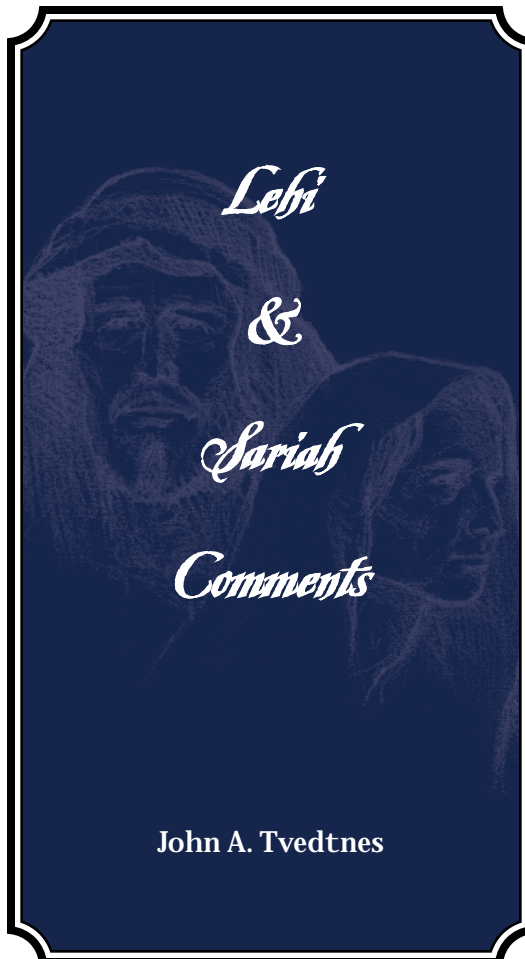




Hoskisson writes that “the name Sariah is not attested, as far as I am aware, in an ancient Near Eastern source.” He seems not to be aware of the 1993 article by Jeffrey R. Chadwick.¹ The name is also known from three seals and two bullae.² Hoskisson cites “the masculine biblical personal name Seraiah” 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 *śar* (“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 [Yah] 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.”