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Title Lehi and Sariah Comments

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Abstract Tvedtnes adds to the onomastic discussion of the names of *Lehi* and *Sariah* in this article. He suggests that scholars should not be dissuaded by the fact that the name *Sariah* is found only for men. He discusses the difference between etymology and attestation of names. In the first article of this discussion, Hoskisson concluded that personal names containing parts of the body are rare in all the ancient Semitic languages. Tvedtnes, on the other hand, finds numerous examples of personal names derived from body parts. He concludes with his analysis that *Sariah* means “Jehovah is (my/a) prince” and that *Lehi* means “cheek, jawbone.”



Lehi
 &
Sariah
 Comments

JOHN A. TVEDTNES

Hoskisson writes that “the name Sariah is not attested, as far as I am aware, in an ancient Near Eastern source.” He seems not to be aware of the 1993 article by Jeffrey R. Chadwick.¹ The name is also known from three seals and two bullae.² Hoskisson cites “the masculine biblical personal name Seraiah” as a comparison with Sariah. Actually, the vocalization Seraiah may be incorrect. Vowels were added to Hebrew at a late stage and were not written in Old Testament times. Thus the name could have been vocalized Sariah at an earlier time. Indeed, this makes much more sense for Hebrew *šar* (“prince”) + *Yāh* (“Yah,” the abbreviated form of the divine name sometimes rendered “Jehovah” in English). We should not be dissuaded by the fact that the name is found only for men on the seals and bullae found in Israel. Even the name Solomon, generally associated with the Israelite king of that name, is attested on a bulla for a woman.³ Sariah could mean either “Jehovah [Yāh] is prince” or “Jehovah is my prince,” in the same way that the biblical name Ahijah can mean either “Jehovah is a brother” or “Jehovah is my brother.”

This brings up a point that we should stress in all of our name research, i.e., the difference between etymology and attestation of names. Determining possible etymologies for nonbiblical Book of Mormon names is, in many cases, a relatively simple matter. A viable etymology lends evidence for the authenticity of the name. But some Book of Mormon names have defied establishing a meaning. Among these are Abish, Himni, and

Hagoth, all of which are now attested from Hebrew inscriptions found in Israel. The attestation of a name in such an inscription provides stronger evidence than does a viable ancient Near Eastern (especially Hebrew and Egyptian) etymology.

Hoskisson objects to Lehi being equivalent to the Hebrew term *leḥī* on the grounds that “personal names containing parts of the body are rare in all the

ancient Semitic languages.” He then follows Nibley’s suggestion that derives Lehi from *l-ḥy*, “(belonging) to/for the living one.” He does not tell us, however, that names beginning with prepositions (the *l-* in this case) are even more rare. Moreover, among the personal names deriving from body parts are Shechem (“back, shoulder,” fifty-four times in the scriptures), Rosh (“head,” Genesis 46:21), Bohan (“thumb,” Joshua 15:6; 18:17), and Seir (“hair,” Genesis 36:20–21). In Joshua 19:25, we have the place-name Beten, which means “womb, belly.” Nibley and Hoskisson want to derive Lehi from a place-name, *La-hai-roi*, meaning “(belonging) to/for the living one who sees me,” but for some reason reject a tie to the biblical place-name Lehi (“jaw, cheek,” Judges 15:9, 14, 19). I find this a rather strange approach. Occam’s razor would dictate that we opt for the simplest etymologies. In the case of Sariah, it is “Jehovah is (my/a) prince,” while in the case of Lehi it is “cheek, jawbone.”

constitute verse 2 and the first half of verse 3.

- 23 William W. Phelps, "An angel came down from the mansions of glory," in Smith, *A Collection of Sacred Hymns*, #16.
- 24 See, for example, "The Indian Hunter" ("Oh, why does the white man follow 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 Felleman, comp., *The Best Loved Poems of the American People* (New York: Doubleday, 1936), 625; or "Metacom" by John Greenleaf Whittier: "My father loved the white men, when / They were but children, shelterless, . . . / Nor was it given him to know / That children whom he cherished then / Would rise at length, 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 R. Snow 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 Red Man of the West": "The Great Spirit, 'tis said, to our forefathers gave / All the lands 'twixt the eastern and western big wave," *Ohio Star*, 31 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 becloud their eyes, / And they, in faultless purity arise."
- 25 Grant Underwood, "Book of Mormon Usage in Early LDS Theology," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 17/3 (1984): 59.
- 26 Parley P. Pratt, "When earth in bondage had long 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 *ibid.*, #259.
- 28 Parley P. Pratt, "O who that has search'd in the records of old," in *ibid.*, #260.
- 29 Author unknown, "Ye wond'ring nations, now give ear," in *ibid.*, #250.
- 30 When the plight of the Indians was treated in popular poetry, it was common for an Indian persona to speak a first-person lament; all three hymns printed with this article use this device.
- 31 Felix Bartholdy Mendelssohn, "Consolation," in *Songs without Words* (Boston: O. Ditson, 1906), #9.
- 32 The tune paired with this text in the *Psalmsody* (#212) is "See, the conqu'ring hero" from George Frideric Handel's *Judas Maccabees* (New York: Vanguard, 1974)—high expectations indeed from a congregation!
- 33 Louisa L. Greene Richards, "The Savior at Jerusalem" in *Deseret Sunday School Songs*, #131.
- 34 J. Marinus Jensen, "A Voice Hath Spoken from the Dust," in *Hymns of the Church* (1950), #291.
- 35 This hymn is not listed under the Book of Mormon heading in the topical index! The text is aesthetically satisfying because of the inclusive, ecumenical use it makes of the Book of Mormon, but apparently its connection with its source is therefore more abstract.

- 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 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 significant role of the Book of Mormon in the works of serious Latter-day Saint composers, including Leroy Robertson's *Oratorio from the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Leroy Robertson, 1953) and Crawford Gates's score for the Hill Cumorah Pageant, *Music from the Hill Cumorah Pageant: America's Witness for Christ*, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, VVOT 4188 (© 1988). Other examples are numerous. K. Newell Dayley has provided a musical setting for 3 Nephi 13–14, "I Come unto My Own," Ralph G. Rodgers Jr. (lyrics), *III Nephi* (Oratorio), Promised Valley Playhouse, LP 14457 (© 1978). In addition, popular vocal music written for the Mormon market 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 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), "Ring Out, Wild Bells," in *Hymns*, (1985), #215.
- 38 *Deseret Sunday School Song Book* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Sunday School Union, 1899).
- 39 Noel B. Reynolds, "The Coming Forth of the Book of Mormon in the Twentieth Century," *BYU Studies* 38/2 (1999): 7.
- 40 Conversation with the author, 30 November 1999.

Seeking Agreement on the Meaning of Book of Mormon Names

- 1 Several researchers have worked on onomastic studies over recent decades. Hugh Nibley started the genre with several chapters in *Lehi in the Desert and The World of the Jaredites* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1952). Robert F. Smith privately distributed several papers that are still unpublished. John A. Tvedtnes did the same; in addition see his "A Phonemic Analysis of Nephite and Jaredite Proper Names," *Society for Early Historic Archaeology Newsletter and Proceedings* 141 (December 1977): 1–8. Joann Carlton, 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 introduction 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), 2:126–35.

Lehi and Sariah Paul Y. Hoskisson

- 1 See Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, *Hebräisches und Aramäisches Lexikon zum Alten Testament*, 3rd ed., rev. Walter Baumgartner, Johann Jakob Stamm, and Benedikt Hartmann (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 53. See for example the "Name List" in Appendix 3 of Jeanene D. Fowler, *Theophoric Personal Names in Ancient Hebrew* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1988), 334ff.; for this reference I wish to thank my colleague Dana M. Pike of Religious Education at BYU. The biblical personal name Ozni and its gentilic Oznite (see Numbers 26:16) and Azaniah (see Nehemiah 10:9), though related to the word for "ear," are probably denominative verbal forms. See Koehler and Baumgartner, *Hebräisches und Aramäisches Lexikon*, 27. For a listing of other possible body parts used in names, see Fowler, *Theophoric Personal Names*, Appendix 3, sub *זן, לֵחַי, יד, יָנ*, and *פִּת*.
- 2 *Chicago Assyrian Dictionary*, L:150. I would like to thank Jonathan Gimmel for finding this rather obscure example.
- 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 *lhy* from "cheek" or "jawbone." Hugh Nibley downplayed this interpretation, preferring Nelson Glueck's reading "Lahai," thus suggesting the biblical place name Lahai-roi in Genesis 24:62 and 25:11. See Hugh W. Nibley, *An Approach to the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1988), 239.
- 4 Hani Hayajneh, *Die Personennamen in den qatabänischen Inschriften* (New York: Olms, 1998), 226, sub *LHY*, "Er möge leben, (O Gott NN)." Under the same entry, Hayajneh does not exclude the meaning "Beauty (of God)." Note the semantic parallel in Akkadian, *lu-ba-li-lī*, in I. J. Gelb, *Glossary of Old Akkadian* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1957), 156–57.
- 5 Translation from the Jewish Publication Society of America, Philadelphia, 1950 edition.
- 6 See the similar construction in Ran Zadok, *The Pre-Hellenistic Israelite Anthroponymy and Prosopography* (Leuven: Peeters, 1988), 61; "Lā'el (W)' Of God/El'; Lury (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, #511, #1072. The name also appears in Lachish Letter #1.
- 2 *Ibid.*, seal #145 and p. 496.
- 3 If "Ahazyahu the Elder" were implied, the

word *זָאֵן* (*zaʿen*) would need to include an initial *ח* (*h*) representing the direct object *ha* and would need to appear in a position following the name Ahazyahu, as an adjectival title.

- 4 Paul Y. Hoskisson, "Lehi and Sariah," in this issue.
- 5 See Genesis 17:17–19 (Isaac); Genesis 30:8 (Naphtali); 1 Samuel 4:21–22 (Ichabod).
- 6 Jeffrey R. Chadwick, "Sariah in the Elephantine Papyri," *JBMS* 2/2 (1993): 196–200.
- 7 Arthur E. Cowley, ed. and trans., *Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century B.C.* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1923), 67.
- 8 *Ibid.*, xv; Bezalel Porten, *Archives from Elephantine* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), 320.
- 9 See 2 Samuel 8:17; 2 Kings 25:18; 23:25; 1 Chronicles 4:13–14; 4:35; 6:14; Ezra 2:2; 7:1; Nehemiah 10:2; 11:11; 12:1, 12; Jeremiah 40:8; 51:59, 61; 52:24.
- 10 Nahman Avigad, *Hebrew Bullae from the Time of Jeremiah* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1986), 47.

Response to Paul Hoskisson's "Lehi and Sariah" Dana M. Pike

- 1 See, for example, E. Brown, S. R. Driver, and C. Briggs, *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, 976, s.v., *לֵחַי*; *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (New York: Brill, 1994–), 3:1356, s.v., *לֵחַי*.
- 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 Phoenician and Punic Inscriptions* (Rome: Biblical Institute, 1972), 180, 338, 418.
- 4 See Mary Jane Woodger, "How the English Pronunciation of Book of Mormon Names Came About," in this issue.

Lehi and Sariah Comments John A. Tvedtnes

- 1 Jeffrey R. Chadwick, "Sariah in the Elephantine Papyri," *JBMS* 2/2 (1993): 196–200; reprinted in John W. Welch and Melvin J. Thorne, eds., *Pressing Forward with the Book of Mormon* (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1999), 6–10.
- 2 See John A. Tvedtnes, John Gee, and Matthew Roper, "Book of Mormon Names Attested in Ancient Hebrew Inscriptions," in this issue.
- 3 *Ibid.*

Response to the Comments Paul Y. Hoskisson

- 1 Jeffrey R. Chadwick, "Sariah in the Elephantine Papyri," *JBMS* 2/2 (1993): 196–200.
- 2 In the original article I could have added more examples of the masculine name *לֵחַי*, but it seemed to me unnecessary. A clear-cut example of the name used for a female would be more helpful.
- 3 *לֵחַי* is interpreted as *לֵחַי-אֵל*, "god has