

A Few Hundred Hints of Egyptian and Northwest Semitic in Uto-Aztecan
By Brian Stubbs
2006 FAIR Conference

[This text was transcribed from Brian Stubbs lecture. He used dozens of languages for his research that the transcriber does not know. Therefore, the words are spelled to the best of my ability, but may not be accurate.]

You are all aware that in First Nephi I believe it was a second verse of the whole Book of Mormon. Nephi says that "I make this record in the language of my father, which consists of the language of the Egyptians and the learning of the Jews." And of course they left Jerusalem where Hebrew was spoken. So there has been a discussion and debate among the LDS scholars whether they spoke only Hebrew or Hebrew and knew something of Egyptian, but that debate has never really been resolved. In fact I have discussed with the few of the LDS scholars at BYU and I mentioned to them that the real way to solve that debate is to look at American Indian languages.

Now let's give you a little background. We don't have time to make you linguists and we don't have time to teach you Hebrew and Egyptian, but we're going to try to give you an overview of some of the basics.

The Book of Mormon is mainly an account of the people of Lehi who came out of Jerusalem presumably speaking Hebrew or something of the Northwest Semitic dialect and came to the Americas.

Looking at American Indian languages there were approximately 2000 American Indian languages with about half of them becoming extinct in the last few centuries. The critics of the Book of the Mormon say that no one has shown evidence of any American Indian language being descended from Hebrew or Egyptian, discounting the Book of Mormon, or no one has shown that to the satisfaction of the linguistic community.

Now a linguist is a language scientist. They are the final word on whether two languages are related or not. I am a linguist. I have been researching in the particular language family Uto-Aztecan, for the past 30 years and we are going to focus on that language family. In fact let's talk about language families before we go any further.

An ancient language family is called a proto-language, the original language, the old language and from this descended other languages. Interestingly, each of these languages given time, will also separate people, move and go different places and the language changes with time. In fact all living languages are always changing, same as English. Every living language changes and from those these become separate branches and other languages develop.

In the Americas there were about 2000 languages and these languages are organized into about a 157 different language families. That means that there are a 157 different groups

of related languages, each group coming from its protoform. But these different groups are not necessarily related to each other. Some proposals have proposed that “this group: or this “group of groups” are related in a larger picture. Some of those will inevitably be shown to be the case, but as of now there are about a 157 language families, quite a few if we look at the time-depth of Lehi. Lehi came to the Americas about 2600 years ago. If we look at the other language families with the time-depth of 2600 years, for example, the Latin or Italic language family is descendent from Latin and Spanish, French, Portuguese and so forth descending from Latin.

Over about in the last 2000 years Germanic, that's the language found in the English belongs to and also German and Dutch and many of the Scandinavian languages and so forth, all descend from Proto-Germanic. We call it over about the last 3000 years. So when you look at the similarities of language descended from Latin a very similar, there is no problem seeing the relationship, same thing with Germanic, we should see something like that in the Americas and yeah it is problematic to see that.

First of all, if Lehi was the only one in the Americas then there should only be one language family instead of a 157. So we know that there are many other groups who came to the Americas besides Lehi. And in fact, of these 157 language families two of them are conclusively demonstrated to be from across the Bering Strait. There are probably others as well but the language evidence suggests that at least two of these came from across the Bering Strait. There is some evidence of a third as well.

There are language families also – well I should say languages also let me back up a bit. There are many sources of language families would include Bering Strait people who entered the Americas. We have Lehites or Lamanites and few Nephites, you have Mulekites. Now remember the Mulekites and Nephites mixed in the Book of Mormon about 200 BC year or so to guess and that group of Mulekites might only be one of many.

The group of Mulekites that the Nephites mixed with could only be one of the Mulekite branches. In other words, you may have many other Mulekite descendents and this one group mixed with the Nephites, you'd also have other groups of Lehites and only this one group mixed with the Mulekites. You also probably have left over Jaredites. My guess is that the Jaredites might be as prominent in the Americas as any mainly because of a 157 different language families and of course the Jaredites date from about the Tower of Babel which is basically the history of the year since Noah.

So there are probably many other sources besides those and what happens is when language groups get in contact with any of the languages, they mix. Many languages are mixtures of various languages. For example English. English is very much a mixture. It comes from old English, originally, so it's called a Germanic language. However at various points in time, they borrowed a lot from Latin. Two or three centuries after 1066 when the when the Norman French speakers conquered the British Isles and ruled for about couple of centuries, a lot of French was brought into English. So much French and so much Latin, in other times, that in an unbridged English dictionary the Germanic part of our vocabulary is actually quite small compared to the Latin dimension of our

vocabulary. But we still call it a Germanic language. Now this kind of thing had probably been happening in the Americas. Bering Strait languages, old leftover Jaredite languages, Lamanite, Nephite, Mulekite languages and lot of other things that arrived in the Americas besides those, have been mixing and so it's a very sticky mess is what it is.

Nevertheless there is one language family we like to focus on and that is the Uto-Aztecan language family. The Uto-Aztecan language family is a group of about 30 American Indian languages that linguists recognize as being one language family descended from a single language, proto-language called Proto-Uto-Aztecan. There are about eight branches of it. In other words it divided into about eight different groups and those had other descended languages. This language family exists in the Southwest United States and in Northwest Mexico. The name Uto-Aztecan comes from the Utes in the north, here in Utah and the branch related to the Utes which includes the Shoshone of Wyoming and other languages in Nevada and Eastern California, and Aztecan because that's the south-end of the language family.

The Hopi, for example, are Uto-Aztecan language. Pima and Papago in Arizona, the various Ute groups. There are about dozen languages in southern California where the northern branch split and spread from. There are about 15 languages in northwest Mexico the Tatahumara the great distance distance runners. Huichol, and Yaqui and many of the Tepehuan languages.

Anyway we don't have time to really go into a lot of detail, but the Uto-Aztecan language family is an American Indian language family that is one of the larger ones. I mean the 30 languages is quite a few. This is some research I have been working on for a number of years, but it has not yet been published. It will be another 2 or 3 years maybe. However, I have shared that with prominent Semitists and Uto-Aztecanists. I shared it with my peers and those who I have shared it with privately are quite overwhelmed at the number of similarities and the closeness of them.

For example, we have the Hebrew on the left three different words or morphemes which is a unit of words with meaning. The plural suffix in Hebrew is "im" it's put on the end of words just like in English we have "s" dog and dogs for plural.

In fact this plural is in number of words that you are familiar with. Elohim, for example, is the plural corresponding to Arabic Alah, Eloh would be the singular, Elohim the plural. Urim and Thummim. Urim Thummim is the plural, "Ur" light, "Urim" lights, "Thum" perfection, "Thummim" perfections. Anyway the plural suffix in Uto-Aztecan is reconstructed to be "ima." Some Uto-Aztecanists argue with that. Nevertheless there is good evidence for that. They would argue about the vowel in front, whether it's – oh by the way I need to tell you that the vowels we here pronounce the vowels like you do in Spanish or most languages in the world. Almost any of you know Spanish or any other languages besides English it's probably close to that. English changed them all.

Anyway, the plural suffix in Uto-Aztecan is "ima" and I talked with Wick Miller the foremost Uto-Aztecans before his passing and explain all the evidence suggesting that, and he agreed that's decent reconstruction for that plural suffix in Uto-Aztecan. It is also a passive prefix in Hebrew "ne" is put on the beginning of verbs to make a verb passive you know I ate the apple, the apple was eaten. In Uto-Aztecan there is "na" which also makes verbs reciprocal and passive.

And also a verb which it's "ashav" in later Hebrew but originally it was "ashab" with a "b" and it means to "sit down". It also means to "dwell or reside at a place". Well in Uto-Aztecan there is a verb "asipa" which also means to sit down and to reside at a certain place. Now that's a you know those are somewhat close "im" and "ima" "ni" and "na" "asab" and "asipa" however when we consider the fact that the Hebrew plural suffix "im" came from an older "ima." "ima" is the original form linguistic and Semitists can figure out that looking at the related languages that the older original form was "ima." Then we see that the plural suffix of the in Northwest Semitic anyway is identical to the Uto-Aztecan plural suffix. Also the Hebrew "ni" came from earlier "na" that Semitists know that, they agree on that. That is identical to the Uto-Aztecan passive and reciprocal and reflexive prefix. Also the Hebrew word "asab" changed it's vowel in a certain time of the history of Hebrew and it was originally "asiba" and the vowel of the Uto-Aztecan verb is identical "asipa" just from "b" to "p." Very interesting similarities. Now these are only three similarities there are about a thousand such similarities between the Uto-Aztecan language family and Hebrew and Egyptian.

There are three basic sound changes, now I need to explain here that linguists have found that sounds change in consistent patterns so that this language changes the sound this way and this one change another way quite consistently within itself so that later this sound corresponds to another sound and the other related language.

For example Hebrew "b" in dogesh positions, which means at the beginning of the word in a certain places are changed to "kwa" in Uto-Aztecan. That "saw" the emphatic or pharyngeal "s" changed to "sa." The "c" with a little hook under it. Hook is going to be used to represent the "ts" sound. In fact that is how it's pronounced now in modern Israel. The "r" changed to "y" or "e" "i". Another very common change in world languages and keeping those three sound changes in mind look at these similarities between Hebrew verbs and Uto-Aztecan verbs.

For example the Hebrew verb "to boil" or "grow ripe to ripen or boil" is "basal". The Uto-Aztecan word is "kwasi". Okay it's missing the "L", it's missing the end of the word but the "b" corresponds to "kwa" and the "s" corresponds to the "s" sound. The Hebrew word for "flesh or meat" is "basar" and other meanings and Uto-Aztecan it's "kwasi" okay again you see the "b" change into "kwa" the "s" corresponds to "s" and the "r" goes to an "e" in "eya" in fact in some of the languages the "y" actually shows up.

The verb for "dabb" in Arabic but it will be "saub" in Hebrew means to latch on to something, to grab like a lizard. Now that "bb" known as the "bb" that would cause a

"kwa" in Uto-Aztecan and interestingly this corresponds perfectly Uto-Aztecan "skwa" means to close or lock like it does in Arabic in Hebrew that is Semitic languages.

It also means to catch or grasp like it does in Arabic and one of the nouns coming from that verb is a word for lizard "saub" or "dabb" in Arabic means lizard and in Uto-Aztecan "skwa" also means lizards. So here you have a identical form has all these three same meanings to "close or lock", to "grab" and "lizard." Same thing that matches phonologically all the sounds match, it also has the same three meanings in Uto-Aztecan.

Back here a few more examples. "She-bear, sha-bear". "She-bear" is a past tense, "sha-bear" is the imperfect phone of a conjugation, don't worry if you don't understand other words I am using at time explain but you can the picture here. Anyway "sha-bear", "skwa", you see the "s" lining up the double b to the kwa and the "r" to the "y". Same thing with "twak" here a few others "mem" is the Hebrew word for water "mem". "mem" "mema" is the word for ocean in number of Uto-Aztecan languages. Word for shoulder are similar. I am just going to go real fast here.

The word for shoulder "sekem" or "sikm", "sikum" if it's got a suffix. "sikum" "sikum" actually with an "m" sometimes that capital "M" does mean any kind of nasal, it changes according to the letter following it. "Singab" word for squirrel. If this word existed in the Hebrew it would match Arabic in the form of "siggôb". We don't have that word for squirrel in ancient Hebrew because there is no need to talk about squirrels in the Old Testament but the sound corresponds amongst Semitic languages themselves. By the way, Semitic is the language family to which Hebrew and Arabic and Babylonian, Aramaic and Ethiopic the Semitic languages belong to. Arabic is closely related to Hebrew. Anyway "siggôb" would be the word in Hebrew "seku" with silent consonant at the end is the word in Uto-Aztecan "ga" changed to "ka" that devoicing of "ga" and "da" to "ka" to "ta" and "butapa" in other positions is also established with several examples.

These are examples of "r" changing to "y" or "e" and by the way those are basically the same letter you don't think of "I" and "y" be in the same letter but say the vowel "e" between two "a's". For example aeceah and if you make the vowel long, it's the vowel "e" but if you make it short iea, iea, iea, iea then the "e" makes the "y" they pronounce it in exactly the same place in the mouth and so forth. Anyway "Syriac" the word for "comb the hair" which I don't have much anymore and in Uto-Aztecan "Syook" see the "y" corresponding to the "y" and everything up matches very well

"Kara" to "go in circles" or to "do dances" in southern Paiute, "kia" to have a "round dance." "Mara," "to go or flow or pass by" in Semitic languages, Uto-Aztecan "mia." "bar" or "ber" in Arabic meaning "field or land" as opposed to water in Arabic is what it means. Uto-Aztecan "quia" there is actually one language it has the "r" so it is "quira" so there are three example in a row of an "r" going between vowels going to "ea" in Uto-Aztecan. There are several others but we don't have time for everything. Here are some interesting one's let's take a look at these. I am watching my clock here so what we are

going to do is give a lot of examples just look at them and there are many interesting ones then we will talk about what it all means.

One of the words for "man" in Hebrew is "aw-dawn" Adam. In Uto-Aztec we have "odahmi". Another word from that same root "adom" means red and in fact the verb Adam means to be red and in Arabic you got Adem, Aadam so forth and in Uto-Aztec "O'odham" is the word for brown okay, red and brown often associated. "Sopour" Oh the Pharyngeal Hebrew "h" is reflected by proto-Uto-Aztec "ho" or "hoo". Now the pharyngeal "H" is different than our English "H." It's pronounced very gutturally in the pharynx. An example would be instead of "aha" with a regular "h", "ahha", the very guttural "h" and the gutturalness of it makes its tonality very similar to round vowels and in fact it's always associated with round vowels like "oh" and "ooh" so here we have usually "hu" is what it corresponds to in the Uto-Aztec.

For example "Chetz", "Chetz" is the Hebrew word for "arrow" and Uto-Aztec it's "chootz" okay you got that pharyngeal "h" causing the vowel. "Amar" means to "smear" something on something else in Uto-Aztec "humy." You see the pharyngeal "h" going to "hu" and the "r" going to "y?" "Harak", same thing. Let's get some more examples here. "Halalh" is the verb to play the flute in Uto-Aztec "ululu." It is missing the initial "h" but it's got the round vowels and the two "l's" it's very similar. To cough, "Haha" and "hoho" and so forth.

To "cry or roar" "sedouck," with that guttural "h", "seyeeou" you got "s" corresponding to "s" like we said in the "y" to "r" and the "w" which is also like a round vowel, to "h". The "w's" and "hoos" are like the "e" and "y".

The pharyngeal ine is also a pharyngeal, but it's voice pharyngeal and voiceless and it's a sound unique to Semitic languages and not in European languages. In fact in Saudi Arabia you have two lines. You have Saudi Arabia. Okay there is an "i" in between Saudi, there are consonants between those, Saudi Arabia. Anyway that pharyngeal "ine" and also goes to "w" or "o" or "oo". That pharyngeal behaves very much like the other pharyngeal, and here are some examples. For example the verb "sa'a" is the word to "cry out" in Hebrew and in Uto-Aztec it is "so'a". You've got that "o" that shows the presence of a pharyngeal. "shea" to "delight in or love" and Uto-Aztec "soha".

Oh this is a great one. In Arabic there is a verb to "grow old" specifically used for women it's not used for men or any other kind of creature it means for a woman to grow old. It's consonants are on "ine", "ga" and "z". In Tatahumara, one of our Uto-Aztec languages, identical! And it also specifically means to grow old only of women. For some reason there is no such verb for man little bit of chauvinism in ancient languages. But anyway you see "ine" corresponding to the "w", a word for women also from that. "seare" means "hair", suhi in Uto-Aztec. So the "s" corresponds the "s" sounds "ine" to the "w" and the "r" is "e" again. Word for "boy" is "nahar", "nowee". Again you see the correspondence of the "I" with the "w" and "r" going to "e", enough of that one. Let's look at a few more here.

The word for forest “yar”, “yuwi”. “Vala”, to “swallow”, “qulew” in Uto-Aztecan to swallow. Again “b” corresponding to “kwa” “l” aligned to “ew”, okay. The word for “leech” in Hebrew and Arabic “alaluqah”. In Uto-Aztecan “waluqah” for snail. Anyway the Semitic aleph for glottal stop also acts like a pharyngeal. The glottal stop is like an “uh-uh” and it went to “w” in fact it does an Arabic. In Arabic you have glottal stops actually going to “w” sometimes.

The word for Lion in Hebrew “Ari”, In Uto-Aztecan “wali” or “wari” identical the change. The word for believe “yahamin” mean means “he believes” in Hebrew, “yawamin” mean means to “believe” in one Uto-Aztecan. “Yawamino” mean “he believes him” or “believes it” in, another Hebrew word from that verb “Gabrielino” “yawemino” it's missing the “m” but it's actually got the “o” meaning him or “it” is an object. The probability of those seven segments aligning perfectly like that is I figured out once, it comes out to one in several thousand anyway

Lot of other interesting words but we don't have time to go over all. Egyptian, oh yes, what's interesting is in Uto-Aztecan we not only find about 600 similarities between Hebrew and Uto-Aztecan but we also find about 300 similarities between Egyptian and Uto-Aztecan.

This first one was not found by me it was found by Cyrus Gordon an internationally renowned semiticist who just happened to notice that the Aztec word, classical Nahuatl, word for crocodile “see-PAHK” which comes from Uto-Aztecan “soo-PAHK” happens to be a very similar to the Egyptian word for crocodile “Sobek”.

The old perfective in Egyptian has verbs ending in “e”. If it was past tense or if it was passive stative kinds of things. Interestingly in Uto-Aztecan there is a mechanism that has verbs ending in “ah” being active or transitive and verbs ending in “e” being passive intransitive and stative, exactly like it is in Egyptian. The passive “wha” or “ey” in Egyptian it's exact same thing in Uto-Aztecan. In fact, there are four ways in Egyptian to make a verb stative or passive and one in Arabic. Uto-Aztecan has all five of them, quite prominently.

Brian Stubbs: By the way an Egyptian will have consonants, we know a little bit about the vowels from Coptic even though they are debatable sometimes. We have a few vowels figured out by transliteration in other languages, but a lot of it is still quite unknown. So the Egyptian consonants for a verb meaning to “pierce” are “t”, “k” and “s”. “Tekso” is the verb in Uto-Aztecan to “pierce”. “Km” is the verb for “black” or any dark color, Kmon in Coptic I think, “koma” is the Uto-Aztecan word for being dark, grey, brown, black. “Nami” is the word for traveling or crossing something. The word in

Uto-Aztec for traveling, walking around is "Nami". "Wunish" is fox, "wunsea" in Uto-Aztec.

Let's just pick out a few from each page. Like I say there are about a thousand of these we are going to show you about a 100 of them or 150. If you want all of them they are in a book in the back. If you are interested in this kind of thing, you've got all the details in a 110 pages back there you. This is the type tip of the ice berg here.

Anyway for example "sheem" in Egyptian, it's the word for "go on a walk", "shima" in Uto-Aztec. "sobek" whatever the vowels were in Egyptian, is "calf of the leg" or "lower leg". In Uto-Aztec "sibika" same three consonants. "Sapte" in Coptic, oh by the way Coptic is a later form of Egyptian that did put the vowels in, it existed about the time of Christ. "Sapte" in a Uto-Aztec language meaning "fence or enclosure". "Koppu" in Egyptian meaning "cool, calm, quiet". "Kopa" is "quiet and calm" in Uto-Aztec.

Oh yes! Now we are getting to something interesting. First I discovered the "kwa" dialect of Hebrew and then I started noticing that all the Egyptian similarities had "b" changing into "p", instead of to kwa. For example you have the Egyptian word for throat "babite" and in Uto-Aztec "papite". Identical, except for "b" is changed into "p", same meaning.

The Egyptian "bashi" is the verb to "vomit or spit out", "bashu" is a noun, a verbal noun or the stop. In Uto-Aztec it matches the noun "besota". But again everything matches the "w" with the "o". So this is built on the noun form. "Bante" or whatever the vowels were in Egyptian, "betee" in Uto-Aztec.

Egyptian has article prefixes. For a feminine noun you would have "wa" means "a, b". "Ta" means "the", so you put that in the front for meaning "the b", and "na" is the plural "the" in Egyptian meaning "the b's". So you have wa, ta, and na as prefixes to the word and here we have in Uto-Aztec, the Tatumara language has three different variants for this word for bumble bee; "nabari" and "tapara" and "wakbara". The "para" part is simply a vowel change. since the last vowel is "ah", it tends to change the vowels in front of it to "ah", that happened real often in English and every other language. So pita becomes pata, intravocalic "t" becomes "r" real often and we do that in English and lot of other languages. So, "para" is that word for bee and it has those same three prefixes for a feminine noun, and Egyptian peet is a feminine noun.

Boy you can't get much better matches than that. Oh yes, a few more. The word for lion in Egyptian is "m" glottal stop, "e" or "y" are the three consonants. Remember, glottal stop goes to "w" and remember "e" is the same as the "y", in fact in Coptic it's "muy". In Uto-Aztec it's "Moweeya" shows all three consonants perfectly. "Dieet" a shroud or some kind of garment, "towieet". All three consonants perfectly matched, the glottal stop to "w" the "y".

“Tak” is the Egyptian word for “earth”. “T” and the glottal stop. “Tewa” is the word for dirt and dust and sand and other kinds of things in Uto-Aztecans.

Oh this is wonderful. “Siba” in Coptic, you see Coptic is already lost the b and the glottal stop of Egyptian, it only has “s” originally from the Egyptian whereas Uto-Aztecans has all three consonants still showing. But the glottal stop jumped from third consonant to second, so “sepo” is the word for star in Uto-Aztecans. And by the way this is a consistent pattern, that glottal stop jumping ahead for certain words or kinds of vocalizations.

Anyway after I found all of these Egyptian words and the sound correspondence of Egyptian were little bit different than what I found for Hebrew. The “sa” goes “saw” and the “b” to “p” and so forth. Then I started noticing lots of words in Uto-Aztecans as well where the Hebrew “b” corresponded to “p”. Here is a good list of them. The “p” dialect of Hebrew for example the word in Hebrew for lightning is "Barack" in Uto-Aztecans “Parock”. The Hebrew word for house "bet", in Uto-Aztecans “bête” means house, “bête” as a verb also means to spend the night.

“Po” means “coming” or it also means “the way” in Hebrew, “po” identical in Uto-Aztecans for “road or path”. "Basar" to “look, to see”, "basara" to “open the eyes”, "basir" “basereth" in Arabic for i, the Hebrew vowelizing would be “bolsi” which matches here in Uto-Aztecans “polsi” so this is a bit strange but it matches. We don't have that word in Hebrew per-se. Word for daughter "bot" in Uto-Aztecans "bota" and so forth. Anyway and several 100 other words showed me that there is also a “p” dialect of Hebrew in Uto-Aztecans. It wasn't until I found all three of these that it dawned on me that, here we have one dialect of Hebrew or Aramaic, it actually has a lot of Aramaic leaning this “p” dialect of northwest Semitic shall we call it. Aramaic and Hebrew are both part of the northwest Semitic branch of Semitic. Anyway we have a “p” dialect of Hebrew and we have it matching Egyptian. Then we have a co-dialect of Hebrew and then it comes to mind of course, with the union of the the Mulekites with the Nephites. The Nephites were dealing with both Egyptian and Hebrew, uniting with the Mulekites. In fact there is a whole bunch of other evidence I don't have time to show you that this actually is a descendant of the language of Zarahemla. because you have all of them. Like I said, I've run this privately passed a few Uto-Aztecans, Ph.D's of linguistics that I work with who are non LDS, and I show them these similarities and their jaw drops, and they are really quite overwhelmed with the number and the quality of the similarities. So, give me little more time. I need to figure few more things out and put some other things together first. But it's from Semitic specialist, LDS specialist and Uto-Aztecans. It seems to be a very strong case.

And this is only one of the 150 language families in the Americas. There are a lot of interesting things in other language families so it's all yet to be worked out, it will come out in the wash. So when the critics say there is no language evidence for the Book of Mormon that has been accepted by the linguistic community, they are correct, there is nothing *yet* that has been accepted by the linguistic community, But that doesn't mean it's not there. The progress of Native American language is generally slow. It takes about 3-5 lifetimes to really get a language family figured out.

You can watch this video on our Youtube site at:

- Pt. 1- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cxrllcMkqS4&feature=related>
- Pt. 2- http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=06eVf62EzDM&feature=watch_response
- Pt. 3- http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jcj7yxxh1BI&feature=watch_response
- Pt. 4- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O2X-QiKaFpI&feature=related>
- Pt. 5- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O2X-QiKaFpI&feature=related>