Hoskisson responds to and elaborates on the comments about the names Lehi and Sariah that Chadwick, Pike, and Tvedtnes provided in this onomastic discussion. Where Hoskisson disagrees with their conclusions, he uses examples to defend his position. He acknowledges the contribution this discussion has provided to the study of Book of Mormon proper names. He welcomes further examples on the points suggested by these scholars.
Response to the Comments

Paul Y. Hoskisson

As stated at the end of my article, “new suggestions are always welcome” when working with the onomasticon of the Book of Mormon. Therefore, I appreciate very much the helpful suggestions of Jeffrey R. Chadwick, Dana M. Pike, and John A. Tvedtnes. Each has contributed in a significant way to making the study of the names more complete.

I am grateful that John Tvedtnes called my attention to Jeffrey Chadwick’s publication in the Journal, in which Sariah is supposedly attested as a feminine personal name in the Elephantine papyri. The attestation is however contained in a restoration, and restorations cannot provide absolute proof but rather at best a suggestion. However, the very suggestion itself indicates that other scholars accept the possible existence of this feminine name in relative temporal proximity to the beginnings of the Book of Mormon.

Sariah can mean “Jehovah is my prince,” contrary to Chadwick’s explanation, as well as “Jehovah is prince.” In Northwest Semitic languages, when the first person possessive suffix is attached to masculine singular nouns in the nominative, it is indicated by the long vowel i, not by the consonant yod. (Feminine nouns and oblique cases are treated variously.) This long vowel is not usually represented in the script until fairly late in the history of the Hebrew language when matres lectionis (the representation of long vowels with a consonant) became the norm. In addition, personal names can be very conservative, often reflecting archaic forms. Thus, in personal names such as Sariah, the presence of a yod at the beginning of the second element in the word does not exclude the presence of the first person possessive suffix. In short, the yod that Chadwick mentions does not have to perform double duty in order for the name to mean “Jehovah is my prince,” even though there is evidence that some letters actually perform double duty.

Professor Pike calls attention to the so-called Phoenician personal name ślimhy, containing a possible analog to Lehi, namely the element ḥy. In commenting on the text that contains this name, Joseph Naveh states that we have here a Phoenician cursive script from the Persian period... [belonging] to the late fifth or early fourth century B.C.”

This would of course postdate Lehi but still be relatively close to the beginnings of the Book of Mormon. However, he also states that the element lhy is “an unusual component in the Phoenician onomastic.” Nevertheless, he argues that since it appears in a list of other obviously Phoenician names and that the ductus is obviously Phoenician, the element, though unusual, is Phoenician. Frank L. Benz, in his classic study of Phoenician names published six years later, concluded that the element lhy is of Arabic derivation, perhaps because he can cite only Arabic parallels. Certainly there is some doubt about whether this name is Phoenician. In addition, from a strictly geographic point of view, Elath, where the text was found, is much more likely to be within the onomastic influence of Arabia than Phoenicia, though as Naveh points out, Phoenicians were certainly present there. What all of this means is that if ślimhy is not Phoenician, then there is no unequivocal example of the element lhy in the Northwest Semitic onomastic.

Dr. Chadwick argues that Book of Mormon “Lehi” and the KJV “Lehi” must necessarily represent the same Hebrew term. This bothers me a little because it assumes that Joseph Smith was dependent on the KJV for pronunciation. While this may be the case with some recognized biblical names, such as “Sarah,” it cannot be maintained across the board. For example, it is not the case with the Book of Mormon “Isabel,” which certainly is the same name as “Jezebel,” the name of the Phoenician wife of the Israelite king Ahab.

With regard to body parts appearing in personal names, I stand by my original statement: there is only one possible example in biblical Hebrew, and even that example is metaphorical. If, however, denominatives (nouns that have become verbs and therefore lost their nominal character) are counted, as Chadwick has done, but which I must reject, then there are a few examples. The example of גָּרֶם that he raises needs more comment. While it may have originally meant “beard,” the word became denominalized (in Hebrew, Arabic, and Akkadian), coming to mean “to grow old.” In its adjectival (i.e., static) form derived from the verb it came to mean “old” and in the normalized adjectival form, “elder.” In these secondarily derived meanings, it is also used to describe women (see Zechariah 8:4), which probably rules out the meaning “beard.” Neither is ידו, yamin,
a valid example. While “right” can be used *pars pro toto* for “right hand,” the original meaning is directional rather than anatomical. That is why some modern scholars translate “Benjamin” as “Son of the South.” It cannot be assumed that “right” is always used synecdochically for “right hand.” Therefore, I state once again, there are no unequivocal examples in biblical Hebrew of a body part being used in its strictly nominal form in any Hebrew name.

With regard to geographic names becoming personal names, there is not a single example that I am aware of in the Old Testament. (I would be delighted if someone could supply an example.) On the other hand, there are numerous examples of personal names becoming geographic names. Such is the case with all of the examples that Chadwick cites.

However, my argument here is basically an argument out of silence: in all instances where a personal name and a geographic name coincide, the personal name always appears in the Hebrew text in a context prior to the context of the geographic name. I would welcome a clear example of a geographic name becoming a personal name.

Professor Pike correctly perceived that my mention of the suitability of certain etymologies does not mean that suitability points to an etymology or even that suitability is an important factor in looking for meaning. When looking for possible meanings, suitability does not equate with etymology. However, the suitability of a name to an individual does come into play when the proposed etymology of the name would seem to be inappropriate. For example, it would be unlikely that “Hater of Jehovah” would be possible for an Israelite of the tenth century B.C. Before accepting such an etymology, no matter how tempting it might be, most scholars would certainly ask many questions and have grave doubts. Nevertheless, some names seem, from their etymology and from the context in which they occur, to be suitable for that individual, even if we would find it hard to believe that someone would legitimately carry that name. For example, Chadwick cites in his critique the example of Nabal, which does mean “fool.” If it were not for the context of the story, which makes it clear that the name is entirely suitable to the person who bears it, we would have to doubt the meaning, because no parent would give such a name to their child, nor would any sane person take such a name upon themselves. We are left to conclude that the name is probably a dysphemism à la Nebuchadnezzar for Nebuchadrezzar. As a dysphemism, the name suits the person.
constitute verse 2 and the first half of verse 3.


24 See, for example, "The Indian Hunter." ("O, why do they chase the sun down my path. / Like the hound on the tiger's track?") by the English poet Eliza Cook (1818–1889), one of three Cook poems anthologized in Hazel Feller, comp., The Best Loved Poems of the American People (New York: Doubleday, 1936), #326; or "Mammoth" by John Greenleaf Whittier: "My father loved the white men, when / They were but little children, shelterless.../ Nor was it given him to know / That children whom he cherished them / Would rise to a height, like armed men. / To work his people's overthrow." The Complete Poetical Works of John Greenleaf Whittier (Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin, and Co., 1894), 489. Eliza Cook was also fond of this tradition. One of her first published poems (in 1830, five years before she became a Latter-day Saint) was "The Rod Man of the Ontario." It is said that we forefathers gave / All the lands 'twixt the east and western big wave. "Ohio Star," March 1830. Much later she lengthened and "Mormonized" this poem, retitling it "The Lamanite." It was published in the Deseret News, 20 September 1865. The expanded version promises that "the scales will fall which now bedazzle their eyes. / And they, in a faultless purity arise.


26 Parley P. Pratt, "When earth in bondage long had lain," in Young, Pratt, and Taylor, A Collection of Sacred Hymns... in Europe (1840), #258.

27 Parley P. Pratt, "The solid rocks were rent in twain." In Young, Pratt, and Taylor, A Collection of Sacred Hymns... in Europe (1840), #329.

28 Parley P. Pratt, "O who that has search'd / In the records of old;" ibid., #260.

29 Author unknown, "The working nations, now give ear," ibid., #250.

30 When the priests of the Indians was treated / In a properly popular, it was common for an Indian person to speak a first-person lament; all three hymns printed with this article use this device.


32 The tune paired with this text in the Padmé (3:12) is "See, the conqu'ring hero" from George Frideric Handel's Judas Maccabæus (New York: Vanguard, 1957), high expectations indeed from a congregation!

33 Louise L. Greene Richards, "The Savior at Jerusalem." in Deseret Sunday School Songs, #31.

34 J. Marins Jansen, "A Voice Hath Spoken from the Dust," in Hymns of the Church (1839), #259.

36 Although the Book of Mormon presence in our modern hymnbook is rather modest, other kinds of music make rich use of Book of Mormon materials: The importance of Book of Mormon songs for the Primary organization has already been mentioned; although the use of Book of Mormon heading in Children's Songs lists only twelve songs, many of these are immensely popular, and they play a crucial role in familiarizing young Latter-day Saints with the Book of Mormon. A great deal could be written about the significance of the Book of Mormon in the works of serious Latter-day Saint composers, including Leroy Robertson's "Omeria" from the Book of Mormon (Salt Lake City: Leroy Robertson, 1953) and Crawford Gates' score for the Hill Cumorah Pageant, Music from the Hill Cumorah Pageant: America, Christ of the Church, the Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, VVOT 418 (1998). Other examples are K. Newell Dayley has provided a musical setting for 3 Nephi 13-14, "I Come unto My Own," Ralph G. Rodgers Jr. (lyrics), 3 Nephi (Owens and Valley Playhouse, LP 14457 (1978)). In addition, popular vocal music written for the Mormon market and chamber music that 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 stanza, these songs often upstep paraphrase 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 Bells," in Hymns, (1885), #215.

38 Desert Sunday School Song Book (Salt Lake City: Desert Sun Sunday School Union, 1899).


40 Conversation with the author, 30 November 1999.

Seeking Agreement on the Meaning of the Book of Mormon Names


Lehi and Sarah

Paul Y. Hoskisson

1 See Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, Heinrichs und Aramaicum Lexikon zum Alten Testament, 3rd ed., rev. Walter Baumgartner, Johann Jakob Stamm, and Benedikt Hartmann (Leiden: Brill, 1995); see also for example the "Name List" in Appendix 3 of Jeanne De Fouler, Théophrast Poirel's Personal Names in Ancient Hebrew (Sheffield: JOT Press, 1988), 334ff.; for this reference I wish to thank my colleague Dana M. Pike of Religious Education at BYU. The biblical personal name Oseni and its gentilic, Ormize (see Numbers 26:16) and Azaniah (see Nehemiah 11:19), though related to the word for "son," are probably denominational/normal forms. See Koehler and Baumgartner, Heinrichs und Aramaicum Lexikon, 27. For a listing of other possible body parts used in names, see Fowler, Théophrast Poirel's Personal Names, Appendix 3, x, §§ 271, 275, 279, and 281.

2 Chicago Assyrian Dictionary, I:150. I would like to thank Jonathan Gimmel for finding this listing in 2000. I would like to thank Jonathan Gimmel for finding this listing in 2000.

3 Paul Haupt, a German-American scholar working around the turn of the last century, was one of the first to derive the personal name "Ryyo" from "check" ("jaw-bone." Hugh Nibley downplayed this interpretation, preferring Nelson Glueck's reading "Luke Train outward and spread speed about") in the name Luke in Genesis 24:5 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 Haysineh, Die Personennamen in den qatabanischen Inschriften (New York: Olms, 1998), 226, sub LYY. "Er möge leben, (O Gott NUN!)." Under the same entry, Haysineh does not exclude the meaning "Beauty (of God)." Note the semantic parallel in Akkadian, la-ab ha-il; in L. Gell, Glossary of Old Akkadian (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1957), 156-57.


6 See the similar construction in Ran Zadok, "The Pre-Hellenistic Jewish Anthropophagy and Penopography (Levon: Peeters, 1988), 61; "Lal'el (W') (God'E') Levi (PE) of Nvy (my light)."

The Names Lehi and Sarah—Language and Meaning

Jeffrey R. Chadwick

1 Nahman Avigad and Benjamin Sass, Corpus of West Semitic Stamp Seals (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1987), 398; #174, #175, #111, #102. The name also appears in Lachish Letter 1.

2 Ibid., #145 and p. 496.

3 "naan" is interpreted as "of age," but it seemed to me unnecessary. A clear-cut example of the name used for a female would be more helpful.

References:


2 In the original article I could have added more examples of the masculine name "sarai," but it seemed to me unnecessary. A clear-cut example of the name used for a female would be more helpful.

3 "sarai" is interpreted as "of age," but it seemed to me unnecessary. A clear-cut example of the name used for a female would be more helpful.
healed." The aphorism that closes the first word also begins the second word. In essence the aphorism is, though, the orthography would never reveal it.


5 Ibid., 27–28.

6 Frank L. Benson, Personal Names in the Phoenician and Aramaic Inscriptions (Rome: Biblical Institute, 1927), 338.

7 Gentilic personal names from geographic names, of course, cannot be used as evidence because such names really mean "of the geographic feature X." A special case may be "Anathoth," which Professor Pike dubiously identifies as "Anathoth." Gentilic personal names is likely used as a personal name in two passages in the Bible after it first appears as a place name. This name can only be derived from the divine name Anath, a Canaanite goddess, in which case we have a divine name becoming a place name becoming a personal name. Gentilic is not the same as a purely geographic name becoming a personal name.

Book of Mormon Names Attested in Ancient Hebrew Inscriptions

John A. Tvedtsen, John Geo. Matthew Reber


Avigad, Hebrew Bullae from the Time of Isaiah, 172.

Deutsch, Hebrew Bullae from the Time of Isaiah, 172.

Deutsch, Hebrew Bullae from the Time of Isaiah, 172.

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