

## Part 2: Evidence for the implied plates of Moroni

The *Book of Mormon* states clearly that its records were engraved<sup>1</sup> on two sets of metal plates, a set made by Nephi<sub>1</sub> (the “small plates of Nephi” or “small plates”)<sup>2</sup> sometime in the 6th century BCE<sup>3</sup> and a set made by his descendant, Mormon<sub>2</sub> (the “plates of Mormon”)<sup>4</sup> sometime in the 4th century CE.<sup>5</sup> Each plate apparently had been made in a similar size<sup>6</sup> from gold, silver and/or copper “ore”<sup>7</sup> and had “the appearance of gold”.<sup>8</sup> By the time Mormon<sub>2</sub> completed his writings and delivered both sets of plates to his son, Moroni<sub>2</sub>,<sup>9</sup> the small plates of Nephi had been described as “full”<sup>10</sup> and the plates of Mormon had just enough “room”<sup>11</sup> for Moroni<sub>2</sub> to engrave the concluding report that his father commanded him to write.<sup>12</sup>

When Moroni<sub>2</sub> finally was able to fulfill his father’s commands, he recorded the concise report set forth in Mormon 8:1-13. Based on the report’s content, Mormon<sub>2</sub> apparently had commanded his son to introduce himself and his purpose,<sup>13</sup> note the completion of 400 years from the coming of Christ,<sup>14</sup> testify that the Nephites were extinct,<sup>15</sup> describe the condition of the Lamanites,<sup>16</sup> witness the hand of the Lord in all of this,<sup>17</sup> and survive as long as the Lord would permit.<sup>18</sup> To fulfill these commands, Moroni<sub>2</sub> had to hide from his enemies and survive

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Nephi 9:3-4; 19:1-2; 2 Nephi 5:29-32; Jacob 1:1-4; 3 Nephi 5:10; 26:11-12; Mormon 1:4.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Nephi 1:17; 9:2-6; 18:25-19:6; Jacob 1:1-4.

<sup>3</sup> Centuries and year numbers in the modern Common Era calendrical system are followed by the CE designation when required for chronological clarity. Common Era year numbers are chronologically identical to year numbers in the *anno Domini* or AD calendrical system, but the unnecessary religious reference and apparent chronological error in the ancient AD system are avoided. Year numbers in the derivative Before the Common Era calendrical system are followed by the BCE designation when required for chronological clarity and are identical to the ancient derivative BC calendrical system. Lehi<sub>1</sub> was called to be a prophet to the Jews “in the commencement of the first year of the reign of Zedekiah, king of Judah” (1 Nephi 1:4-20). King Zedekiah apparently began to reign in 597 BCE. Donald J. Wiseman, *Chronicles of Chaldean Kings (625-556 B.C.) in the British Museum* (London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1956), 1-33. Lehi<sub>1</sub> and his family left Jerusalem before the city was destroyed by the Babylonians (1 Nephi 1:18-2:5; 7:6-15), an event that has been alternatively dated to 587 or 586 BCE, depending largely on how the 11 regnal years of king Zedekiah may have been reckoned. Jeremy Hughes, *Secrets of the Times: Myth and History in Biblical Chronology*, *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament, Supplement Series 66* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1990), 229 n.137, listed 11 scholars in favor of 587 BCE and 12 scholars in favor of 586 BCE. Nephi<sub>1</sub> placed the fabrication of the small plates sometime between 30 and 40 years after “the time we left Jerusalem” (2 Nephi 5:28-34).

<sup>4</sup> 3 Nephi 5:8-18; 4 Nephi 1:48-Mormon 1:5; 4:16-23; 6:1-6; 8:5-6.

<sup>5</sup> In the plates of Mormon, it is implied both that Mormon<sub>2</sub> was born after 300 years had passed away from the coming of Christ and that his death occurred before 400 of such years had ended (4 Nephi 1:48-Mormon 1:2; 6:5-15; 8:1-8).

<sup>6</sup> The fabrication and use of plates of essentially the same size is implied from two sources. First, blank plates on which to engrave the records of the Nephites were known as “the plates of Nephi”, as were the plates that had already been engraved (Mormon 1:2-4; 2:17-18; 6:6). This suggests that a standardized system for fabricating plates after the model of Nephi<sub>1</sub>’s initial plates had been adopted and maintained by official Nephite record keepers and their assistants. Second, engraved plates from the time of Nephi<sub>1</sub> and from the time of Mormon<sub>2</sub> (approximately nine centuries apart) could be “put ... with” or attached together in some manner and appeared to be a single set of plates (Words of Mormon 1:1-11; Kirk B. Henriksen, compiler, “How Witnesses Described the ‘Gold Plates’”, *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 10/1 (2001), 16-21, 78.

<sup>7</sup> E.g., 1 Nephi 18:25-19:6; Mosiah 21:27; Helaman 6:11; Mormon 8:5.

<sup>8</sup> Henriksen, “How Witnesses Described the ‘Gold Plates’”, 17.

<sup>9</sup> Words of Mormon 1:1-11; 4 Nephi 1:48-Mormon 1:2; 6:5-7:10; 8:1-8.

<sup>10</sup> Omni 1:25, 30.

<sup>11</sup> Mormon 8:5.

<sup>12</sup> Mormon 6:6; 8:1-13; compare Moroni 9:22-24.

<sup>13</sup> Mormon 8:1.

<sup>14</sup> Mormon 8:6.

<sup>15</sup> Mormon 8:2-3, 7, 13.

<sup>16</sup> Mormon 8:8-9.

<sup>17</sup> Mormon 8:5-6, 8, 10-11.

<sup>18</sup> Mormon 8:3-5.

alone for about 15 years from the 385th Nephite year when the combined Lamanite armies annihilated most of the Nephite people.<sup>19</sup>

Moroni<sub>2</sub> began his report by stating: “Behold, I Moroni do finish the record of my father Mormon. Behold, I have but few things to write, which things I have been commanded of my father.”<sup>20</sup> As Moroni<sub>2</sub> wrote his “sad tale” of destruction and loneliness, he noted that he had no “room upon the plates” where he could write all that he wanted and no “ore” to make more plates because he was alone, and his father and “all [his] kinsfolks” had been “slain in battle”.<sup>21</sup> Apparently, the finding and mining of “ore”, the creation of “bellowses” and the fabrication of metal plates was not a process typically left up to a single artisan.<sup>22</sup> After completing his report, he finished by identifying himself and his father again. “Behold, I am Moroni. And were it possible, I would make all things known unto you. Behold, I make an end of speaking concerning this people. I am the son of Mormon, and my father was a descendant of Nephi”.<sup>23</sup>

Presumably, in keeping with his stated intention,<sup>24</sup> Moroni<sub>2</sub> then buried “the records” on the plates of Mormon and small plates of Nephi that his father had delivered to him. Where Moroni<sub>2</sub> buried the records and how he hid them in the earth are not mentioned nor is there any statement in the text that Mormon<sub>2</sub> transferred any other records to Moroni<sub>2</sub> or informed his son where the accumulated official Nephite records and treasures were buried.

## 2.1 The implied plates of Moroni

Despite the statements that the small plates were full, that Moroni<sub>2</sub> had no helpers or ore, and that he had filled the room left to him on the plates of Mormon by fulfilling his father’s commands, Moroni<sub>2</sub> later wrote extensively on what may be inferred to have been another set of plates. Moroni<sub>2</sub>’s expansive writings apparently include his exhortation, testimony and prophecy in Mormon 8:14-9:37, his abridgment of the Jaredite Book of Ether, and his compilation in the Book of Moroni of official Nephite religious texts, one of his father’s speeches, two of his father’s letters to him, and even more of his own exhortation, testimony and prophecy. All these texts suggest that Moroni<sub>2</sub> either made or obtained blank plates on which to write.

Furthermore, in two circumspect statements, Moroni<sub>2</sub> appears to have mentioned the use of this third set of plates. In widely separated comments, he referred to “[t]he plates” and “these plates”.<sup>25</sup> One may question whether he referred to the plates of Mormon rather than to a third set of plates, but it would seem that the plates of Mormon were buried at the time he began writing again. In the text of the printer’s manuscript, Moroni<sub>2</sub>’s definite conclusion on the plates of Mormon is followed immediately by an equally definite resumption of Moroni<sub>2</sub>’s writings. After stating “Behold, I make an end of speaking concerning this people. I am the son of Mormon, and my father was a descendant of Nephi”, Moroni<sub>2</sub>’s very next statement is “And I

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<sup>19</sup> Mormon 6:4-15.

<sup>20</sup> Mormon 8:1.

<sup>21</sup> Mormon 8:3, 5, 12.

<sup>22</sup> Nephi<sub>1</sub> and Mormon<sub>2</sub> each recorded that he had made his set of plates “with [his] own hands” (1 Nephi 1:17; 3 Nephi 5:11-12), a statement that does not necessarily preclude either man from having benefited from the assistance of others. Compare 1 Nephi 17:9-11, 16; 18:25.

<sup>23</sup> Mormon 8:13.

<sup>24</sup> Mormon 8:4.

<sup>25</sup> Mormon 8:14; Ether 4:4.

am the same which hideth up this record unto the Lord.”<sup>26</sup> The ampersand in the printer’s manuscript representing the conjunction *and* that begins the text now known as Mormon 8:14 is not distinguished in any way from the hundreds of other ampersands in the manuscript text.<sup>27</sup> In other words, having just told his reader twice who he was, and after explaining to his reader what he was going to do with the records that were full and had no room on them for any more writing, Moroni<sub>2</sub> began writing again and reintroduced himself.

Several aspects of this reintroduction must be noted. First, Moroni<sub>2</sub> does not use his name. Indeed, nowhere in his testimony, exhortation and prophecy at the end of his father’s personal book<sup>28</sup> does Moroni<sub>2</sub> use his name or his father’s name. At the beginning of this report, he calls himself “the same”, meaning “the person”, “the one” or simply “he”.<sup>29</sup> Second, to make this enigmatic identity understandable to a reader, he describes which person he is—the one who “hideth up this record unto the Lord.” Neither his reference to himself in the third person nor his use of the third person present indicative verb *hideth*<sup>30</sup> can be overlooked or ignored. Essentially, he is saying, “And I am the person who is hiding up this record to the Lord.” Third, he does not refer to the “record of [his] father” or to the combined “records” he apparently had already buried and hidden. Instead, he refers to “this record”.

This seemingly odd and unnecessary way of describing himself is understandable if one assumes that he had just begun to write on a new blank plate. Without identifying himself to an enemy (a Lamanite or robber<sup>31</sup>) who might find this plate before Moroni<sub>2</sub> could complete it and place it with his father’s buried records, Moroni<sub>2</sub> disclosed just enough about his identity to make the transition from the buried plates to the blank plate on which he had begun to write again. Between the personal nouns and pronouns (“I”, “Moroni”, “my father” and “Mormon” used as identifiers on the plates of Mormon) and the verb “will ... hide” (future tense used on his father’s plates) and the vague identifier “the same” and verb “hideth” (present tense used on the implied blank plate),<sup>32</sup> unrecorded events involving Moroni<sub>2</sub> appear to have occurred. Apparently, he had buried the combined plates of Mormon and small plates of Nephi. Later, while the completed part of the records continued to remain hidden, he seems to have created or acquired blank plates on which to write more. Suddenly (from a modern textual standpoint), Moroni<sub>2</sub> reintroduced himself and recommenced engraving with plenty of room to write on “these plates”<sup>33</sup> that were close at hand, the blank plates that became the plates of Moroni.

One more textual clue is consistent with this proposed sequence of events; it suggests the reason for Moroni<sub>2</sub>’s immediate warning. After stating “And I am the same which hideth up this record unto the Lord”, Moroni<sub>2</sub> says, “The plates thereof are of no worth because of the

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<sup>26</sup> Mormon 8:14. Royal Skousen noted that “in Early Modern English ... *which* was originally applied to both persons and things” and “there are numerous instances where *which* is used in place of *who*”. This text appears to be such an instance. Skousen (with Carmack), *The History of the Text of the Book of Mormon, Part Two*, 1188, 1207.

<sup>27</sup> Skousen, ed., *The Printer’s Manuscript of the Book of Mormon, Part Two*, 897. The original manuscript for this part of the text is not extant, but it appears to have been the manuscript used for typesetting the *Book of Mormon* at this point. Skousen, ed., *The Original Manuscript of the Book of Mormon*, 37; Skousen, ed., *The Printer’s Manuscript of the Book of Mormon, Part One*, 4. Thus, the 1830 printed version of this text also is a copy of the original manuscript. Smith, *The Book of Mormon* (1830), 532; Skousen, *Analysis of Textual Variants of the Book of Mormon, Part Six*, 3656-57.

<sup>28</sup> Mormon 8:14-9:37.

<sup>29</sup> *The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary*, II: 2631 (same).

<sup>30</sup> Skousen, *Analysis of Textual Variants of the Book of Mormon, Part Six*, 3656-57.

<sup>31</sup> Mormon 8:9.

<sup>32</sup> Mormon 8:1-4, 12-14.

<sup>33</sup> Ether 4:4.

commandment of the Lord, for he truly saith that no one shall have them to get gain.”<sup>34</sup> This suggests Moroni<sub>2</sub>’s concern that he might be discovered and/or that the plates he intended to fill with his witness and prophecies might be discovered among his possessions. This seems to be a warning delivered in the name “the Lord” not to destroy these plates for their metallic value. Instead, Moroni<sub>2</sub> says, “But the record thereof is of great worth. And whoso shall bring it to light, him will the Lord bless”<sup>35</sup> (rather than curse).

These textual clues suggest that Moroni<sub>2</sub>, after fulfilling his father’s commands and burying “the records” contained on the plates of Mormon and the small plates of Nephi,<sup>36</sup> created or obtained other plates on which to write. In this source book, this implied set of plates is called the “plates of Moroni”.

## 2.2 Statistical clues based on the text

In addition to the textual clues examined above, statistical data drawn from the *Book of Mormon* text appear to support the inference that the plates of Moroni existed as a third principal set of plates. The data presented in the following discussion (numbers of pages and lines of text) were obtained from the facsimile edition of the printer’s manuscript of the *Book of Mormon*. This facsimile reproduces each of the pages and lines of text that appear on the pages of the printer’s manuscript.<sup>37</sup>

### 2.2.1 The small plates of Nephi were “full”.

Shortly before the death of Nephi<sub>1</sub>, he delivered the small plates to his younger brother, Jacob<sub>2</sub>.<sup>38</sup> Nephi<sub>1</sub> commanded Jacob<sub>2</sub> and his descendants to preserve the small plates and to engrave their genealogy and personal accounts on them. Apparently, their accounts were to include reports of the passing of years from the time that Lehi<sub>1</sub>, the father of Nephi<sub>1</sub> and Jacob<sub>2</sub>, left Jerusalem.<sup>39</sup> Amaleki<sub>1</sub> was the last of Jacob<sub>2</sub>’s descendants to write on the small plates of Nephi. When he “began to be old” and was “about to lay down in [his] grave”,<sup>40</sup> he recorded that he had no family member to receive the plates; so, he intended to deliver them to Benjamin, his king, who was also the then-current Nephite record keeper with responsibility for the official plates of Nephi.<sup>41</sup> If a family member of Amaleki<sub>1</sub> had been able to receive the plates, he presumably would have delivered the small plates to that family member and a few more minor additions to the plates might have been made by other generations of Jacob<sub>2</sub>’s descendants. Still, one must take particular note of Amaleki<sub>1</sub>’s final engraved words: “these plates are full, and I make an end of my speaking”.<sup>42</sup>

Despite Amaleki<sub>1</sub>’s closing declaration, enough blank space apparently remained on the small plates of Nephi for Mormon<sub>2</sub> to add his own concluding words on these plates. In the

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<sup>34</sup> Mormon 8:14.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Mormon 8:4.

<sup>37</sup> Skousen, ed., *The Printer’s Manuscript of the Book of Mormon, Part One*; idem, *The Printer’s Manuscript of the Book of Mormon, Part Two*.

<sup>38</sup> Jacob 1:1-4.

<sup>39</sup> E.g., Jacob 1:1-4; 7:27; Enos 1:25-26; Jarom 1:1-2, 5, 13-15; Omni 1:1-5; 8-12, 25-30.

<sup>40</sup> Omni 1:25, 30.

<sup>41</sup> Omni 1:25; compare Mosiah 1:1-8, 15-17.

<sup>42</sup> Omni 1:30.

printer's manuscript<sup>43</sup> and in printed editions of the *Book of Mormon*,<sup>44</sup> the major division called the "Words of Mormon" appears at the end of the text of the small plates of Nephi and just before the extant text of the Book of Mosiah in the plates of Mormon. The text of the Words of Mormon covers approximately 1.5 manuscript pages or 54.3 lines in the printer's manuscript. When compared with the rest of the text employed in transcribing the small plates of Nephi in the printer's manuscript,<sup>45</sup> the Words of Mormon employ about 1.3% of the total pages and lines.<sup>46</sup> Thus, when Amaleki<sub>1</sub> declared that the small plates were "full", about 98.7% of the space had been covered with engravings. To Amaleki<sub>1</sub>, who understood that his last days had arrived and that he had no family member to receive the ancient record, the plates apparently could be described as "full". To Mormon<sub>2</sub>, however, the small plates of Nephi had just enough room to add his carefully crafted "Words" that testified of the coming of Christ on this ancient set of plates and created a narrative bridge to the Book of Mosiah that Mormon<sub>2</sub> had engraved on his own set of plates. This statistical perspective on the small plates is important to an understanding of the amount of blank space Mormon<sub>2</sub> left for Moroni<sub>2</sub> on the plates of Mormon.

### 2.2.2 The plates of Mormon had no "room".

Shortly before the death of Mormon<sub>2</sub>, he delivered the small plates of Nephi and the plates of Mormon to his son, Moroni<sub>2</sub>.<sup>47</sup> No commandment to Moroni<sub>2</sub> was recorded by Mormon<sub>2</sub> for his son to finish the plates of Mormon. In the small plates of Nephi, Mormon<sub>2</sub> did write that he supposed his son would "witness the entire destruction" of the Nephites and he prayed that Moroni<sub>2</sub> "may survive them, that he may write somewhat concerning them and somewhat concerning Christ".<sup>48</sup> However, when Moroni<sub>2</sub> began to write, he introduced himself and his father, and commented that he was finishing "the record of [his] father" with "but few things to write, which things I have been commanded of my father".<sup>49</sup> It was not possible for him engrave all that he wanted because, as he noted, "I would write [more] if I had room upon the plates, but I have not."<sup>50</sup> Moroni<sub>2</sub> also stated: "I will write and hide up the records in the earth. And whither I go, it mattereth not.... Behold, I am Moroni. And were it possible, I would make all things known unto you. Behold, I make an end of speaking concerning this people. I am the son of Mormon, and my father was a descendant of Nephi."<sup>51</sup>

Moroni<sub>2</sub>'s comments raise the issue of how full the plates of Mormon were when he began to fulfill his father's command to add his concluding report. Table 2.A summarizes four Scenarios that approximate the blank space Moroni<sub>2</sub> had on the plates of Mormon when he began to fulfill his father's command. These Scenarios are based on five numbered assumptions that also are summarized in the table.

Assumption 1. In Scenarios A and B, the plates of Mormon are assumed to begin with the extant Book of Mosiah. This assumption recognizes the relative scarcity of direct

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<sup>43</sup> Skousen, ed., *The Printer's Manuscript of the Book of Mormon, Part One*, 281-84.

<sup>44</sup> E.g., Smith, *The Book of Mormon* (1830), 151-53.

<sup>45</sup> Skousen, ed., *The Printer's Manuscript of the Book of Mormon, Part One*, 52-281 (114.6 pages or 4,218.4 lines of text).

<sup>46</sup> Skousen, ed., *The Printer's Manuscript of the Book of Mormon, Part One*, 52-284 (116.1 pages or 4,272.7 lines of text)..

<sup>47</sup> Mormon 6:6; 8:1-13; compare Moroni 9:22-24.

<sup>48</sup> Words of Mormon 1:2.

<sup>49</sup> Mormon 8:1.

<sup>50</sup> Mormon 8:5.

<sup>51</sup> Mormon 8:4-5, 12-13.

textual evidence for the existence of Mormon<sub>2</sub>'s first abridgment, the Book of Lehi.<sup>52</sup> This assumption functions primarily to provide statistical contrast with the assumptions used in Scenarios C and D.

Assumption 2. In Scenarios C and D, the plates of Mormon are assumed to have begun with the lost Book of Lehi (116 additional manuscript pages).<sup>53</sup>

Assumption 3. In Scenarios C and D, the original size of the Book of Mosiah is assumed to have been double the size of the extant Book of Mosiah (105.2 manuscript pages or 3,888 lines of text, rather than the extant 52.6 pages or 1,944 lines of text).<sup>54</sup>

Assumption 4. In Scenarios A and C, the plates of Mormon are assumed to have been covered with engravings by the end of the text at Mormon 8:13.

Assumption 5. In Scenarios B and D, the plates of Mormon are assumed to have been filled by the time Moroni<sub>2</sub> finished adding all his writings to his father's personal book (Mormon 9:37).

A comparison of the four Scenarios about the length of the plates of Mormon in Table 2.A suggests that no matter which point is assumed to be the beginning of the plates of Mormon, Moroni<sub>2</sub> likely would not have described the plates as having no room for him to write more<sup>55</sup> if he could have continued writing all the way to Mormon 9:37 (Scenarios B and D). If he could have done so, then when he started engraving the report his father had commanded him to make, Moroni<sub>2</sub> would have seen he had sufficient space to record a report equal in length to about 0.94% to 1.70% of the entire text found on the plates of Mormon (the equivalent of about 195.4 lines of text on five pages of the printer's manuscript). Moroni<sub>2</sub> would have had plenty of room on the plates to write the report required by his father and all of Moroni<sub>2</sub>'s other testimony, exhortation and prophecy.

In contrast, and again no matter which point is assumed to be the beginning of the plates of Mormon, Moroni<sub>2</sub> reasonably could have reported that he had no room to write more if the plates were filled at the conclusion of Mormon 8:13 (Scenarios A and C). In that case, when Moroni<sub>2</sub> began to engrave his report, he would have had sufficient space to record about 0.13% to 0.24% of the entire text found on the plates of Mormon (about 1/7th of the space available in Scenarios B and D). His space was limited to the equivalent of about 27.6 lines of text on about 2/3rds of a manuscript page in the printer's manuscript. Furthermore, by the time Moroni<sub>2</sub> complained about having no room to write, he had already filled more than 1/3rd of the space that Mormon<sub>2</sub> apparently had reserved for his son's report.<sup>56</sup> Scenarios A and C are consistent with Moroni<sub>2</sub>'s comment that he had no room to write more than the report commanded by his father.

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<sup>52</sup> In a preface to the 1830 edition of the *Book of Mormon*, Joseph Smith stated that 116 pages of handwritten text for the Book of Lehi were stolen before the book could be printed. Smith, *The Book of Mormon* (1830), iii-iv. See Section 1.7.1 in Part 1 of Division 1.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid. On average, each manuscript page in the plates of Mormon contained 37 lines of text; so, the 116 pages are assumed to have included 4,292 lines of text.

<sup>54</sup> Skousen proposed that the original Book of Mosiah included: chapter I dealing with the reign of king Mosiah<sub>1</sub> and the consecration of his son Benjamin; chapter II covering most of the reign of king Benjamin; and chapter III describing the consecration of king Mosiah and the events of his reign. Royal Skousen, "Critical Methodology and the Text of the Book of Mormon", *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* 6/1 (1994): 137-39. The extant Book of Mosiah includes the last of those chapters and subsequent chapters (52.6 printer's manuscript pages); so, the initial, missing pages of the original Book of Mosiah may have been either larger or smaller than the existing 52.6 pages. For estimating the number of missing pages, the size of the extant book was simply doubled.

<sup>55</sup> Mormon 8:5.

<sup>56</sup> Skousen, ed., *The Printer's Manuscript of the Book of Mormon, Part Two*, 896-97.

## 2.3 Summary

When 400 Nephite years had passed from the coming of Christ, Moroni<sub>2</sub> appears to have quickly fulfilled his obligation to complete his father's record before stating his own conclusion in Mormon 8:12-13. His work with the plates of Mormon was done and they could be buried (presumably again) for safekeeping: "Therefore I will write and hide up the records in the earth. And whither I go, it mattereth not".<sup>57</sup> Based on the foregoing textual clues and statistical considerations, the text on the plates of Mormon has been assumed to have ended with Mormon 8:13. Moroni<sub>2</sub>'s additional writings are assumed to have been placed on blank plates he made or acquired, which in this study are called the plates of Moroni.

The foregoing narrative analysis implies an intermediate step in the development of the *Book of Mormon* text. Mormon<sub>2</sub> ended his writings on the plates of Mormon with hardly any blank space left for the concluding report he hoped his son could add many years later. On the small plates of Nephi, however, Mormon<sub>2</sub> had almost twice as much blank space available—even though Amaleki<sub>1</sub> had believed they were full. Hence, at the end of the small plates of Nephi, Mormon<sub>2</sub> engraved what he called the Words of Mormon, which introduced the small plates of Nephi and distinguished his brief narrative bridge from the seven books he had engraved on the plates of Mormon and the six books engraved by other writers on the small plates of Nephi.<sup>58</sup> When Moroni<sub>2</sub> buried the "records",<sup>59</sup> the combination of plates seems to have included thirteen major divisions called "books" and another major division called the "words" of Mormon. Only after Moroni<sub>2</sub> had finished that intermediate step did he (or, perhaps, was he able to) create or acquire blank plates on which to add his expanded testimony, exhortation and prophecy and two more major divisions in what became the final text of the engraved *Book of Mormon* available to Joseph Smith for translation.

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<sup>57</sup> Mormon 8:4.

<sup>58</sup> The books engraved on the small plates of Nephi were entitled the books of Nephi (now the First Book of Nephi), Nephi (now the Second Book of Nephi), Jacob, Enos, Jarom and Omni.

<sup>59</sup> Mormon 8:4.