

Chapter 22

JERUSALEM CONNECTIONS TO ARABIA IN 600 B.C.

S. Kent Brown

At the behest of the Lord, Lehi and Sariah led their family from their home near Jerusalem into the desert of Arabia where they lived for eight long years. Even though for generations their descendants would celebrate their exodus in story and song, the question that invites our attention concerns the connections of the homeland of Lehi and Sariah to Arabia.

The surprise is that Lehi and Sariah fled to Arabia, not to Egypt. As readers of the Old Testament will know, almost all persons known to flee from Jerusalem and its environs went southwest to Egypt, not southeast to Arabia. Given the political climate of 600 B.C., going north or east into Babylonian-controlled areas was not an option because Babylonian authorities would force Lehi back to Jerusalem if Jewish officials requested. In contrast, Egypt was a place of refuge.¹ But Arabia?

As a matter of fact, the Old Testament preserves a number of references to connections between Arabia and ancient Palestine. Other ancient sources do as well, including some recently discovered. Some of these ties were commercial, others were military.

Traditions even claim that Israelites had moved into Arabia long before—and even during—the days of Lehi and Sariah. In this light, should we see Arabia as a known though infrequent destination for travelers from Jerusalem?

Outbound Routes

A reader of the Book of Mormon is left to assume that the Lord had instructed Lehi about where he and his family were to travel from Jerusalem. We do not possess Lehi's report of this experience, and Nephi does not preserve any such instruction in his narrative of the family's move. Evidently knowing the general direction of travel, Lehi led his family "into the wilderness" toward the southeast. How do we know the direction of travel? Because the family's first camping spot lay "in the borders which are nearer the Red Sea" (1 Nephi 2:5).²

While Nephi does not indicate the route that he and other family members followed when going south and east toward Arabia, four known roads were open to them, and the likelihood is high that the family followed, or perhaps shadowed, one of these routes that led away from Jerusalem. Two ran south, two ran east. As a point of clarification, one must bear in mind that only one of them ran along the shores of the Dead Sea. On both the east and west sides of the Dead Sea the terrain slopes steeply from cliffs to water's edge and does not allow travelers to pass. The problems would be worse, of course, for pack animals.³

South. The only route that skirted any part of the shoreline of the Dead Sea descended the so-called ascent of Ziz (2 Chronicles 20:16 RSV). A major road ran southward from Jerusalem to Hebron through Bethlehem, beginning at the southern gate of Jerusalem, which stood near the Siloam Pool.⁴ To reach the ascent of Ziz, a person turned off this main road, bending east near Tekoa, the birthplace of the prophet Amos



Map by Andrew D. Livingston. © FARMS

(Amos 1:1). From this point the trail descended through the rugged desert hills of Judea to a point near the Ein Gedi oasis next to the Dead Sea. Had the family followed this route, at Ein Gedi they would have turned south toward the northeast arm of the Red Sea where Aqaba and Eilat now sit, keeping the Dead Sea on their left for the next twenty-five miles or so.⁵

A second option consisted in following the same trade route that led south to Hebron. Beyond Hebron, a traveler continued to Arad, then down through the Zohar Valley, and finally into the Arabah Valley. This road would have been more direct and, like the other, would have led the family toward the northeastern tip of the Red Sea. I should emphasize that I do not discount the possibility that the family stayed generally close to a trade route not only for this segment of the journey but for later segments too. Even though Nephi's recounting of the journey does not specifically mention meeting other people, the party surely would have done so. For Nephi offers clear hints that family members ran into others as they traveled.⁶

East, then south. Two other commercial routes led travelers eastward from Jerusalem and then south toward the Red Sea. The more southerly of the two ran from the east side of the city and wound around the southern slope of the Mount of Olives. From that point, it gradually descended eastward through Wadi Mukallik (Nahal Og) and connected with the northeast shore of the Dead Sea. In antiquity this trail was known as the Route of Salt because caravans carried salt, which had been extracted out of the Dead Sea, from its northwest shore up to Jerusalem.⁷ If the family had followed this road, they could have broken off at any point after reaching the Jordan Valley and headed eastward to the mountains of Moab where they would have intersected either the King's Highway or another road farther east and turned south.⁸

The other trail ran almost directly eastward from a point north of the temple area. This route climbed the steep western slope of the Mount of Olives, crossing at a point near the modern village of At-Tur, and then plunged downward toward the Wadi Kelt, eventually reaching Jericho. This path, too, carried trade between the Jordan Valley and Jerusalem. One of its spurs on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives led south to Bethany, a path that Jesus followed when going to raise his friend Lazarus from the tomb (see John 10:40; 11:17–20). For their part, the family of Lehi and Sariah would have exited Wadi Kelt a couple of miles south of Old Testament Jericho. From there, it was an easy trek eastward across the Jordan Valley to the base of the mountains of Moab. The King's Highway or the eastern road would then have led them southward to the tip of the northeastern arm of the Red Sea.

Military Contacts

The nature of military connections between Arabia and ancient Israel is not totally clear. The Old Testament does not treat any such matters directly except for one possible reference in the book of Job, which reads, "The troops of Tema looked, the companies of Sheba waited for them" (Job 6:19), a seeming reference to armies. But the translation is misleading. To be sure, Tema, or Tayma, was an important city in northwestern Arabia and Sheba was the name of an important kingdom in the southwest sector of the peninsula whence the queen of Sheba came to visit Solomon (see 1 Kings 10:1–2). The Revised Standard Version presents a more accurate rendering of Job 6:19: "The caravans of Tema look, the travelers of Sheba hope." Hence, there is nothing of military significance in this passage. Instead, it is the annals of the Assyrian kings that suggest possible military contacts between ancient Israel and Arabia.

The earliest notice of Assyrian military action in the northern kingdom of Israel, which was formed in 922 B.C. after the death of Solomon (see 1 Kings 12:1–20), comes from King Tiglath-pileser III who ruled Assyria from 745 to 727 B.C.⁹ Sometime after 736 B.C., the forces of Tiglath-pileser captured Samaria, the capital city of the northern kingdom of Israel. Because Tiglath-pileser's record is incomplete, we do not know the reason for this military action. But we can be reasonably certain that the Assyrian army had come to Samaria because officials there had stopped paying tribute. The Israelite kingdom had already been making such payments during the reign of Menachem (745–737 B.C.), as both the Old Testament and an earlier record from Tiglath-pileser show. By submitting to payment of a heavy tribute, Menahem had effectively surrendered the independence of Israel.¹⁰ The next known military invasion by Assyrians came a decade or so later.

King Shalmaneser V, who ruled Assyria from 726 to 722 B.C., saw a number of small kingdoms attempt to revolt from his control during his first year in office. The kingdom of Israel was one of them. The Israelite king at the time of Shalmaneser was Hoshea, who had come to power by assassinating the prior king (see 2 Kings 15:30). As soon as Hoshea thought he had opportunity to rebel against the Assyrians, he withheld the tribute due to King Shalmaneser and instead tried unsuccessfully to buy military aid from Egypt (see 2 Kings 17:4). It was, however, a fatal mistake. After a siege of more than two years, Israel's capital city, Samaria, fell to the Assyrian army, which promptly marched almost thirty thousand people north and east.¹¹ These people later became known as the lost ten tribes of Israel.

Shalmaneser's successor, Sargon II (721–705 B.C.), noted in his annals that the Assyrian army faced other forces in the same region, hinting strongly that these clashes occurred during the campaign that destroyed Samaria, or soon thereafter.

They included battles against the rebellious armies of Gaza and Egypt. Then he wrote the following intriguing lines: “I received the tribute . . . from Samsi, queen of Arabia (and) It’amar the Sabaeen, gold in dust-form, horses (and) camels.”¹² Were these rulers among those who tried to revolt from Sargon’s control, effectively collaborating in a general rebellion that the kingdoms of Israel, Gaza, and Egypt initiated? It seems possible. For the Assyrian king forced all the rebel groups and their leaders to pay heavy tributes. And on this occasion the rebels included Queen Samsi of Arabia and It’amar of the Sabaeen kingdom, which was likely the same as the biblical Sheba.¹³ Hence, it appears that two forces from Arabia had joined the revolts of Israel, Gaza, and Egypt. To be sure, we do not know for certain whether the Arabians had made a formal pact either with King Hoshea of Israel or with the Gazans and Egyptians, or whether they had rebelled on their own. But the observation that Sargon’s army apparently met all their armies during the same campaigning season points to a coordinated effort on the part of the rebels.

What must have added insult to injury for both the conquered Israelites and Arabians was the forced migration of nomadic Arab peoples into the former territory of Israel.¹⁴ In the seventh year of his reign, Sargon wrote of “the Arabs who live, far away, in the desert (and) who know neither overseers nor officials.” He was evidently referring to Bedouins, who owe no loyalty to rulers unless they are reined in. Next, speaking again of Arab tribesmen, he recorded that “[the Arabs] had not (yet) brought their tribute to any king. I deported their survivors and settled (them) in Samaria.” In this context he again mentioned “Samsi, the queen of Arabia, [and] It’amra, the Sabaeen.”¹⁵ In light of Sargon’s assertions that he regularly moved people from one area of his realm to another, as he did

with the Israelites and these Arabs, it seems safe to say that on this occasion he forced the Arab “survivors” of war against him to move from their desert homes to the former territory of the Israelites, where he could exercise more control over them and force them to pay tribute.¹⁶

What does all of this mean for the Book of Mormon story? It is evident that, more than one hundred years before Lehi and Sariah came on the scene, the army of the Assyrian empire had been active in the general region of Jerusalem, both north of the city in the kingdom of Israel and south in Gaza and Egypt. Some of that activity had to do with the intransigence of the Israelites, led by their kings, and some had to do with peoples in Arabia. Two possibilities arise from the military conflicts that occurred in the region over a period of years. First, it is possible—even probable—that Lehi’s forebears in the tribe of Manasseh (see Alma 10:3) had moved south to Jerusalem in order to escape the terrors of war with Assyria in the north, eventually establishing an estate that, in time, Lehi came to inherit. Second, it is possible that the Arabs whom Sargon moved into the territory of the former kingdom of Israel became the liaisons for merchants in Arabia who wished to make their exotic goods available to buyers in that general area, including the city of Jerusalem, where Lehi would have had contact with them.

Commercial Ties

According to the Old Testament, by far the largest number of contacts between people in Arabia and those in and around Jerusalem were of a commercial character. Jerusalemites enjoyed prized Arabian imports as diverse as incense, sheep, goats, and gems (see 2 Chronicles 17:11; Isaiah 60:6; Ezekiel 27:21–22). And most of the Old Testament references to this trade date to

the era of Lehi and Sariah. But before reviewing these references, we must treat an important person in the book of Job.

Although the date of the composition of the book of Job is a matter of debate, it seems reasonably safe that it was composed before or by the fifth century B.C., not long after the days of Lehi and Sariah.¹⁷ What is significant is that the book features prominently a friend of Job known as Eliphaz the Temanite.¹⁸ Tema, or Tayma, of course, was a crossroads city of northwestern Arabia whose importance blossomed suddenly when Nabonidus, ruler of the ancient Babylonian kingdom, unexpectedly moved his capital there about 550 B.C. For approximately ten years, this desert city was the focus of King Nabonidus's life, even though the city lay many hundreds of miles south of the Mesopotamian valley where his original base of power lay.¹⁹ It was from this city that Eliphaz came to visit the suffering Job. What seems plain in the story of Job is that Eliphaz was a man of means who was able to come to Job in his hour of need. Hence, it seems reasonable to say that Tema was a city of importance that offered opportunity for its citizens to amass a certain amount of wealth. We know, for example, that it was a major center for worship of the moon god in antiquity²⁰ and sat astride a major junction of trade routes.²¹

In a telling passage written a century before Lehi and Sariah left Jerusalem, the prophet Isaiah wrote of Tema as a place of refuge for those worn weary by war. The passage reads: "In the forest in Arabia shall ye lodge, O ye travelling companies of Dedanim. The inhabitants of the land of Tema brought water to him that was thirsty, they prevented [= met] with their bread him that fled. For they fled from the swords, from the drawn sword, and from the bent bow, and from the grievousness of war" (Isaiah 21:13–15).

Whether this passage alludes to Isaiah's Israelite contemporaries who were fleeing the war waged by the Assyrians against King Hoshea is unknown, although the thought is tempting. For if Isaiah is indeed speaking of Israelites seeking refuge in northwest Arabia, this may constitute the first evidence from an ancient source of such people moving to Arabia. But certainty eludes us. To be sure, later traditions hold that Israelites had begun to live in Arabia as early as the era of Moses and the exodus. But such traditions seem to have no historical basis (more on this subject below).

From the same prophet come words that anticipate events in the latter days when the Lord again gathers his people to his temple for worship. In expressing the varied dimensions of this prophecy, Isaiah appeals to imagery that shows his acquaintance with Arabia. For he writes: "The multitude of camels shall cover thee, the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah; all they from Sheba shall come: they shall bring gold and incense; and they shall shew forth the praises of the Lord. All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered together unto thee, the rams of Nebaioth shall minister unto thee: they shall come up with acceptance on mine altar, and I will glorify the house of my glory" (Isaiah 60:6–7).

We note that the goods to be offered in the temple will come from Midian, a territory in northwest Arabia; from Sheba, which lies at the edge of the southern desert; and from the people of Kedar and Nebaioth, whose territories lie in north Arabia.²² The goods are to include "gold and incense" as well as "the flocks" and "the rams" from these areas. From this and other passages we learn that goods from Arabia were prized by Israelites, including those in the era of Lehi and Sariah.²³

Besides written evidence for extensive ties to Arabia's merchants from Old Testament prophets of the eighth and seventh

centuries B.C.—Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel—important inscriptions found in Jerusalem date to the same period. According to William Whitt, among the thirty known inscriptions written in the old south Arabian script from this era, some were “found in Jerusalem” on potsherds.²⁴ Actually, the number of potsherds discovered was three. Archaeologists discovered them in the ancient City of David, the spur of hill that has been inhabited for four thousand years and runs south from the ancient temple area where the Dome of the Rock now sits. Because the potsherds demonstrate the presence of Arabians in Jerusalem, the discoverer, Yigal Shiloh, calls them “extraordinary inscriptions inscribed on sherds from the Iron Age.” Maria Höfner of the University of Graz, who is an expert in south Arabian scripts, dates the three inscriptions “to the early stage of the [south Arabian] writing in the eighth–seventh centuries B.C.”²⁵ As is plain, this evidence matches the notices that we have found in the Old Testament about commercial contacts between Arabia and people in and around Jerusalem.

From the above it becomes clear that from a period dating at least one hundred years before Lehi and Sariah, there were extensive commercial contacts between people in Arabia and those in and around Jerusalem. Ancient Israelites sought exotic imported goods as widely diverse as incense and sheep, fabrics and gold, precious gems and spices. If, in fact, Lehi was a trader, as some have suggested,²⁶ he may have enjoyed commercial relations with counterparts in Arabia. Unfortunately, there is sparse evidence for this observation beyond the fact that with his family he traveled there from Jerusalem.

Traditions

The traditions about Israelites or Jews coming to live in Arabia number essentially three.²⁷ One holds that some of

the Hebrew slaves who came out of Egypt with Moses turned aside from the main migrating group and settled in northern Arabia.²⁸ There is a certain attraction in this notion because Moses' father-in-law, Jethro, lived in Midian, a region that lay in northwestern Arabia (see Exodus 2:15–16; 3:1). Thus one might suppose that it would be natural for some of Moses' migrants to settle there. But no archaeological or other kind of evidence exists to show that any sizable group of Israelites inhabited Midian in those days.²⁹ For example, the pottery record for northwest Arabia from the thirteenth to twelfth centuries B.C., about the time of the exodus, consists mostly of remnants of so-called Midianite ware. Researchers have been able to determine that this pottery was manufactured in or around the Arabian town of Qurayyah and spread as far north as Hebron. But no evidence has been uncovered to determine that it was carried farther north, as one might expect if Midianite pottery vessels were being used to carry goods back and forth between Israelites in Midian and Israelites in the land of Canaan.

A second tradition asserts that in the days of Solomon a large group of people migrated from ancient Israel into Arabia. This story attaches itself to the visit of the queen of Sheba (see 1 Kings 10:1–2) and claims that Israelites accompanied her back to her home in south Arabia, eventually settling in the region.³⁰ While this tale is appealing, chiefly because one can imagine Israelites relocating in order to find commercial opportunities to ship goods to Jerusalem, the evidence falls short of sustaining the story. The biblical record offers no hints about such a migration, and other written and archaeological evidence is lacking.

A third tradition claims that up to seventy-five thousand faithful Jews—a huge number—fled Jerusalem before the Baby-

lonians destroyed the city and the temple in 587 B.C. The same story says specifically that they left forty-two years before the coming of the Babylonians (ca. 629 B.C.). Why did they go? Because these people believed the warning of Jeremiah about the terrible fate of those who remained in Jerusalem (e.g., Jeremiah 38:2).³¹ In this case, even allowing for the exaggeration of the number of migrants, they would have departed during the lifetime of Lehi. But as far as we know, no writer took notice of the departure of such a large group. In addition, there is no physical evidence of large numbers of Israelites moving into Arabia in the late seventh century B.C.³²

Interest in these traditions received a tremendous boost in 1949 when Israelis began to airlift to Israel more than fifty thousand Jews who had been living in Yemen. These Yemenite Jews brought with them fresh versions of these and other traditions, thus fortifying claims that Jews had lived in that region for thousands of years. One of the persons most responsible for recording the stories of Yemenite Jews, even before the airlift, was Shelomo Dov Goitein.³³ While Goitein and his colleagues were thorough in their collecting of stories and their analyses, they turned up no evidence to support these Yemenite Jewish traditions about large numbers of Israelites migrating to Arabia before the fall of the First Temple (587 B.C.), which would roughly coincide with the departure of Lehi and Sariah.³⁴

On the other hand, many Jews were living in Arabia by the time of Muhammad, the prophet of Islam, more than a thousand years after Lehi and Sariah. And these people must have come from somewhere. Substantiation for Jews residing in Arabia a few hundred years after the trek of Lehi and Sariah arises in various forms. Four illustrations will suffice, two archaeological and two literary.

The earliest archaeological proof of Jews in Arabia comes from the third century A.D. In 1936, excavations in a cemetery of Bet Shearim in Lower Galilee revealed a series of graves of Jews from Himyar in southern Arabia. Although scholars have challenged the conclusions drawn from this discovery, it seems apparent that prominent Jews living in Himyar were brought to Galilee for burial, much as the remains of Joseph were carried from Egypt to Shechem (see Joshua 24:32).³⁵ A second witness comes in the form of a Hebrew inscription found in south Arabia and dated to the last quarter of the fourth century A.D. (ca. 380), wherein an Arabian convert to Judaism announces his new house.³⁶ In light of these remains, it is possible to speak about large numbers of Jews in Arabia, but not until almost a millennium after Lehi and Sariah.

The earliest written account comes from Strabo (ca. 64 B.C.–A.D. 19) who, in referring to the failed Roman military expedition led by Aelius Gallus into Arabia in 25–24 B.C., wrote in his *Geography* that Aelius Gallus “set sail with about ten thousand infantry, consisting of Romans in Egypt, as also of Roman allies, among whom were five hundred Jews.” Later, Josephus added a few details about these Jews in his *Antiquities of the Jews*: “at that time [25 B.C.] . . . [King Herod] sent to Caesar five hundred picked men from his bodyguards as an auxiliary force, and these men were very useful to Aelius Gallus, who led them to the Red Sea.”³⁷ Whether these Jewish soldiers accompanied the Roman army in order to contact and seek help from other Jews who were already living in Arabia—an unlikely scenario because the expedition failed—or whether they went because of their skills in desert living and warfare remains an open question. In sum, although the written notices do not demonstrate a significant

Jewish presence in Arabia, the archaeological remains do, but only at a time long after Lehi and Sariah undertook their trek.

The observations of Lehi and Nephi add nothing. They are silent about any contacts with fellow Jews as they moved south. To be sure, Nephi's narrative consistently omits mention of other people whom they surely must have met.³⁸ But running into fellow Israelites who had moved into Arabia would plausibly have given Nephi reason to note such a meeting. Yet he is silent. In a different vein, the possible reference to Nephi's preaching in Arabia (D&C 33:8) could be construed to mean that he preached to other Israelites. But that need not be so. And even if there were a few Israelites residing in Arabia (and there likely were), it seems reasonable that Lehi and Sariah avoided contact with them so that they would not draw unwanted attention to themselves and their group.

Conclusion

Although at first glance it may seem out of character for refugees from Jerusalem to flee to Arabia rather than to Egypt, a review of ancient sources suggests well-established connections between peoples of Arabia and those who lived in and around the city. At times, the ties evidently linked to military matters; at times, they were of a commercial sort. Whether Lehi himself dealt with Arabian traders or their goods remains unknown. In any event, because of long-standing connections with Arabia, Lehi and Sariah would not have felt completely uncomfortable traveling there. Besides, although Nephi does not mention a commandment of the Lord that the family travel specifically to Arabia (see 1 Nephi 2:1–2), Lehi must have received such a directive, thus pointing him southeast toward Arabia rather than southwest toward Egypt.

We have also learned that there is no evidence to suggest that significant numbers of Israelites were already living in Arabia when Lehi and Sariah began their journey. The first written notation appears in Strabo and the earliest archaeological remains date to the third century A.D., both hundreds of years after Lehi and Sariah. Hence, we should see Lehi and Sariah as pioneers, not relying on others for assistance. Instead, they were to rely on the Lord, who had promised that he would “be [their] light in the wilderness” (1 Nephi 17:13).

NOTES

1. See 1 Kings 11:26–40 (Jeroboam); Jeremiah 43:1–7 (Jeremiah—under protest—and others); compare the journeys of Abraham and Jacob into Egypt (Abraham 2:21; Genesis 12:10; 46:1–7). See also S. Kent Brown, “The Exodus: Seeing It as a Test, a Testimony, and a Type,” *Ensign*, February 1990, 54–57. According to the Annals of Sargon II, king of Assyria (721–705 B.C.), rulers of Ashdod twice fled to Upper Egypt to avoid Sargon’s army; see James B. Pritchard, ed., *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, 3rd ed. with suppl. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 285, 286.

2. For estimates of where the family might have camped in northwest Arabia, see Lynn M. Hilton and Hope Hilton, *In Search of Lehi’s Trail* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976), 63–64 (Al-Bad^c oasis); and George D. Potter, “A New Candidate in Arabia for the Valley of Lemuel,” *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 8/1 (1999): 54–63 (Wadi Tayyib al-Ism, the more likely place). On Lehi’s record, see S. Kent Brown, *From Jerusalem to Zarahemla: Literary and Historical Studies of the Book of Mormon* (Provo, Utah: BYU Religious Studies Center, 1998), 28–54.

3. The family must have led pack animals—possibly camels—to carry tents and other essentials (1 Nephi 2:4–6). Tent panels can each weigh over a hundred pounds. But camels cannot carry such burdens if they are underfed and tired; see Bertram Thomas, *Arabia*

Felix: Across the "Empty Quarter" of Arabia (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1932), 164–65. That camels were more suited to desert travel than other animals can be seen in the offhanded remark of Ahmed Fakhry, who traveled through southwestern Arabia with camels and mules: "It is impossible for laden mules to walk in that loose sand, and so we had to ride camels." *An Archaeological Journey to Yemen (March–May, 1947)* (Cairo: Government Press, 1952), 1:12. Charles Doughty observes that donkeys "must drink every second day." *Travels in Arabia Deserta*, with an introduction by T. E. Lawrence (New York: Random House, 1936), 1:325.

4. For reconstructions of Jerusalem and its gates at the end of the seventh century B.C., see Dan Bahat, *The Illustrated Atlas of Jerusalem* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1990), 24–25, 30–31.

5. For the trade routes that brought goods to Jerusalem from the south and the east, see M. Har-El, "The Route of Salt, Sugar and Balsam Caravans in the Judean Desert," *GeoJournal* 2/6 (1978): 549–56. The "ascent of Ziz" route is favored by D. Kelly Ogden in "Answering the Lord's Call (1 Nephi 1–7)," in *1 Nephi to Alma 29*, ed. Kent P. Jackson (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1987), 17–33, especially 23. The first mapping effort was undertaken by Claude R. Conder and Horatio H. Kitchener in *The Survey of Western Palestine: Memoirs of the Topography, Orography, Hydrography, and Archaeology* (London: Palestine Exploration Fund, 1883), 58. For further details on the possible routes from Jerusalem, see S. Kent Brown, "New Light from Arabia on Lehi's Trail," in *Echoes and Evidences of the Book of Mormon*, ed. Donald W. Parry, Daniel C. Peterson, and John W. Welch (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 2002), 56–60.

6. The expression "the place which was called Nahom" indicates that the family learned the name Nahom from others (1 Nephi 16:34). In addition, when family members were some fourteen hundred miles from home at Nahom, some knew that it was possible to return (1 Nephi 16:36), even though they had run out of food twice (16:17–19, 39). Evidently, family members had met people making the journey from south Arabia to the Mediterranean area. Further, the Lord's commandment to Lehi about not taking more than one wife, if Lehi received it

in Arabia, may point to unsavory interaction there (see Jacob 2:23–24). Moreover, Doctrine and Covenants 33:8 hints that Nephi may have preached to people in Arabia, although the reference may be to preaching to members of his own traveling party. See also S. Kent Brown, “A Case for Lehi’s Bondage in Arabia,” *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 6/2 (1997): 205–17.

7. For the routes running east from Jerusalem, see Har-El, “The Route of Salt,” 549–56.

8. A series of forts in Edomite territory probably guarded a caravan route that ran to the east of the King’s Highway, although they seem not to have been inhabited in 600 B.C. Consult Nelson Glueck, *The Other Side of the Jordan* (New Haven, Conn.: American Schools of Oriental Research, 1940), 128–34. For the route of the King’s Highway, see Barry J. Beitzel, “Roads and Highways (Pre-Roman),” in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman et al. (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 5:779 and the accompanying maps.

9. An army from the northern kingdom of Israel was part of a coalition of forces that opposed the Assyrian king Shalmaneser III at Qarqar in 853 B.C. There is no record that the Assyrians invaded Israel thereafter as punishment. Consult Israel Eph^cal, *The Ancient Arabs: Nomads on the Borders of the Fertile Crescent, 9th–5th Centuries B.C.* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1982), 21.

10. For Tiglath-pileser’s records, see Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, 283; and Eph^cal, *Ancient Arabs*, 26–27, 28, 30–33. For Menachem’s actions, consult 2 Kings 15:19–20. For an overview of this era, consult John Bright, *A History of Israel*, 3rd ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1981), 269–78.

11. Shalmaneser’s successor, Sargon II (721–705 B.C.), records that the number of Israelite exiles was 27,290; see Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, 285; and Eph^cal, *Ancient Arabs*, 38.

12. Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, 285. Samsi, the Arab queen, is noted by several Assyrian monarchs; consult Eph^cal, *Ancient Arabs*, 25–28, 30–32, 36.

13. On the identification of Sheba and Saba or Sabaea, see Gus W.

Van Beek, "Sheba," in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Archaeology in the Near East*, ed. Eric M. Meyers et al. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 5:18–19.

14. The Old Testament does not specifically mention Arabs among the peoples whom Sargon moved into the former territory of Israel; only Sargon does. Consult 2 Kings 17:24 and Eph^cal, *Ancient Arabs*, 36, 38.

15. Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, 286. It is not clear whether the difference in spelling between It'amar (Sargon's first Annal) and It'amra (seventh Annal) points to different individuals or not. Also consult Eph^cal, *Ancient Arabs*, 36.

16. In the Annal for his eleventh year, Sargon wrote that "I reorganized (the administration of) these cities (and) settled therein people from the [regions] of the East which I had conquered personally." Compare also his remark that he "led away as prisoners 9,033 inhabitants [of Rapihu, south of Gaza] with their numerous possessions," in Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, 286, 285.

17. See the review of the evidence for wildly differing estimates of the date of the composition of Job in Roland K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1969), 1031–42.

18. References to Eliphaz the Temanite occur in Job 2:11; 4:1; 15:1; 22:1; and 42:9.

19. It seems that Nabonidus moved his official residence for religious reasons. See his Chronicle and his so-called Verse Account in Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, 305–7, 312–15; also consult Bright, *History of Israel*, 352–54, 360.

20. Consult Françoise Briquel-Chatonnet, "Les Arabes en Arabie du nord et au Proche-Orient avant l'Hégire," in Pierre R. Baduel, ed., *L'Arabie antique de Karib'il à Mahomet: Nouvelles données sur l'histoire des Arabes grâce aux inscriptions*. *Revue du Monde Musulman et de la Méditerranée*, no. 61 (1991–93): 38.

21. See Ernst A. Knauf, "Tema," in *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, 6:346–47 and accompanying bibliography.

22. See the articles by Ernst A. Knauf, “Kedar” and “Nebaioth,” in *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, 4:9–10, 1053.

23. See Jeremiah 6:20; Ezekiel 27:20–24; 38:13; 2 Chronicles 17:11. For other references to Arabia and Arabians, see Joel 3:8, which was composed perhaps between 450 and 400 B.C.; 1 Chronicles 4:39–43; and 2 Chronicles 26:6. On the dating of the book of Joel, consult Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, 876–79. On the Mehunim or Meunim (Minaeans) of the Chronicler and the likely retrojection of later events into an earlier era, see the summary by Ernst A. Knauf, “Meunim,” in *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, 4:801–2. On the importing of luxury goods from Arabia as tribute items, see Ryan Byrne, “Early Assyrian Contacts with Arabs and the Impact on Levantine Vassal Tribute,” *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 331 (2003): 11–25.

24. William D. Whitt, “The Story of the Semitic Alphabet,” in *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East*, ed. Jack M. Sasson et al. (New York: Scribner’s Sons, 1995), 4:2391–92.

25. See Yigal Shiloh, “South Arabian Inscriptions from the City of David, Jerusalem,” *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* 119/1 (1987): 9–18 (the quotations, including that from Höfner, come from p. 10); see also the cautionary words of Benjamin Sass, “Arabs and Greeks in Late First Temple Jerusalem,” *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* 122/1 (1990): 59–61.

26. Hugh Nibley holds that Lehi knew the desert well and had made his wealth from commerce. See his books *An Approach to the Book of Mormon*, 3rd ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1988), 77–80; and *Lehi in the Desert, The World of the Jaredites, There Were Jaredites* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1988), 34–38. The Hiltons, *In Search of Lehi’s Trail*, 34–35, suggest that Lehi did business in the desert and thus possessed tents and desert skills. John A. Tvedtnes, “Was Lehi a Caravaneer?” in *The Most Correct Book* (Salt Lake City: Cornerstone, 1999), 76–98, maintains that Lehi did not necessarily go into the desert for commercial purposes.

27. The traditions about Jews in Arabia are summarized in handy

form by Reuben Ahroni in his *Yemenite Jewry: Origins, Culture, and Literature* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 24–37.

28. See Ahroni, *Yemenite Jewry*, 24–25, where he notes both Arab and Jewish traditions to this effect.

29. Beno Rothenberg and Jonathan Glass, “The Midianite Pottery,” in *Midian, Moab and Edom: The History and Archaeology of Late Bronze and Iron Age Jordan and North-West Arabia*, ed. John F. A. Sawyer and David J. A. Clines (Sheffield: JSOT, 1983), 65–124.

30. A variant version in Arabic holds that King David himself lived in Arabia for seven years. See Ahroni, *Yemenite Jewry*, 25.

31. Ahroni, *Yemenite Jewry*, 25–26; consult also Tudor Parfitt, *The Road to Redemption: The Jews of the Yemen 1900–1950* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 4.

32. Ahroni, *Yemenite Jewry*, 27, 33–36, makes a special plea—based on no evidence at all except tradition—that “there were Jewish communities in southern Arabia at the very least as far back as the destruction of the First Temple” in 587 B.C. See a similar guess in Bright, *History of Israel*, 353.

33. For example, consult Shelomo D. Goitein, *Von den Juden Jemens: Eine Anthologie* (Berlin: Schocken, 1937); and *From the Land of Sheba: Tales of the Jews of Yemen* (1947; reprint, New York: Schocken, 1973).

34. On the approximate date for the departure of Lehi and Sariah from Jerusalem, consult S. Kent Brown and David R. Seely, “Jeremiah’s Imprisonment and the Date of Lehi’s Departure,” *Religious Educator* 2/1 (2001): 15–32.

35. See Ahroni, *Yemenite Jewry*, 40–42. In this connection, it is worthwhile noting that “nomadic groups . . . carried with them in bags or clay coffins those who died during seasonal migrations, burying them in tombs only when the tribe returned to its traditional burial place. . . . It is also possible that, if the person was killed somewhere far away from his traditional burial place, what was left of him was carried in a container (clay coffin) to the traditional burial place.” Khair Yassine, “Social-Religious Distinctions in Iron Age Burial Practice in Jordan,” in *Midian, Moab and Edom*, 32.

36. “The first reliable epigraphic testimony to the presence of Jews in Yemen dates to the last two decades of the fourth century [A.D.]” Werner Daum, ed., *Yemen: 3000 Years of Art and Civilisation in Arabia Felix* (Innsbruck: Pinguin-Verlag, 1987), 52. One can consult a photograph of this unusual inscription in Baduel, *L’Arabie antique de Karib’il à Mahomet*, 30.

37. See Strabo, *Geography* 16.4.23–24; Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* 15.9.3 (§317).

38. Consult note 6 above.