Over two hundred proper names of peoples or places appear in the Book of Mormon text. Although some of those names appear in the Bible, a large majority of them are unique to the Book of Mormon. Paul Y. Hoskisson leads the Onomasticon Project, which seeks to identify and interpret Book of Mormon names using standard principles and methods. This article introduces five subsequent articles that demonstrate to nonspecialists how this type of research can and should be applied to the Book of Mormon. Prepared scholars—Hoskisson, Jeffrey R. Chadwick, Dana M. Pike, John A. Tvedtnes—display the type of interchange that is required to clarify and settle the issues surrounding Book of Mormon proper names. This article also introduces two additional articles that complement the onomastic discussion.
Introduction

Over two hundred proper names of peoples or places appear in the Book of Mormon text. Some of those names occur in the Bible, so we can gain added understanding about them from research by Bible scholars. But a large majority are unique to the American record. For those names we would like to know more. For instance, knowing the etymology or linguistic origins, and their original meanings, could shed light on obscure portions of the text. From what Old World languages, if any, did the names descend? What might this information tell us about relationships among the different peoples in the record and about their history? Moreover, do the names tell us anything about how Joseph Smith translated the record? Are the names products of that prophet’s imagination, as some critics charge, or do they have actual sources in ancient tongues? These and other questions are legitimate areas of inquiry for researchers. Some research has already gone on to identify and interpret Book of Mormon names.¹

Paul Y. Hoskisson, professor of ancient scripture at BYU, has for a number of years been leading out in an effort called “The Onomasticon Project” (onomasticon is the technical term for a list of proper names) begun over a decade ago under FARMS sponsorship.

Research on the names in the Bible and in other ancient texts has established standard principles and methods that must be followed in research of this type. If Book of Mormon studies are to take advantage of what has already been learned about such matters, and if we wish LDS research to be accepted by other scholars, our investigations should proceed along established lines. In failing to do so—that is, if
merely impressionistic methods were employed—unreliable conclusions could be reached, undermining the credibility of the research and misleading both believers and nonbelievers. The accepted procedures for onomasticon research have rarely been stated or exemplified in terms that nonspecialists can appreciate. The purpose of this article is to demonstrate to nonspecialists how this type of research can and should be applied to the Book of Mormon.

Sound research to shed light on exotic names is complicated. Only those with a strong base of knowledge in one or more of the languages that are thought to be involved are able to participate fruitfully in the process. In the case of Book of Mormon names, that means that researchers must thoroughly control at least one of the background Near Eastern languages: Hebrew, related Semitic languages such as Akkadian or Arabic, Egyptian, Coptic, or neighboring tongues like Greek and Sumerian. Those of us who have not attained the required level of control of ancient languages have to be more than cautious; we need to be appropriately skeptical of any off-the-wall proposals. Well-meaning Latter-day Saints have frequently tried to treat Book of Mormon names without appropriate preparation. The results of ill-prepared, speculative efforts have confused, not helped, our understanding.

In this article, a group of prepared scholars have been invited to display the type of interchange that is required to clarify these matters. Readers will discover multiple viewpoints that have arisen in analyzing just two Book of Mormon names, Lehi and Sariah. Disagreements are not harmful but necessary, because they point out where more data and better reasoning must be brought to bear to settle the issues. It is in the nature of scholarly discourse about such a complex topic that someone puts forward a proposal about what a name means, where it came from, and how it was pronounced. Others then agree or disagree. From the clashes and agreements in the experts’ views, we hope that clarification may result. Also characteristic of this kind of discussion is the need to deal with technical linguistic and philological data. Participants usually need to refer to highly footnoted scholarly publications to support their arguments.

This journal is not the proper place to carry on high-level technical communication. To do so would intrude too much on our limited space and the patience of nonexpert readers. But this one time, we consider it valuable for anyone interested in this topic to be exposed to the scholarly process. Further detailed studies of the Book of Mormon onomasticon will no doubt be pursued by the handful of qualified people engaged in the work via the FARMS Occasional Papers series or in other publications where the length of arguments and footnotes is less constrained than in the Journal. One thing we bystanders can learn is patient respect for the fact that the experts’ arguments, that so forbiddingly demand knowledge of ancient texts, are making progress. Light is slowly being shed on the proper names of the Nephite scripture. We need to understand that despite disagreements on details, understanding of this topic is moving along. But we’ll have to be patient as the laborers in the field struggle toward consensus. And just possibly, some people who had not considered participating in the interchange will be stimulated to prepare themselves and wade in. Professor Hoskisson, a specialist in Akkadian, begins our discussion with his interpretation of the names Lehi and Sariah. Then three other language specialists offer their views on what he has said. Finally the original author responds to the critiques.

Two other articles in this issue complement the onomasticon interchange. John A. Tvedtøes, John Gee, and Matt Roper have collaborated to document striking new artifact finds from the Holy Land that seem to prove that certain names used in the Book of Mormon were in use in Israel before the Book of Mormon record was begun. Hence those names did not originate in Joseph Smith’s imagination, as some claim, but are evidence of the Israelite origins of the record.

In the article that follows, Mary Jane Woodger informs us about some of the problems involved in deciding how Book of Mormon names have been pronounced, as shown by the pronunciation guides included in English-language copies of the Book of Mormon. An interesting note by Frederick M. Huchel works through the phonetic characters used in the Deseret Alphabet to point out how some leading figures in the LDS Church, many of whom had heard Joseph Smith speak the names, were pronouncing Book of Mormon names in the mid- to late-nineteenth century. None of this material defines a standard of pronunciation that Latter-day Saints today “ought” to adopt, but these contributions make us more informed about and tolerant of attempts to understand what the names signify.
36 Although the Book of Mormon presence in our modern hymnbook is rather mod-
ered, other kinds of music make rich use of Book of Mormon materials. The im-
portance of Book of Mormon songs for the Primary organization has already been men-
tioned; although the Book of Mormon's heading in Children's Songs lists only twelve songs, many of these are immensely popular, and they play a cru-
cial role in familiarizing young Latter-day Saints with the Book of Mormon. A great deal could be written about the significant role of the Book of Mormon in the works of serious Latter-day Saint composers, including Leroy Robinson's "Overture from the Book of Mormon (Salt Lake City: Leroy Robinson, 1953) and Crawford Gates's score for the Hill Cumorah Playmound, Music from the Hill Cumorah Pageant: America's Witness for Christ, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, SVOT 4188 (1988). Oregon State University's Conduct of K. Newell Dayley has provided a musical setting for 3 Nephi 13:14–14, "I Come unto My Own," Garland R. Pugh's "Spirits," J1 Nephi III Massey has used the Book of Mormon with great success; as fairly free-form
works, without the strict requirements of meter and rhyme found in a hymn stan-
zas, these songs often use unparaphrased text. An example familiar to many
English-speaking LDS people is "Oh, That I Were an Angel" (Alma 29:1; music by
Wanda West Palmer).
37 Alfred Tennyson (lyrics), Crawford Gates (music), "Wild Horses and Wild
38 Desert Sunday School Song Book (Salt Lake City: Desert Sunday School Union,
1899).
39 Noel B. Reynolds, "The Coming Forth of the Book of Mormon in the Twentieth
40 Conversation with the author, 30 November 1999.

Seeking Agreement on the Meaning of Book of Mormon Names

1 Several researchers have worked on onom-
astic studies over recent decades. Hugh Nibley started the genre with several
sal chapters in Lehi in the Desert and The
World of the Jaredites (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1952). Robert F. Smith private-
ly distributed several papers that are still unpublished. John A. Tvedtnes did the
same; in addition see his "A Phonetic Analysis of Nephih and Jethro Proper Names," Society for Early Historic
41 Joann Carlon, A Semiticist in southern California, with John W. Welch produced a
1981 FARMS Paper, "Possible Linguistic Roots of Certain Book of Mormon Names." A particularly useful introduc-
tion to the field is Paul Y. Hoskisson's "An Introduction to the Relevance of and a
Methodology for the Study of the Proper Names of the Book of Mormon," in By
Study and Also by Faith: Essays in Honor of Hugh W. Nibley, ed. John M. Lundquist
and Stephen D. Ricks (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1990), 228–36.

Lehi and Sariah

Paul Y. Hoskisson

1 See Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, Heinrichsches Aramäisches Lexikon zu Alten Testament, 3rd ed., rev. Walter Baumgartner, Johann Jakob Stamm, and Benedikt Hartmann (Leiden: Brill, 1995). See for example the "Name List" in Appendix 3 of Jeanne D. Fowler, Throphical Personal Names in Ancient Hebrew (Sheffield: JOT Press, 1988), 334f.; for this reference I wish to thank my colleague Dana M. Pike of Religious Education at BYU. The bib-
lical personal name Oznai and its gentilic
Ornate (see Numbers 26:16) and Azariah (see Nehemiah 10:19), though related to the word for "race," are probably nononom-
ative verbal forms. See Koehler and Baumgartner, Heinrichsches Aramäisches Lexikon, 27. For a listing of other
possible body parts used in names, see
Fowler, Throphical Personal Names, Appendix 3, sub $\text{bn}$, $\text{br}$, $\text{yl}$, $\text{ny}$, and $\text{rn}$.
2 Chicago Assyrian Dictionary, 1:150. I would like to thank Jonathan Gimmell for
finding this rather obscure entry.
3 Paul Haupt, A German-American scholar working around the turn of the last cen-
tury, was one of the first to derive the personal name Bit from "cheek" or "jaw-
bone." Hugh Nibley downplayed this interpretation, preferring Nelson Glueck's reading "La-hat"; thus suggesting the bib-
lical place name Lahatu-ri in Genesis 24:62 and 25:11. See Hugh W. Nibley, An
Appendix to the Book of Mormon (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1988), 239.
4 Hans Hayniezen, Die Personenamen in den qabalistischen Inschriften (New York:
Olmis, 1998), 226, sub LH.Y. "Er möge
leben, (O Gott NUN)." Under the same
entry, Hayniezen does not exclude the
meaning "Beauty (of God)." Note the semantic parallel in Akkadian, la-la lub-U.
5 In L. Gell, Glossary of Old Akkadian
(Chicago, University of Chicago Press,
1957), 156–57.
6 Translation from the Jewish Publica-
tion Society of America, Philadelphia, 1918.
7 See the similar construction in Ran
Zadok, The Pre-Hellenistic Israelite
Anthropophagus and Propagatoro (Leuven: Peeters, 1988), 61; "La'I' (W')
Of God?EVR, Y Ley (PE') Of Nry (my
light)."

The Names Lehi and Sariah—Language and Meaning

Jeffrey R. Chadwick

1 Nahman Avigad and Benjamin Sass, Corpus of West Semitic Stamp Seals (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1997), seals #8,174, 175, 1011, 1072. The name also appears in Lachish Letter #1.
2 Ibid., seal #145 and p. 496.
3 If "Abrahah the Elder" were implied, the
word $\text{zn}$ (zaen) would need to include an initial $\text{n}$ (h) representing the direct
object he and would need to appear in a position following the name Abrahah, as
an adjectival title.
4 Paul Y. Hoskisson, "Lehi and Sariah," in this
issue.
5 See Genesis 17:17–19 (Isaia): Genesis 30:8 (Naphtali); 1 Samuel 4:21–22 (Ishahd).
7 J. Alexander Cowley, ed. and trans., Aramaic
8 See David B. Redford, Archives from
9 See 2 Samuel 8:17: 2 Kings 25:18; 23:25; 1 Chronicles 4:13–14; 4:35; 6:14; Ezra 2:2
7:3; Nehemiah 10:11; 12:1, 12; Jeremiah 40:8; 51:9, 61; 52:24.

Response to Paul Hoskisson's "Lehi and Sariah"

Dana M. Pike

2 E.g., Nahman Avigad and Benjamin Sass, Corpus of West Semitic Stamp Seals (Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1997), 163, #390.
3 Frank L. BENZ, Personal Names in the

Lehi and Sariah Comments

John A. Tvedtnes

3 Ibid.

Response to the Comments

Paul Y. Hoskisson

2 In the original article I could have added more examples of the masculine name $\text{zn}$, but it seemed unnecessary. A clear-cut example of the name used for a female would be more helpful.
3 $\text{zn}$ is interpreted as "h-zaen," "god has