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Title Epigraphic Considerations on Janne Sjodahl's
Experiment with Nephite Writing

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Abstract Having studied Janne Sjodahl's work on the number of plates required for the original Book of Mormon text, John Gee examines the potential drawbacks of Sjodahl's experiment. He concludes that the size of Miller's script suffices for Sjodahl's test.

EPIGRAPHIC CONSIDERATIONS ON JANNE SJODAHL'S EXPERIMENT WITH NEPHITE WRITING

John Gee

Two issues arise from the Hebrew characters that Henry Miller drew for Janne Sjodahl's experiment on Nephite writing. A minor issue is that Miller used the later, square Hebrew letters rather than the archaic Hebrew letters of Lehi's day. The type of characters used made a difference in the space required to record the sample text. A major issue, however, is the size of the characters used, which made an even greater difference in the space required for the sample text. To modern readers, the characters that Miller used look too small to be readily legible. Would ancient scribes have used such minuscule letters?

A casual look at Hebrew papyrus manuscripts (most of which date to after the Babylonian exile) shows that the letters were written much larger than those that Miller rendered. Papyrus documents were written with brush and ink and can exhibit elegant calligraphy. But the plates of gold and brass were engraved, and engraving involved different conventions than did brush and ink writing.

We now have enough actual examples of ancient Hebrew writing on artifacts to examine the issue of engraved Hebrew characters from Lehi's day. Published drawings or photographs of the writing on such objects are typically enlarged to two or three times the actual size in order to make the characters more legible. I have measured the actual size of the letters on a series of engraved objects based on their documented size. The characters used anciently are about the same size as those that Sjodahl's scribe used. Contrary to our notions of legibility, Miller's Hebrew script serves adequately for the test for which Sjodahl used it.

The writing sample I have used in the accompanying chart is taken from two recent publications (others could have been used without changing the result) that illustrate ancient seals, bullae, and weights on which Hebrew characters are engraved. Seven objects come from the Moussaieff collection, as shown in a book by Robert Deutsch.¹ Other letters appear on a stone weight (the "Kollek weight") discussed in an article by Michael Heltzer.² The ob-

jects were selected to cover the entire alphabet. All the writing comes from the three centuries immediately preceding Lehi's departure from Jerusalem.

The letters in Sjodahl's 1927 article average about 1.5 mm square. The table below shows the sizes in millimeters of the characters on the antique objects. (The table substitutes later Hebrew equivalents, which some readers will know, rather than the archaic characters.) The letters vary in size from

Hebrew Letter	Height	Width	Reference
א	1.5	1	Moussaieff 1
ב	1.5	1	Moussaieff 2
ג	3	1.5	Moussaieff 45
ד	1	1	Moussaieff 1
ה	1.5	1	Moussaieff 1
ו	1.5	.5	Moussaieff 45
ז	.5	1	Moussaieff 1
ח	1.5	1	Moussaieff 1
ט	1.5	1.5	Moussaieff 11
י	1	1	Moussaieff 1
כ	1.5	2	Moussaieff 1
ל	1	1	Moussaieff 1
מ	1.5	2	Moussaieff 1
נ	3.5	1	Kollek weight
ס	2	1.5	Moussaieff 35
ע	.5	.5	Moussaieff 2
פ	2	3	Moussaieff 17
צ	1	1.5	Moussaieff 43
ק	2	1.5	Moussaieff 2
ר	3	1	Kollek weight
ש	1.5	2	Kollek weight
ת	2.5	1	Kollek weight

ject to object but are all roughly in the 1–3 mm-square range. The epigraphic realities of the size of the characters shed new light on Jacob's remark about "the difficulty of engraving our words upon plates" (Jacob 4:1) and on Moroni's lament that "we could write but little, because of the awkwardness of our hands" (Ether 12:24). ■

nished a product similar in appearance (see Lechtman, "Pre-Columbian Surface Metallurgy"; and Dorothy Hosler and Guy Stresser-Pean, "The Huastec Region: A Second Locus for the Production of Bronze Alloys in Ancient Mesoamerica," *Science* 257, 28 August 1992, 1215). Moreover, Nephi's original plates might have been of different composition than Mormon's plates.

The Book of Mormon Plates Janne M. Sjadahl

Like the article itself, the following notes are as they appeared in the original article from the April 1923 *Improvement Era*, with the exception that publication data has been added in brackets.

1. This is quoted from [Gregg Thomas,] *The Prophet of Palmyra* [New York: J. B. Alden, 1890] and may or may not be authentic.
2. An excellent little book by George Reynolds [Salt Lake City: Juvenile Instructor Office, 1883].
3. The American edition, published at Nauvoo, 1842, has 566 pages, 5/8 by 3/4 inches, including the margins.
4. See *History of the Prophet Joseph*, by his mother, Lucy Smith, pp. 85 and 105. The account related must have been given by the Prophet himself to his mother. [The pages cited correspond to the 1902 edition of this book, revised by George A. Smith and Elias Smith and published by the *Improvement Era*.]
5. *Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 3, p. 347.

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1. Robert Deutsch, *Messages from the Past: Hebrew Bullae from the Time of Isaiah Through the Destruction of the First Temple, Shlomo Moussaieff Collection and an Up-to-Date Corpus* (Tel Aviv: Archaeological Center Publications, 1999).
2. "A New Weight from Hamath and Trade Relations with the South in the Ninth–Eighth Centuries BCE," in *The World of the Aramaeans II*, ed. P. M. Michèle Daviau, John W. Wevers, and Michael Weigl [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001], 133–35.

The Book of Mormon Art of Arnold Friberg, "Painter of Scripture" Vern Swanson

1. Vern Swanson, "A Master's Hand: Arnold Friberg, Illustrator," *Southwest Art* 11 (December 1981): 75.
2. Arnold Friberg notes (February 2001), Springville Museum of Art (SMA) Library.
3. John L. Sorenson correspondence with the author (21 May 1999), in the author's possession. Two generations later, Sorenson would issue a book, *Images of Ancient America: Visualizing Book of Mormon Life* (Provo, Utah: Research Press/FARMS, 1998), that provided some of the information Friberg had hoped for in 1951.
4. Arnold Friberg notes (February 2001), SMA Library.
5. Ted Schwarz, *Arnold Friberg: The*

Passion of a Modern Master (Flagstaff, Ariz.: Northland, 1985), 54. Schwarz has a background in general commercial studio photography and magazine and book illustration.

6. Margot J. Butler, Special Education Coordinator, Church Education System, Salt Lake Valley North Area, transcript of an interview with Friberg (3 June 1986). This and other quotes from the transcript were modified by Friberg himself upon reviewing this article in manuscript form in February 2001.
7. *Ibid.*
8. Friberg interview with author, 1981.
9. Arnold Friberg notes (February 2001), SMA Library.
10. *Ibid.*
11. Friberg interview with author, 1981.
12. Quoted in Grady Johnson, "Moses and the Mormon Artist," *Instructor*, September 1954. The final nine words in the quotation were added by Friberg in an interview with the author in February 2001.
13. Arnold Friberg notes (February 2001), SMA Library.
14. All the comments are from Butler's 1986 interview, modified by Friberg in February 2001.
15. Friberg statement to Vern Swanson, December 2000.
16. See Noel A. Carmack, "Images of Christ in Latter-day Saint Visual Culture, 1900–1999," *BYU Studies* 39/3 (2000): 40–41, 73.
17. It was exhibited in December 2000 at Williams Fine Art in Salt Lake City on the occasion of a show of Friberg's work.

The Journey of an 1830 Book of Mormon Gerald E. Jones

1. Journal of Samuel Smith, Historical Department Archives, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City.
2. I have obtained three other 1830 books that closely match my 1830 Book of Mormon and Bible not only in the type of binding but also in the size and placement of the lines of type on the spines. I have not seen a study of book binding (process, materials, suppliers) in America in that era. That study still awaits the work of a serious student.
3. Journal of Orson Hyde, Historical Department Archives, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.
4. The only other notations in the book are by Melvin Wilbur. On the top of the first blank page is his very legible signature and beneath it, in two lines, the words "Providence, R.I." The other notation is found at the top of page 574 (the title page for the book of Moroni), where he wrote, again in two lines, "Melvin Wilbur Book."

The Book of Mormon as a Collectible Matthew R. Sorenson and John L. Sorenson

1. This article was prepared using observations by Curt Bench (Benchmark Books), Madelyn Garrett (University of Utah Marriott Library Special Collections), Richard Horsley (Pioneer Books), Joan Nay (Sam Weller's Bookstore), Ken Sanders (Ken Sanders Rare Books), Kent Walgren (Sallywag's Used and

Rare Books), and others who choose to remain anonymous.

Other Ancient American Records Yet to Come Forth Monte S. Nyman

1. In *A Guide to Publications on the Book of Mormon: A Selected Annotated Bibliography* (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1996), there is no mention of books or articles about future records to come forth as promised in the Book of Mormon. Some time ago I published a book with a chapter on the subject (chapter 5 of *Two Sticks One in Thine Hand* [Salt Lake City: Gen-Dex Press, 1973], 139–50). Although this publication was included in the FARMS bibliography, the subject of the above chapter was not annotated. Perhaps this subject has been treated elsewhere, but not to my knowledge, although excerpts from an unpublished manuscript that briefly outlined some of these records were printed in the RLDS publication *The Witness* (winter 1992).
2. See Henry J. Cadbury, "The New Testament and Early Christian Literature," *The Interpreter's Bible*, ed. George Arthur Buttrick et al. Although I do not agree with the conclusions of the article cited here, it represents the thinking of many Bible scholars regarding the dating of 2 Peter and why scholars reject the authorship of Peter's epistle. The claim that the epistles of John were written after his gospel is much more widely accepted and is probably correct. The dating of John's epistles is also confirmed in the article cited above.
3. The brother of Jared was one of those who had written his vision of the end of the world. The vision was recorded in the sealed portion of the plates given to Joseph Smith. These will be discussed later.
4. Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 19:38. The incident is quoted as evidence of the existence of plates and not as a discussion of Book of Mormon geography. Whether the cave was in New York or was a vision given to Joseph and Oliver is irrelevant to the discussion here.
5. The preceding references are to quotations that were obviously taken from the plates of brass and included in the writings of Nephi or in Mormon's abridgment.
6. See *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, comp. Joseph Fielding Smith (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976), 327.
7. The subheadings of the Book of Mormon books were part of the text written by Mormon and translated by Joseph Smith, while the synopses of chapters were written by various modern-day apostles as new editions were printed. For examples of the subheadings written by Mormon, see the major subheading under the titles of Alma, Helaman, 3 Nephi, and 4 Nephi; and for examples of subheadings within various books, see the italicized comments preceding Mosiah 9, 23; Alma 5, 9, 17, 21, 36, 38, 39, 45; Helaman 7, 13; and 3 Nephi 11.

8. Jesus also taught more in Jerusalem than is recorded in the New Testament. As John wrote his gospel, he declared, "And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen" (John 21:25).
9. Moroni told Joseph Smith that the fullness of the gospel was found in the Book of Mormon plates (Joseph Smith—History 1:34). The Doctrine and Covenants repeatedly states that the Book of Mormon contained the fullness of the gospel (see D&C 1:22–23; 14:10; 20:9; 27:5; 35:12, 17; 39:11; 42:12; 45:28; 66:2). For a definition of the fullness of the gospel given within the Book of Mormon, see 3 Nephi 27:13–21.
10. Some consider 2 Nephi 27 to be partly from the text of Isaiah 29 with Nephi's comments interspersed. Because Isaiah 29 in the Joseph Smith Translation contains almost the exact wording of 2 Nephi 27, I accept the whole chapter of 2 Nephi 27 as the original text of Isaiah except for the introductory verse and a slight paraphrasing of verses 2 and 3. 2 Nephi 28 also implies that Nephi had concluded his quoting of Isaiah and was now adding his commentary.
11. See Sidney B. Sperry, *Doctrine and Covenants Compendium* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1960), 305–6. Isaiah speaks of how "in that day shall the Lord of hosts be for a crown of glory, and a for diadem of beauty, unto the residue of his people" (Isaiah 28:5). The context of that chapter is Ephraim, or northern Israel, in the day of its wickedness prior to being taken into captivity by Assyria in 721 B.C. Typical of Old Testament prophecy, a message of doom (captivity) is followed by a message of hope referring to the restoration of the latter days as "in that day." The residue is probably the remnant of the tribes of the north that would someday return (see Isaiah 6:13; 7:3 [the name *Shear-jashub* means "a remnant shall return"]; 10:20–22).

The "crown of glory" suggests the temple endowment and sealings in other scriptural passages. Enoch was commanded to ascend Mount Simeon, where he was "clothed upon with glory" (see Moses 7:2–3). President Joseph Fielding Smith believed that Peter, James, and John received their endowments on the Mount of Transfiguration (see Matthew 17:1–9) when they were given the keys of the kingdom (see his *Doctrines of Salvation*, comp. Bruce R. McConkie [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1999], 2:165). The Lord has often used the mountain for his holy place when there were no temples available (as he did with Moses in Exodus 24:12–31:18 and with Elijah in 1 Kings 19). While we have no direct scriptural statement that the "rich treasures" mentioned in D&C 13 are genealogical records, the above scriptures suggest that such records will constitute at least a part of that legacy. One of the most significant purposes of the latter-day restoration is the