.

[*Bob Moore*]: “I think, Tyler do you want to talk about how the inside by the rings was sealed?”

[*Tyler Crowell*]: “So yes, we learned when we were there that, as was mentioned, after Mauricio translated the title page [first plate] of the portion [evidently including Hofmann’s forgery characters too—Editor] that is going to be translated, then the plates swelled, and yes so that, before it was compact like one solid brick, when Joseph and Bob were down there in October [2017]. When we were there [March 2018], you could, the space had come in between the [sealed] plates. And so we knew the pins were on the outside and those held them tight, but we didn’t know what was holding it tight on the inside of the rings, the ring side, because they were tight on both sides. But we did see what I would describe as kinda like a metal twist tie similar to the pins that was on the ring side, and so we are speculating, that that seal had broken loose, and but I believe the pins were also stretched, when the plates swelled. So something caused those plates to separate and that space to occur, so that’s what we saw” (<http://www.ustream.tv/recorded/113956329> video time markers 02:14:55–02:16:20).

As photo evidence on the next pages will demonstrate, something similar to this inexplicable swelling of the plates has evidently happened several times—for the plates appear to have grown and shrunk, multiplied and diminished a number of times. Moreover, the sealing straps seem to have elongated as the stack of plates grew, and then shrunk when the plates grew fewer. And the straps have also apparently been unhinged and rewrapped from time to time.

Especially note in the pictures on the following two pages how various photos of Mauricio’s plates show them growing taller or shorter, how the sealed portion varies in height from about 2 to 6 inches (as do the lengths of their sealing straps), and how the straps seal up different percentages of the plates (from a mere 50% to a full 82%).

EXHIBIT 14—PLATES, SEALING STRAPS, AND SEALED PORTION KEEP CHANGING SIZE

**82% of Plates Sealed,
Plates Twice as Tall,
Straps Twice as Long as at Right**



Photo released by a multi-national/church investigation team



Joseph F. Smith (L) and Bob Moore (R) holding the plates showing approximately **82% of plates sealed.**

Note Sword #3 on table wrapped in plastic per instructions from “Moroni” (as shall later be attested), who says plastic will “protect it” from damage caused by cleaning, or, (“Moroni” is not sure) damage from humidity—that is supposedly causing gold hilt to “eat” the steel sword!

**65% of Plates Sealed,
Plates 47.5% Shorter,
and
Straps 56% Shorter than at Left**



Photos released by a multi-national/church investigation team. Top image with sword was resized until plate length matched plates held by Smith and Moore at left; then ratios were compared.



Sealing straps appear to be machine-rolled with equal widths and blended edges—as if made in a modern factory.

Straps look fresh and smooth here, yet show multiple wrinkles in photo with Smith and Moore at left.

50% of Plates Sealed?

Sealing strap appears to end near center of Binder Ring, which witnesses say is silvery color and magnetic (indicating steel). Ring’s curves appear not only machine-turned, but ring’s shank is a uniform diameter—indicating fabrication by extrusion—even though producing extruded steel was not possible until 1941 (see

https://www.nssmc.com/product/catalog_download/pdf/P104en.pdf).



Same photo as in Exhibit 5 brightened, cropped, and rotated



Photo released by a multi-national/church investigation team

Straps and Plates Are Half the Height of Smith’s and Moore’s Plates on Previous Page

plates change size yet again in this showing. Left to right are Joni Carlos Rodrigues Batista (holding Sword #3), Valdeci O. Machado, and Wagner Zeppenfeld (holding plates)—Mauricio’s special three witnesses (see <https://secondinvitation.files.wordpress.com/2018/04/testemunho.pdf>). Note how these sealing straps cover about *half* the height of the plate stack, but neither straps nor plates appear to be even *half* the height of the plates and straps Brothers Smith and Moore are holding on the previous page. Brother Smith estimated the weight of the plates he lifted to be fifty to sixty pounds (originally at <https://secondinvitation.org/faq/> but the site is now disabled. The transcript is now at <https://secondinvitation.files.wordpress.com/2017/11/joseph-f-smith-testimony.pdf>, p. 7). That is about the same weight as seven gallon jugs of milk, or a sack of concrete. But the above version of the plates is obviously much shorter than the version Brothers Smith and Moore were shown with on the previous page and easier to cradle than something that weighed as much as seven gallons of milk!

Mauricio’s group appears free to pose with, and show off, their relics at will, as opposed to Joseph Smith Jr., who was warned: “[Moroni] told me . . . I should not show them to any person, neither the Breastplate with the Urim and Thummim, only to those to whom I should be commanded to show them, if I did I should be destroyed” (RLDS *History of the Church*, 1:14).

EXHIBIT 15—SCALED VIEWS OF THREE DIFFERENT SWORDS MAURICIO HAS PROCLAIMED AS THE SWORD OF LABAN

Sword of Laban #1

Mauricio presented this as Laban's sword from 2010–2013 (see Exhibit 2). However, within hours of PPC pointing out that this was most probably an image of a Chinese bronze sword, circa 481–221 BC, Mauricio had his eight witnesses publically disavow it.



Sword of Laban #2

Mauricio presented this as the sword of Laban on March 10, 2018, (see Exhibit 5). Original image is shown at left, colors are reversed to show details, at right.



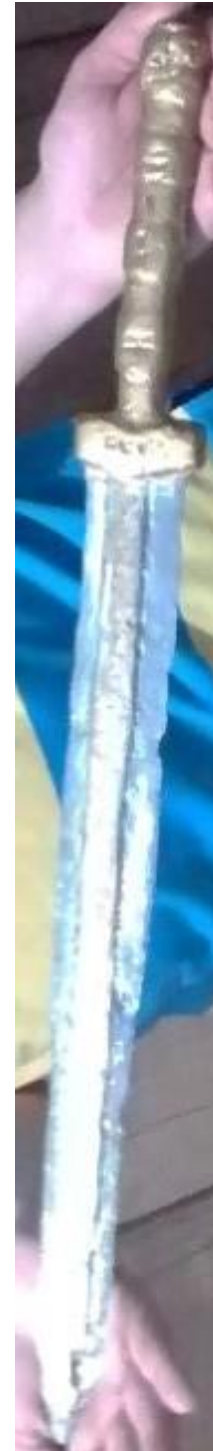
How could the sword be so shiny in the picture at the right (which Mauricio sent November 7, 2017), yet lose its luster in the picture above (which Mauricio sent to the same person four months later on March 10, 2018)?

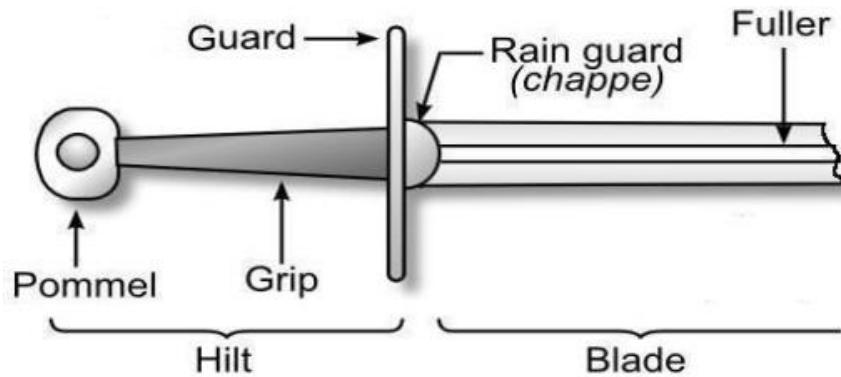
Some have claimed the big dent on right side of Sword #3 is the same feature as the dark notch on the left edge of Sword #2 (if the sword is turned to show the other side). Yet the features are clearly located at different distances from the hilt.

Note: Photos of all swords were resized until blade widths were equal at hilt. Guard tops were then aligned. So if images are of the same sword, the size and location of every feature must match. If they do not match, these cannot be the same sword.

Sword of Laban #3

Mauricio presented this as the sword of Laban in a November 7, 2017 e-mail to Brother Jim McKay.





SWORD #1 ANALYSIS

Unlike the other swords, Sword #1 has a gold-hued grip and pommel but a rust-hued blade *and* guard. However, Laban’s entire hilt (including guard) was “of pure gold” (RLDS 1 Nephi 1:109; LDS 1 Nephi 4:9). Sword #1 looks very similar to nonsteel, Bronze Age Chinese swords (especially from the 481–221 BC Warring States era) as can be found on the Internet. **Note:** Even if a sword’s thick tang under a hollow grip was steel, it would still be accurate to say the hilt (including grip) could be “pure gold.”

- Grip has 4–5 crenellations (bumps), topped by a T-shaped pommel that does not feature a face/head as grip #3 does. Grip is shorter than the grips on the other swords.
- Ratio of grip-to-blade width = approx. 0.33–to–1 (unlike the others). Grip is narrower than the others.
- The fuller of Sword #1 has cavities, and is narrower than the adjacent blade edges (unlike the other swords). **Note:** Technically, fullers are *indentations* in the center of a blade running from the hilt to the tip. They are designed to strengthen the blade while lessening its weight. Fullers first appeared about AD 800–1000. They replaced thick, tapered blades as well as thinner blades with narrow central ridges or thicker central spars. To make the discussion of these center-of-blade features easier by using only one term, we will use the word “fuller” when referring to either a concave indentation or a convex ridge (or spar) running the length of the blade’s center.
- Ratio of guard width-to-thickness = 3.38–to–1. This and the guard details are unlike the other swords.
- Blade has no wood grain, holes, or cracks as does Sword #2. It is not dented where Sword #3 is dented. Blade/sword is also longer than Sword #3 blade, even though the grip is shorter than the Sword #3 grip.
- Mauricio represented this object as the Sword of Laban for many years. However, on March 31, 2018, Sam Gould, one of his eight witnesses, stated from the rostrum at Colbern Road Restoration Branch in Lee’s Summit, Missouri, that it is *not* the Sword of Laban. According to Sam, Mauricio told him that “he does not know how that first sword picture entered into the letter—that he did not put it there. It was not the sword” (see <http://www.ustream.tv/recorded/113956329> at video time markers 1:42:20–1:42:31). This statement directly contradicts Mauricio’s correspondence and photos (with his name attached to the photos by his Internet service provider) sent to the Church of Christ (Temple Lot) between January 26, 2010, and September 2, 2013 (see pp. 4–6 of *Indisputable*).

Mauricio Denied Existence of Sword #1. At Colbern Road Branch on March 31, 2018, witness Samuel Gould was tasked to respond to the first edition of *Indisputable* that had appeared just days prior, exposing Mauricio’s multiple swords. Brother Gould stated: “The question of the sword . . . the first one [Sword #1] that was on that was shown [in *Indisputable*] that has sort of a white backdrop, I want you to understand that I had that conversation, a very detailed conversation, with Mauricio, under the speaking of tongues and the interpretation of tongues between the two of us. And so I know of a surety by the Holy Spirit that what he said was true. And that is that he does not know how that first sword [#1] picture entered into the letter [to the Church of Christ—Temple Lot, previously quoted]. That he did not put it there, it was not the sword [of Laban]. And it indeed is not a Hebrew sword” (see <http://www.ustream.tv/recorded/113956329> video time markers 1:41:47–1 42:35).

Brother Gould added: “Mauricio does not know how that first sword picture [Sword #1] got into the document that got sent to the Church of Christ [Temple Lot]; it was not his doing, and we cannot speculate how that happened. But that was not the Sword of Laban” (see <http://www.ustream.tv/recorded/113956329> video time markers 1:43:50–1:44:12).

It should be noted that the photo of Sword #1 is imprinted (by the Internet provider) with Mauricio’s name, identifying him as the originator, and that for a number of years while Mauricio first promoted his story, that photo was cited as the Sword of Laban. However, within less than forty-eight hours of us publishing the first edition of *Indisputable*, he abandoned that testimony and denied any responsibility in originating the photo!

SWORD #2 ANALYSIS

- Sword #2 appears to be made of damaged wood, instead of having a blade of the “most precious steel,” and hilt of “pure gold” as RLDS 1 Nephi 1:109 and LDS 1 Nephi 4:9 describe.
- Grip shows only 2 crenellations and appears to be cut short, yet it is longer than grip #1 that has 4–5 crenellations plus a pommel! If 2–3 more crenellations and a pommel were added to it (like grip #1), the grip would be nearly three times longer than grip #1. Faces adorning crenellations do not appear on the other swords. Critics who might claim that we have “inappropriately vertically stretched” this photo are wrong. We resized the *entire* photo until the blade width at the hilt matched the other swords in order to equivalently compare them. We even erred on the side of caution by including what might appear to be a shadow beneath the blade as part of the blade itself. If we had resized the image by only measuring what is clearly discernible as the blade (and not also included the “shadow”), this image would be even bigger, and the differences between this object and the others would be even more pronounced.
- Ratio of grip-to-blade width = approx. 0.79–to–1 (unlike the other swords).
- Fuller is completely missing, and the blade has a rounded side instead of a flat or raised rectangular spar side, as do the other swords.
- Ratio of guard width-to-thickness = approx. 2.33–to–1. This, and guard details, are unlike the other swords.
- Blade shows holes and cracks that Sword #1 does not have and is not dented where Sword #3 is dented.

SWORD #3 ANALYSIS

Mauricio has produced at least two different versions of Sword #3: A silvery blade version and a golden blade version. Besides coloring differences, the two also show significantly different mechanical and cosmetic differences. Photos reveal the golden version has been subjected to mechanical grinding and cutting to reshape and redecorate it, application of putty or pot metal to repair blade flaws, cutting off and reshaping the tip, glopping material onto the hilt to reshape it, and evidence of it being painted! The silvery version was produced first, so it is analyzed in this section. The golden version will be analyzed in a later section.

EXHIBIT 16—SWORD #3 SILVERY BLADE AND GOLDEN BLADE VERSIONS



Silvery blade with bird-head pommel version

Photos are same source as Exhibit 15



Golden blade with snake-head pommel version

Photo released by a multi-national/church investigation team

- Silvery blade version of Sword #3 has bright, unruined blade with gold-hued hilt (unlike the other swords).
- Grip has 3 crenellations, topped by a large, rounded pommel featuring an image of a face/head (unlike the other swords). Grip is longer than the other swords.
- Ratio of grip-to-blade width = approx. 0.62-to-1 (unlike the others). Pommel is not removable. Real swords *with slide-on guards and grips* secure those components with a removable pommel at the end to hold them on. This sword looks like it was cast in one piece (from easily meltable pot metal) with the guard/grip pommel features spray-painted gold to make the object appear to be a genuine sword assembled from separate components.
- Fuller consists of a thick rectangular spar, which Brother Smith estimates stands up 5/8" above the sword blade (see www.ustream.tv/recorded/109386345 video time markers 1:19:30–1:19:40). This odd, protruding spar shows big and useless notch-like flaws toward the tip. This is unlike what a skilled metal-worker would produce, but very much like what an amateur might concoct (especially out of softer, more meltable pot metal).

Hours of searching images of swords on the Internet (Bronze Age through modern times—all cultures) failed to locate a single example of a real *steel* sword that had ever been forged with such a large, deep, rectangular spar. Examples of bronze swords exist with similar massive spars (since bronze is much easier to melt than gold and easier to hot-hammer than steel), but no *steel* swords of such a design have been found. Some early iron or primitive steel swords *did* have tiny ridges at the center of, and running the length of, the blade. However, no examples of a *forged steel* blade exhibiting such a massive center spar have been found. In fact, we do not believe hand-forging such an implement is even possible using human strength. While it is possible to hand-hammer glowing hot steel by *hand* into a flat object, or to make (by using additional tools) a tiny center ridge down the length of a blade, we do not believe it is possible to

hammer a large block of steel by *hand* into a thick rectangular spar (with or without tapered blade edges), such as appears on this sword. However this single object was formed, the fuller area is solid and does not show cavities as does Sword #1, and the fuller is much wider than that of Sword #1. It also does not match Sword #2, which has neither a fuller nor a spar. In addition, it differs from the other swords in that the fuller/spar is as wide or wider than the adjacent blade edges, whereas the fuller of Sword #1 is much narrower than its adjacent blade edges.

- Grips and guards are almost always made separately and later attached to the blade—either by addition of a similarly removable pommel, or using rivets if the pommel is permanent. This object does not appear to have a separate guard or grip, nor a removable pommel, nor any rivets or any other means to allow attachment of those separate components. Instead, the entire blade, guard, handle, and pommel appear to have been cast as one piece in a mold (pouring molten gold, which melts at 1,945 °F, atop molten steel which melts at 2,500 °F) to give it the false appearance of being a real sword assembled from separate components. But if that is true, this *cannot* be Laban’s sword, for although casting gold has been possible for millennia, and although the first steel blades were *forged* (heated until malleable and then hammered into shape) about 600 BC, the ability to cast steel—to melt and pour it into molds—was *impossible* until materials and processes were invented in 1740 to allow that advanced feat (see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crucible_steel#History_of_production_in_England).

If forged, due to its thickness, we do not believe it can be steel, but merely soft pot metal such as movie props are made of—and it does not appear to be forged, but cast. But if it *is* cast steel, it cannot be Laban’s, for casting of steel was not possible until 1740—at least 2,332 years after the time of Laban. So since such a thick steel blade could not be hand forged, and if steel could not be cast until nearly twenty-four centuries after the time of Laban, this cannot be Laban’s steel sword.

- Ratio of guard width-to-thickness = approx. 2.78-to-1. This, and guard details, are unlike the other swords.
- Blade is shorter than Blade #1. It has pronounced deformations (which cannot be blamed on oxidative deterioration, since the blade shows no rust). While punishing strikes to steel (axes, hatchets, chisels) can produce small flaws, such will not produce the wide radiused and deep dents and deformations the entirety of this object shows. Instead, under stress, steel holds its form until it bends or breaks. We estimate the largest blade dent in this object to be about 1/4 inch deep and 1/3 inch wide. Only softer metals and alloys produce such large deformations. Thus, we do not believe this object is made of “the most precious steel” (RLDS 1 Nephi 1:109; LDS 1 Nephi 4:9).



This black and white version of the color photo of Sword #3 in Exhibit 15 more clearly shows the sword’s many deep gouges, dents (including the center spar), deformations, notches, uneven surfaces, etc.

More Reasons Sword #3 Cannot Be Genuine

On October 29, 2017, at the Zarahemla Branch, Joseph F. Smith preached a sermon in the morning, and both he and Brother Moore conducted an open forum in the evening to testify and answer questions about Mauricio's plates story. Brother Smith's sermon may be viewed at www.ustream.tv/recorded/109371953, and their discussion at the open forum may be viewed at www.ustream.tv/recorded/109386345. Their declarations that day greatly worsened Mauricio's claim that Sword #3 was the Sword of Laban!

In his sermon, Brother Smith stated, "the blade is about three inches wide. And maybe about three-quarters of an inch back from the edge, it starts to rise up" (see video time markers 1:09:53–1:11:07). Both Brothers Smith and Moore estimated the length of the sword to be about three feet (Smith: See www.ustream.tv/recorded/109371953 video time markers 1:09:53–1:11:07; Moore: www.ustream.tv/recorded/109386345 video time markers 1:18:24–1:18:30). Brother Moore said the handle appeared to be "cast brass" (www.ustream.tv/recorded/109386345 video time markers 36:11–36:59).

According to Brother Moore, when the sword "was molted [molten], characters were placed into it like with some sort of brand. They are fairly deep—a quarter of an inch. There's three on each side of the hilt" (view open forum at video time markers 36:11–36:59). Note that three such characters are barely visible on Sword #3 (page 31). Brother Moore stated about the sword's condition that "you can tell it's been in combat. I mean, it's got dents and dings" (see www.ustream.tv/recorded/109386345 video time markers 36:11–36:59).

Regarding cleaning the sword, Brother Moore stated "they also tried to clean the sword [with acetone]. And when they did, they caused the sword to deteriorate. So Moroni told them to wrap it in plastic, and so it's wrapped in plastic. They let us tear it [the plastic] because they could rewrap it [the sword]. And we looked at it [the sword]" (see www.ustream.tv/recorded/109386345 video time markers 1:17:36–1:17:53). Brother Smith confirmed that the sword was wrapped in plastic after "Moroni" instructed them to do so "to preserve it" (see www.ustream.tv/recorded/109386345 video time markers 1:09:53–1:11:07).

The statements about the sword by Brothers Smith and Moore contain many technical errors, which not only cast grave doubts on their claim that the object they beheld was the Sword of Laban, but also their statements reveal that the "Moroni" advising Mauricio on how to best safeguard the sword is not the intelligent, all-knowing heavenly being he is purported to be.

Casting and material discrepancies. As previously discussed, the ability to cast steel did not exist until 1740. Brother Moore said the handle/hilt appeared to be "cast brass." Laban's sword, of course, had a hilt of "pure gold." In addition, Brother Moore said that when the sword was molten (made by melting and casting)—meaning the blade also, evidently—that the "characters were placed into it like with some sort of brand. They are fairly deep—a quarter of an inch. There's three on each side of the hilt." This would imply that the characters would have been formed during the casting process of the hilt. But the way Brother Moore described the sword's manufacture, we are left with the impression that he was referring to the blade also as being cast. As previously described, it was impossible to cast steel prior to 1740, and we do not think a steel tool with such a thick rectangular spar could be forged by hand. So this sword, as described by Brother Moore and photographed by Mauricio, cannot be either hand-forged steel, or cast steel (unless it was manufactured within the previous three centuries), cannot be Laban's steel sword!

Human strength cannot so deeply dent such thick steel. Regarding Sword #3, Brother Moore stated, “you can tell it’s been in combat. I mean, it’s got dents and dings.” When punished by mere human effort, thick, cold steel cannot suffer the deep and wide deformations Sword #3 displays. Brother Smith estimates the “fuller” spar running the length of the blade from hilt to point rises 5/8” above the blade body (see www.ustream.tv/recorded/109386345 video time markers 1:19:30–1:19:40). Accordingly, we pronounce that it is *impossible* for human strength alone to impart the huge dents and deformations that photos show afflict not only Sword #3’s edges, but also its five-eighths-inch-high ridge!

While human strength against such thick steel can impart peen marks, chipping and line scorings, steel holds its general form until the entire blade permanently bends or breaks. Such thick steel does not respond to human strength by deforming, dimpling, and undulating as the entirety of Sword #3 exhibits. Doubters are invited to prove this to themselves by procuring a large, steel pipe wrench as thick as Brother Smith says Sword #3 is, and then hammer on it for as long as they like. Or, to likewise beat two crowbars against each other for several weeks. The result will be that their specimens will not show *any* of the deep and wide deformations that afflict Sword #3! The severe mutations on Sword #3 indicate that it is either not steel, or if it does contain a small amount of iron or steel so a magnet sticks to it, that it was fabricated by an uninformed person trying to make it look “battle damaged.”

Acetone is harmless to metal. Brother Moore stated that Mauricio and his group “also tried to clean the sword [with acetone]. And when they did, they caused the sword to deteriorate. So Moroni told them to wrap it in plastic,” which Brother Smith added, was “to preserve it.” This claim alone proves that the sword cannot be Laban’s and that their “Moroni” is not inspired by God. *Acetone is harmless to steel and gold.* (For cleaning steel, see <http://www.reliance-foundry.com/site/documents/stainless-steel-care-and-maintenance.pdf>; for cleaning gold, see <https://taxfreegold.co.uk/cleaninggoldcoins.html>). In fact, worldwide, a preferred method for professionals to clean *all metals* is to do so with acetone (see <https://www.corrosionpedia.com/definition/1278/acetone>).

Acetone is, in fact, less destructive to metal than is water. Anyone who has washed a muddy shovel with a garden hose has done more harm to it than if they had scrubbed it with acetone. While acetone is harmless to *all metals*, it rapidly dissolves organics and their derivatives—such as plastic, polyester, rubber, Styrofoam, soldering rosins, epoxies and adhesives, grease and oil, *and resins that are poured into shaped molds* (see <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Acetone>). If acetone damaged the sword, then it cannot be metal, and so cannot *possibly* be the Sword of Laban, which Nephi described as being made of “the most precious steel” and “pure gold” (RLDS 1 Nephi 1:109; LDS 1 Nephi 4:9). If their Moroni were truly from God, he would not have shown up late (after the damage was supposedly done) and then given bad advice that could have made the damage even worse.

EXHIBIT 17—SWORD #3 IS BEING MECHANICALLY AND COSMETICALLY ALTERED!

Spar transformed from silvery to golden. It appears that someone is modifying Sword #3. In the top photo of Exhibit 17, the center spar is silvery colored. In the bottom photo it is golden. We adjusted Brightness, Contrast, Color Temperature, Tint, and Saturation to try to make the silvery blade's spar look gold, and the golden blade's spar silvery—but we could not. So something else is to blame for this color change. Evidently, the first photo was taken before a golden finish was applied to the spar. It may *look* fancier now, but the artifice that has been altered looks *less* like how Nephi described the genuine artifact!



Silvery Version—Even held at different angles, the sword shows no hint of gold on center spar. Also note hand guard ends are squared, whereas on golden version they are rounded (photos same as Exhibit 16).



Golden Version—Photos above appear to show gold paint applied to center spar, and results of grinding on hilt crenellations and pommel to reshape them. Also note the repair of a cavity at the blade tip and the reshaping of the point. Also, the hand guard ends are rounded, whereas on the silvery sword they are squared. Top photo is close-up view from Exhibit 16; bottom photo is close-up view from Exhibit 14.

Spar appears to have gold paint dripping from it and the hand guard is reshaped. There appears to be a messy, uneven application of gold paint all along the center beam. Toward the hand guard the paint appears to have collected and coagulated, then dribbled down the joint where the blade joins the guard.



Old silvery spar
No paint dripping from spar at hilt
Squared sides on hand guard
Photo is close-up view from Exhibit 16.



New golden spar
Gold paint evidently dripping from spar at hilt
Rounded sides on hand guard
Photo is close-up view from Exhibit 16.

Grip crenellations appear to be machine trimmed, and spaces were widened by mechanical grinding. On the silvery version of the sword, the two grip crenellations nearest the hilt appear longer than the one closest to the pommel. Also, the spaces between the crenellations are not equal. Yet on the golden version, the crenellations and their spacing appear much more equal.

This modification appears to have been done with a powered metal lathe. The “After” photo, below appears to show that the crenellation ends have been trimmed shorter to make them more equal, and that the spaces between them have also been equalized by grinding away material. The spaces between the crenellations also appear to have been artistically tapered—getting narrower toward the hilt—including where the shank of the handle goes into the hilt to complete the new tapered “look.” In addition, the bird face on the pommel appears to have been defaced!

Observe how the areas abraded by the grinder (including where the bird’s face was) no longer shine, but appear dull and fuzzy. That is because when the outer layer of melted-smooth brass is ground off, grainy metal beneath the surface is exposed. A good metalsmith could have blended and polished those exposed burrs to match the original glint of the adjoining, undisturbed metal.

BEFORE



AFTER



Pommel face changed to a different animal. What happened to the bird face on the pommel of the silvery sword? It appears that its nose and eyes were ground off, leaving only its lower beak. And then continual grinding resulted in an image that looks like an angry snake with new, beady snake eyes higher up on the pommel. Note also how the grip crenellation's end-transition was previously rounded and smooth, but is now angular and sharp, and how the newly machined surfaces are no longer shiny, but are dull.

BEFORE



AFTER



“Key notch” feature on silvery sword has been repaired. The photos of the sword tips below provide indisputable evidence that Mauricio’s claims are false. Brother Smith testified that the blade’s center spar only appears on one side. So since the spar is shown in both photos below, the same side *must* be showing. Note the big “key notch” flaw toward the tip of the silvery blade. The only explanation for such a compound geometric “key notch” to exist in metal is for it to have been designed that way, and there is no reason a sword would have such a feature. On the golden sword, that feature appears to have been removed—perhaps filled in with putty or solder, blended, and then painted.

BEFORE



AFTER





BEFORE



AFTER

Tip sawed off and rounded. Not only was the “key notch” repaired, but the tip of the blade was apparently also reshaped.

After first resizing the photos of each blade’s width until they were equal, we applied red squares directly below the little notch on each blade, then aligned the notches/red squares. The resultant scaled comparison clearly reveals that the tip of the silvery sword was sawed off, and it was reshaped.

Where are the “ornate” spar decorations? On previous pages, we can observe the spar that runs from hilt to tip in both the silvery and golden versions of Sword #3. There is apparently nothing to see there but nondescript “battle-damaged” metal. Yet, when Brother Moore handled the sword, he pronounced that the spar was ornately decorated, exclaiming: “The handle, I would say, is cast brass . . . the sword is gilted in that there . . . it’s a two-edged sword . . . and going down the side is, a gilted part down the center of those blades, it’s golden, **it’s ornate**” [bolding added] (see www.ustream.tv/recorded/109386345 video time markers 0:35:55–0:36:53). Gilding is a decorative technique wherein a miniscule layer of gold (as thin as .001” in thickness) is painted or rubbed onto cheaper metals to make them look fancy—which is *not* how Nephi described the solid gold of Laban’s hilt! But that discrepancy aside, photos of the sword show no *ornate* gold gilding such as Brother Moore described. Were such “ornate” gold flourishes added after the photos were taken, or is Brother Moore’s description incorrect?

Swords #2 and #3 Declared to Be the Same Object

At Colbern Road Branch on March 31, 2018, after struggling to explain Mauricio’s denial of Sword #1, Brother Gould attempted to justify why Mauricio’s photos still showed two additional very different Swords of Laban, offering this questionable explanation: “The one that was considered to look like it was Hebrew and it was kinda cut short [Sword #2] and it shows at a different angle? The sword blades [side-by-side views of Swords #2 and #3] are in the opposite [angle] and one sword [#2] is cut short to make it look like it was not the same sword [as #3].¹ **It is the same sword** [bolding added]. It [Sword #2 that appears to be dark wood] was [actually Sword #3] before it was cleaned up by Mauricio and his helpers [whereupon its appearance became that of Sword #3]. That . . . the details of cleaning up that sword were shared with me. The sword was not in their possession when we were there [March 2018], and so I only can trust what the Holy Spirit had given on that. The sword had begun to deteriorate, and as you know it’s a bimetallic structure. Gold and steel—the steel acts as a cathode and the gold is an anode and so that [only at the juncture of where the gold touches the steel] electrolysis takes place [so] that [the gold] actually eats the metal of the [steel] sword. And so it was put back in Moroni’s protection” (see <http://www.ustream.tv/recorded/113956329> video time markers 1:42:47–1:43:50). Empirical evidence is offered in this report showing that Swords #2 and #3 are *not* the same object. For Mauricio to insist they are the same exposes his deceit and impeaches his testimonies.

¹ The inference that we “cut short” the blade of Sword #2 “to make it look like it was not the same sword” is disingenuous. The photo of that sword is “cut short” because when Mauricio took the photograph, he only photographed the center of the sword and failed to include both ends in his photo.

EXHIBIT 18—WOODEN SWORD #2 HAS BEEN CARVED TO LOOK LIKE SWORD #3

Sword #3 is not the only artifact that has been altered. Sword #2 has also been altered. In the photo of the plates, at the right, a portion of Sword #2 was also included. We are sure this is Sword #2, because it shows the same exact damage holes on its wooden upper blade as appear on Sword #2 in Exhibit 5.

The question has been asked, “Why would anyone need a wooden sword?” Possible answer: For a metalsmith to use as a template when they are asked to build a unique metal sword unlike any other.



Photo released by a multi-national/church investigation team

The rounded side of Sword #2 appears to have been carved to form flat “blades,” and form a center spar, so that it appears to be the same object as Sword #3.

Sword #2 BEFORE

Photo from Exhibit 5

- Side of sword facing viewer appears rounded
- Center spar does not yet fully exist
- Upper/lower edges not yet “flattened” into “blades”

Note the same damage holes at the right appear in the same places on both photos.



Sword #2 AFTER

Photo from Exhibit 18 with plates, above

- The side facing the viewer is no longer rounded, but has angles
- Center spar was formed by cutting down edges on each side
- Upper/lower edges were beveled into “blades”
- Lower “blade” was possibly widened

Note the same damage holes appear in the same places on both photos, but on the lower photo, the hole appearances have changed somewhat, revealing additional damage to the holes beneath the surface. These same holes—visible on both swords—prove that the same side of the sword is shown in both photos: the first, before it was fully carved, and the second afterwards, when the center spar was fabricated.



**EXHIBIT 19—THE HOLES IN WOODEN SWORD #2 DO NOT APPEAR ON METAL SWORD #3
THEY ARE NOT THE SAME OBJECT**

Blade widths were equalized so they could be viewed to scale. Brothers Smith and Moore have testified that the raised spar appears *only on one side of the blade*, so with the spar side up, if they are the same object, both should look exactly alike.

Mauricio cannot claim the holes were caused by acetone when cleaning the sword, or from later corrosion, because the object with the hole damage is supposedly the “dirty” sword received a decade ago, and today’s “clean” sword shows no holes!



SWORD #2

Photo from Exhibit 18

- Color of wood
- Center spar has flaws the other sword does not
- Center spar is *wider* than the other sword
- Center spar is *wider* than either adjacent sharp edge
 - Upper sharp edge has hole damage (it is wood)
 - Lower sharp edge has flaws other sword does not
- Hilt *does not* have pronounced “V” shape at bottom
- Hilt *not imprinted* with three symbols
- Hilt looks like rough, damaged wood



SWORD #3

Photo from Exhibit 15

- Color of brass and silvery bright metal
- Center spar has flaws the other sword does not
- Center spar is *narrower* than the other sword
- Center spar is *narrower* than either adjacent sharp edge
 - Upper sharp edge has no hole damage (it is metal)
 - Lower sharp edge has flaws other sword does not
- Hilt *has* pronounced “V” shape at bottom
- Hilt *imprinted* with three symbols
- Hilt looks like formed metal

Mauricio insists Swords #2 and #3 are not two different objects, but are the very same sword.

EXHIBIT 20—MORE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN (WOODEN) #2 AND (SILVERY) #3

- Sword #2 appears to be made of damaged wood, instead of having a blade of the “most precious steel,” and hilt of “pure gold” as RLDS 1 Nephi 1:109 and LDS 1 Nephi 4:9 describe.

Sword #2 (photo from Exhibit 5) grip crenellations are square, whereas on #3 they are rectangular. Plus, the faces on them are very different. Sword #2 has deep holes in blade, guard, and handle that #3 does not. Sword #3 (photo from Exhibit 15) blade has dents and thick center spar that #2 does not (yet) have, nor does #2 have “letters” on hilt guard.



(Wooden) Sword #2—with colors reversed to appear lightened like (silvery) Sword #3



(Silvery) Sword #3



(Wooden) Sword #2



(Silvery) Sword #3—with colors reversed to appear dark like (wooden) Sword #2

Mauricio insists Swords #2 and #3 are not two different objects, but are the very same sword.

Acetone No Longer Blamed for the Deterioration of Sword #3 (and/or #2)

Brother Samuel Gould's statement in the previous section that Swords #2 and #3 are the same object was not the only discrepancy. In contrast to Brother Moore stating in the meeting on October 29, 2017, that the sword was "damaged while cleaning with acetone," Brother Gould stated on March 31, 2018, that the *real* reason the sword was disintegrating so rapidly (so much so that it had to be wrapped in plastic and returned to Moroni) was because gold "eats" steel. He asserted, "The steel acts as a cathode and the gold is an anode and so that electrolysis takes place that actually eats the metal of the sword. And so it was put back in Moroni's protection." Brother Gould got it backwards though. In reality, it is gold (not steel) that is the noble metal that acts as the cathode (the metal doing the eating), and it is steel (not gold) that acts as the anode (the base or sacrificial metal getting eaten) during electrochemical oxidation between those two metals.

While the process of corrosion by galvanic electrolysis between gold and steel is *possible*, for such to readily transpire requires constant exposure to an electrolyte (such as salt water or acid). When the electrolyte is removed, galvanic electrolysis ceases. So unless the sword is in constant contact with battery acid or seawater, no galvanic electrolysis of any consequence is transpiring where the gold (or gold-plated brass) hilt touches the steel blade.

Not only was that the new reason offered for how the sword was damaged during washing, but it was also offered as the new reason Moroni had to take back the sword. Consequently, it was not available for the witnesses to view it during their March visit to Brazil.

It is *ludicrous* to claim that a gold hilt will so rapidly "eat" up a steel sword that it cannot survive a few more days in an air-conditioned apartment, but had to be taken from the earth! Galvanic Series charts (easily searchable on the Internet) show that the chemically based electro-potential difference between gold and carbon steel is practically the same as the difference between copper and zinc. Since 1981, pennies have consisted of 97.5% zinc with a coating of copper. Directly exposed to the moisture and salt of our perspiration, our pennies are thus "eating" themselves about as fast as gold "eats" steel! So to claim the current disappearance of Laban's sword is due to it eating itself, is as ridiculous as telling the judge you didn't put coins in the parking meter because your money ate *itself*!

Laban's sword did not self-destruct while being carried into battle in the humid, coastal tropics for 1,000 years, and also for some 1,400 years more before being revealed to Joseph Smith! The readers must ask themselves, If Laban's real sword did not "eat" itself during those expeditions and sojourns, how can it be that the same *shiny and unruined* sword could now so quickly corrode that it could not survive another week sitting in Mauricio's home—especially when "Moroni" had previously given them instructions to wrap the sword in plastic to "preserve it" from further disintegration? The witnesses made a pilgrimage to see the holy artifacts—yet shortly before their arrival, the sword grew so decrepit that it had to be taken away by an angel!

Especially notable is how incapable and unenlightened their "Moroni" seems to be when it comes to caring for the sword of which he is supposedly the eternal guardian. Mauricio's Moroni evidently failed in his guardianship of the object by not showing up in time to prevent it from being damaged. When he did finally appear, he misdiagnosed the sword's damage as being due to harmless acetone. Then, he mistakenly instructed that the sword be wrapped in plastic (which the acetone would melt into a sludge). After discovering that train of errors, "Moroni" revised his earlier decision and pronounced that the real reason the sword was deteriorating was because of a scientifically impossible rate of corrosion, then gave up his remedial instructions and announced the sword had to be taken from the earth. Evidently "Moroni" was unaware that all that trouble could have been avoided—and any such corrosion halted—by just giving the hilt a good squirt of WD-40!

Before such commercial products were available, people made do by applying oils and fats to metals to prevent corrosion. Why was *their* "Moroni" not aware of the preservation technique the real Moroni would have certainly known about? Why was "Moroni" not able to prophetically discern the timing of the sword's viability upon earth so that, at the slated hour of its one-time presentation to the witnesses, it could actually *be there* for them to view? Because "Moroni" made so many mistakes, the eight witnesses were unable to view the sword!

Where it is recorded in Scripture that God gave technical instructions (to Noah when building the Ark, or to Nephi regarding mining ore and making metal plates by commandment), God’s instructions were never reactive or in need of revision but were always proactive and profoundly correct. God never commanded a technical innovation which proved to be erroneous. God is not taken by surprise by design flaws or environmental changes that force Him “back to the drawing board.” In fact, God works so far beyond the human mind that He gives perfect technical instructions *before* the need arises! Nephi marveled, “Wherefore, the Lord hath commanded me to make these plates for a wise purpose in him, which purpose I know not.” (RLDS 1 Nephi 2:99; LDS 9:4). Also, “And I knew not at the time when I made them, that I should be commanded of the Lord to make these plates.” (RLDS 1 Nephi 5:220; LDS 19:2). But in Mauricio’s group, prophetic foresight, technical problems, cleaning fluids, humidity, corrosion, maintenance schedules, materials and processes, safe exposure times on earth, and coordination times for the witnesses’ visit, seem to confuse the originator of *their* artifacts!

After Brother Moore Pronounced Sword #3 (and/or #2) “Bright ... *Not Rusted*,” Mauricio Declared It So Badly Rusted that Moroni Had to Take Back the Sword

Let us continue to examine the false claim that Sword #3 had to be taken from the earth because of corrosion and evacuated so quickly that the witnesses were not even allowed to glimpse it. We should continue this examination, because, if it can be shown their “Moroni” is making mistakes and correcting his own previous pronouncements, or if it can be shown that the witnesses’ testimonies include impossibilities or vague and misleading statements, then Mauricio’s entire narrative must be doubted!

While the formula for making corrosion-resistant (or stainless) steel was accidentally discovered in 1904 by Leon Gillet, he had no idea what he had discovered. Not until 1912 would Philip Monnartz accidentally stumble upon the antirust properties of Gillet’s earlier formulation, publish the first detailed description of it, and start marketing that amazing discovery (see <http://www.estainlesssteel.com/historyofstainlesssteel.shtml>). With that in mind, we know, of course, that the *real* Sword of Laban is *not* made of stainless steel as was derived in 1912, but of *carbon* steel, which has been known to humanity since about 600 BC.

We also know that different metals “corrode” in different ways. When most people think of “corrosion,” they think of the green patina that forms on old copper pennies, or the bulky white sulfides that galvanize on the zinc plating on plumbing fixtures. Both copper’s green patina and zinc’s white sulfides are forms of corrosion that are particular to those different types of metal.

Sometimes, planned corrosion can even be beneficial. For instance, the green-topped RLDS Auditorium is covered in copper sheets. Originally, its distinctive green dome was the color and brightness of a new penny. As the copper corroded, it turned green as the patina formed. Unlike the rusting of steel (which, if unmitigated, continues until the steel dissolves), when copper corrodes (under normal-use conditions) the process slows when the patina appears, and the patina forms a protective shell which actually protects the copper beneath it. So although the Auditorium dome will never be shiny again, the green patina now forms a protective shell—just as planned. However, when carbon steel (such as Laban’s blade) corrodes, it grows no protective green patina. Instead, when iron or carbon steel corrodes, it produces *red rust!* “Rust” is the word used to describe the result of corrosion of iron or carbon steel. And when carbon steel starts to rust, it does not stop as does copper when it corrodes. It continues until the part dissolves and falls apart (see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stainless_steel).

Pure gold does not corrode, so if Laban’s steel blade *is* corroding *due to contact with the gold hilt as claimed*, only the steel blade is doing so, and only at the juncture where the gold touches the steel. And if it *is* corroding, it will have no protective green patina such as copper manifests, nor debilitating white residue as does zinc. Instead, it will manifest *only* rust—red, crusty, flaking, destructive rust. But Mauricio’s Sword #3 has no rust. None! Brother Moore certified on October 29, 2017: “It’s bright, in that it’s not rusted” (see <http://www.ustream.tv/recorded/109386345> video time markers 1:19:20–1:19:25). And indeed, the photo Mauricio sent to Brother Jim McKay on November 7, 2017, features a sturdy, shiny sword that shows *no hint* of rust—including at the juncture of hilt and blade where Brother Gould claims the hilt is eating the sword.

Yet, less than five months after Brother Moore held the gleaming object shown below and declared it bright and free of rust, and less than four months after Mauricio sent the above photo of his sparkling sword, Mauricio proclaimed that invasions of rust had so ruined the once-magnificent weapon that it could not even be *viewed* by the witnesses—and that it needed to be returned to Moroni.



Photo from Exhibit 15

The witnesses offer as evidence of the sword’s imminent deterioration, a tiny crack that apparently exists in the blade where it meets the hilt. In October 2017, Brother Smith said that the crevasse was such a threat to the sword that “Moroni” said that the blade needed to be wrapped in plastic (see www.ustream.tv/recorded/109371953 video time markers 1:10:47–1:11:05). Just how plastic being wrapped over the entirety of the sword was supposed to repair a crack in the blade was not explained. Evidently though, the crack is the primary evidence that the gold is eating the steel. But if such was the case, the steel would not be *cracking, but rusting!* When steel corrodes, it does not shatter like a pane of glass, it rusts; but Brother Moore says *there is no rust!*

Just a few months ago, Brother Smith said that the weapon was still so mighty that it could incise the unwary and lop the limbs off of the unfortunate (see www.ustream.tv/recorded/109371953 video time markers 1:10:30–1:10:45). Now, however, it is said that it is so dilapidated that *it is not even viewable* and needed to be returned to Moroni. We are asked to believe that in a few short months, it went from being “bright . . . not rusted” to so rapidly eating itself that it had to be returned to Moroni before the witnesses could even view it. The supporters of Mauricio’s story are making extraordinary claims, and extraordinary claims require extraordinary proof—especially when their commentaries have proven to be so highly conflicted and demonstrably false.

Laban’s Name Declared to Be Imprinted into Hilt of Sword #3 (and/or #2)

For the last ten years or so, no one knew what the symbols imprinted into the hilt of the sword(s) signified. However, on Saturday, March 30, 2018, witness Samuel Gould said that Mauricio had just announced the markings were Hebrew letters spelling the name of Laban. Brother Gould said: “In the hilt of the sword there are three letters pressed in it. They are Hebrew letters and they are the letters for Laban or Lathan, showing it is Laban’s sword” (see <http://www.ustream.tv/recorded/113956329> video time markers 1:44:12–1:44:28). And Brother Moore announced the letters appear on both sides of the hilt (see www.ustream.tv/recorded/109386345 video time markers 36:11–36:59).

From about 1000 BC to 500 BC, the Hebrews wrote using the Paleo-Hebrew alphabet, which had only consonants and no vowels. During the captivities that followed, they were unable to sustain their language and adopted the languages of others. If Sword #3 has Hebrew letters on it from 600 BC, then those letters cannot be modern Hebrew letters, but *must be* Paleo-Hebrew! (See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paleo-Hebrew_alphabet.) Hebrew is written and read from right to left. Therefore, in Paleo-Hebrew, Laban’s name would be spelled NBL using the letter Nun (for N), Bet (for B), and Lamedh (for L), which should appear similar to:

נ ב ל

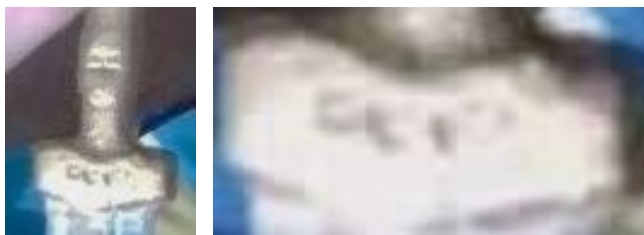
EXHIBIT 21—PALEO-HEBREW LETTERS vs. SWORD #3 MARKINGS

How “Laban” Should Appear
in Paleo-Hebrew Letters



Markings on Sword #3 That Mauricio Says Spell “Laban”

Photos from Exhibit 15



Mauricio sent the photo of Sword #3 (above) to Brother Jim McKay on March 10, 2018, to prove it was Laban’s. He authorized witness Samuel Gould to announce that the letters on the hilt spell “Laban” (in Paleo-Hebrew, and “backwards” to how we are accustomed to reading). Since the photo he sent does not clearly show Laban’s (Hebrew) name, Mauricio should provide additional clear photos of the letters *that Brother Moore certifies appear on both sides of the hilt* (see www.ustream.tv/recorded/109386345 video time markers 36:11–36:59). This would prove that the name of Laban actually appears on the hilt.

Lack of Any Symbols on Hilt of Sword #2 Reveals It Cannot Be Same Object as Sword #3

Mauricio and his witnesses insist he has not produced multiple swords, but that Swords #2 and #3 are the very same object. However, other statements by them, and comparisons of the photos of the two swords, provide empirical evidence that Swords #2 and #3 are indeed separate objects.

On October 29, 2017, at the Zarahemla Branch, Brothers Smith and Moore conducted an open forum to promote Mauricio’s plates story. According to Brother Moore, when the sword “was molted [molten], characters were placed into it like with some sort of brand. They are fairly deep—a quarter of an inch. **There’s three on each side of the hilt . . . I don’t know what those characters are, what they mean**” [bolding added] (see www.ustream.tv/recorded/109386345 video time markers 36:11–36:59).

Note that in the above October 2017 presentation, the meaning of the symbols baffled everyone. However, on March 30, 2018, Mauricio had witness Samuel Gould announce they were Hebrew letters spelling out the name of the sword’s original owner—Laban! Brother Gould also then firmly declared that Mauricio had recently instructed the witnesses that Swords #2 and #3 were the same sword—and insisted that any differences in appearance were due to the sword being photographed before and after being cleaned (see <http://www.ustream.tv/recorded/113956329> video time markers 1:44:12–1:44:28).

However, if Swords #2 and #3 are the same object, then the hilt of what is known as Sword #2 must exhibit the same markings as the hilt of Sword #3—“on each side of the hilt.” So if the hilt of Sword #2 shows no letters, it cannot be claimed that the letters appear on the opposite side of the hilt. So far, the photos Mauricio has released of hilt #3 are so blurry that the markings cannot be recognized at all, and photos of Sword #2 show no letter-type markings on the hilt at all! While some may insist the letters are obscured by filth that was later washed off, that response should be inadmissible due to the visibility of many smaller holes and details on Sword #2 that are *not* rendered invisible by filth. Since Sword #2 shows no letters, it *must* be a different object than Sword #3.


Mauricio insists Swords #2 and #3 (see Exhibit 15) are the same swords, and with him, the eight witnesses attest Laban's name is imprinted *on both sides* of the hilt. Hebrew is written and read from right to left, so the letter placement would appear "backwards" to us (NBL instead of LBN). If "Laban" is really imprinted in Paleo-Hebrew on these hilts, it should appear similar to the Paleo-Hebrew  letters for NBL, e.g.:



EXHIBIT 22—PALEO-HEBREW LETTERS NOT DISCERNABLE ON SWORD #3 HILT

Also, the face on the crenellation has a smooth neck, round chin, eyes in front, and no mouth

Photos from Exhibit 15



Brightness Increased



Contrast Decreased



Colors Reversed

EXHIBIT 23—NO LETTERS OF ANY SORT ON SWORD #2 HILT

Also, the face on the crenellation has a hole in the neck, a pointy chin, eyes on the side of the head, and a big open mouth

Photos from Exhibit 5



Brightness Increased



Brightness Increased More



Colors Reversed

Mauricio claims Swords #2 and #3 are the same sword. He also claims Laban's name is imprinted on the hilt (on both sides, according to Brother Moore), but Sword #2 has no such letters!

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

PLATE PROBLEMS. There are numerous problems with not only the plates, but also the writing upon them.

- Dozens of fake symbols invented in 1980 by convicted forger Mark Hofmann appear on the plates. Did Mauricio copy Hofmann's forgery, or did Hofmann help fabricate Mauricio's plates?
- Swirls and skips show where a modern electric power tool gouged the metal.
- Black sludge smeared on the plates violates a prophetic Book of Mormon promise.
- Wide, unused spaces between lines of characters are unlike what Nephi described.
- Binding rings are magnetic, gray, smooth, and dimensionally uniform, so apparently they are made of extruded steel (a manufacturing process that was impossible until it was invented in 1941).
- The straps that were first shown were perfect and flawless—unlike what ancient craftsmen produced by hand, but very much like what modern metal factories produce using high speed rolling presses and cutting machines.
- The plates, sealed portion, and sealing straps keep changing size and configuration.

SWORD DISPARITIES. The three swords not only differ vastly from each other, but *none* of them match Nephi's description of Sword of Laban. The real sword was probably not hidden up with the plates and Interpreters at Hill Cumorah, since Joseph Smith Jr. never mentioned it was, nor did he record that it was *ever* given to him! On *one occasion only*, an angel appeared to Joseph and the original Three Witnesses to allow them to view (but not touch) the sword! (See RLDS *History of the Church* 1:16; RLDS DC 15:1, LDS DC 17:1.)

Sword #1

- The photo of this sword appears to show a non-steel, Bronze Age Chinese sword (probably from the 481–221 BC Warring States era), as found on the Internet.

Sword #2

- Laban's sword was gold and steel, not wood.
- The blade of Sword #2 is wooden and shows damage holes missing from metal Sword #3.
- Before and after pictures of this sword show it was whittled to make it look like Sword #3.
- If Swords #2 and #3 are the same object (before and after being washed) as Mauricio says, why are the decorative faces on the grip crenellations so vastly different? If Hebrew letters spelling "Laban" are impressed into both sides of the hilt, why does Sword #2 have no such impressions?

Sword #3

- Laban's sword was gold and steel, not brass and dentable pot metal.
- The friendly bird face on the pommel has been recarved into an angry snake head.
- The original silvery blade spar has now been painted or plated golden in color.
- The gold paint that evidently was slopped onto the center spar appears to have run and puddled at the hilt.
- The tip cavity has been filled in and the point shortened/reshaped.
- The grinding of grip crenellations has resized and tapered them, as well as removed their original shiny finish.
- Gold does not "eat" steel any faster than pennies "eat" themselves.
- Squared hand guard sides appear to have glops of metal added to them, making them look more rounded.
- Swords can either be *cast* (pouring white-hot molten metal into a mold), or *forged* (hammering red-hot metal into a shape). Casting of steel was invented in 1740, so *Laban's steel sword had to be forged*. However, only *thin* swords can be formed by hand hammering—it is *impossible* to beat (by hand) such a thick central beam into steel as Sword #3 has! *If* this object is steel, and *if* it was forged, then it was formed by a huge, modern, electro-hydraulic drop press that was powerful enough to mash a bar of red-hot steel into such a shape! Doubters are invited to heat up a thick crow bar and beat on it with a hammer to try to make it look like Sword #3!

SEER STONE. The broken chunk of glass has decorative flourishes similar to a fancy candy dish. The Interpreters were never described as such.

ANGELS. Real angels or heavenly messengers do not need bubble vehicles in which to travel, cell phones to deliver messages from God, nor do they need to generate sparks to see in the dark. Trans-dimensional relics (such as the Interpreters or Sword) that angels carry from heaven cannot be damaged or destroyed by humans, or high humidity. Angels do not rely on humans to repair or replace damaged heavenly relics, and if an angel were to repair a relic it would not need to disappear for a long period as the angel struggled to fix it. When an angel summons witnesses from thousands of miles away to view a relic, the angel shows up with the item at the appointed hour, instead of failing to do so, while issuing yet another outrageous claim why God's plan has gone awry.