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Part 5: "We Called the Place Bountiful"

Author(s): Warren P. Aston

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Abstract: The terminus of the Lehite land journey of some 2,100 miles/3,400 km across Arabia was a place that caused the group to rejoice “exceedingly.” Like others since then, the group’s relief and enthusiasm is vividly captured in Nephi’s words as he writes of the group’s arrival at the shores of the Indian Ocean. The green vista they emerged into indicated that arduous years of desert travel were behind them. The place where they arrived from the interior desert was full of trees and other vegetation, including edible fruit, something that would impress anyone after eight years of desert travel. Nephi mentions “much fruit” twice (17:5, 6), indicating that abundant fruit was the specific reason that Bountiful was so named.

The text makes clear that the group was also impressed with the vast ocean panorama spread out before them. Nephi was careful to record a proper name for the ocean, Irreantum, as well as the translation of the name into his own language as “many waters.” Despite a superficial resemblance to a Greek term for the ocean (Erythraem), a more plausible South-Arabian origin for the name that fits this meaning of the word has recently been suggested. Since Lehi’s group had just spent some eight years in the Arabian wilderness, such an etymology would not be surprising.

PART 5

"We Called the Place Bountiful"

"And we did come to the land which we called Bountiful, because of its much fruit and also wild honey; and all these things were prepared of the Lord that we might not perish. And we beheld the sea, which we called Irreantum, which, being interpreted, is many waters. And it came to pass that we did pitch our tents by the seashore; and notwithstanding we had suffered many afflictions and much difficulty, yea, even so much that we cannot write them all, we were exceedingly rejoiced when we came to the seashore; and *we called the place Bountiful*, because of its much fruit."

(1 Nephi 17:5, 6)



Introduction

The terminus of the Lehite land journey of some 2,100 miles/3,400 km across Arabia was a place that caused the group to rejoice “exceedingly.” Like others since then,¹ the group’s relief and enthusiasm is vividly captured in Nephi’s words as he writes of the group’s arrival at the shores of the Indian Ocean. The green vista they emerged into indicated that arduous years of desert travel were behind them. The place where they arrived from the interior desert was full of trees and other vegetation, including edible fruit, something that would impress anyone after eight years of desert travel. Nephi mentions “much fruit” twice (17:5, 6), indicating that abundant fruit was the specific reason that Bountiful was so named.

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Writing years later on the American continent of the journey from the Old World, Nephi acknowledged that the place Bountiful with all its bounty was “prepared of the Lord” (17:5). Here was everything necessary for them to rest, to regroup and then to begin constructing the vessel that would complete their journey. This place was more than merely a welcome contrast to the desert, especially with the most difficult leg from Nahom just completed; Bountiful was so named because its fertility was exceptional, especially for Arabia.

“Almost equal to Paradise”

From the very beginning, critics of the Book of Mormon have made much of Nephi’s mention of a fertile place on the Arabian coast. Because they relied on sources normally considered authoritative, such as the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* and the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, which denied the existence of rivers and forests anywhere in Arabia, the Lehite Bountiful came under attack as soon as the book was published. As early as 1831 a Baptist minister commented on the improbable place described in Nephi’s text:

*After Lehi and his family had wandered in the wilderness, they came to a fertile country, which they call the land Bountiful. This... must have been on the coast of the Sea of Arabia, or the Indian Ocean, which is a barren, sandy desert...The historical part of the book is, all of it, thus fabulous and extravagant...To believe the Book of Mormon, we must suppose that these emigrants... discovered a country **almost equal to paradise**, where nobody else can find anything but a sandy, barren desert.³*

A century and a half later criticism of a fertile location remained just as dismissive, as in this 1985 example from a biologist:

Arabia is bountiful in sunshine, petroleum, sand, heat, and fresh air, but certainly not in ‘much fruit and also wild honey,’ nor has it been since Pleistocene times.

This latter article went on to claim that there has never been “ample timber” in Arabia for building a ship.⁴ Critics thus saw Nephi’s Bountiful as an easy target and for well over a century, LDS commentators could only assign the place to a vague “somewhere” on the Arabian coastline. Without reliable information about the coastline, locations ranging from Aden, near the bottom of the Arabian peninsula, to the United

Arab Emirates near the top, and even Somalia on the Horn of Africa, have been proposed for Bountiful at various times. What has not been done in almost every case, by LDS and non-LDS writers alike, is to first carefully evaluate what the Book of Mormon tells us about Bountiful.

Examining what Nephi's text actually tells us remains the starting point in any serious attempt to locate a location on today's map. The text of the Book of Mormon often offers little or no insight as to the location of events, but when the direct and implied references concerning "Bountiful" in the First Book of Nephi are examined closely, a surprisingly detailed picture of the place emerges.

Nephi's Criteria for Bountiful

1. As discussed earlier, the location of Bountiful is directionally linked to Nahom. Bountiful lay "nearly" eastward of Nahom (17:1). Here, Nephi used the same wording he had earlier used in describing the travel direction from the Valley of Lemuel ("nearly a south-southeast direction," 16:13, 14, 33). Given his ability to accurately determine variations from the cardinal directions, we should therefore expect that Bountiful lies close to the 16th degree north latitude of Nahom. Surprisingly, the clear-cut implications of this basic and unequivocal scripture continue to be ignored or understated by many commentators on the subject, years after the location of Nahom has been firmly established. Such writers still depict the route from Nahom to Bountiful as anything but the "nearly eastward" direction Nephi recorded, defying also geographical realities.⁵

2. Clearly, the terrain had to permit reasonable *access from the interior deserts to the coast*. At some places along the Arabian coast, the terrain is so rugged that overland travel from the interior is simply impossible.

3. Nephi's usage of the name "Bountiful" suggests that *a wider, general area* (17:5,7) *may have enjoyed notable fertility in addition to the particular location where the Lehites initially camped* (17:6), making any candidate location for Bountiful without a comparable surrounding fertile area less likely.

4. Bountiful, logically on the east coast of Arabia, was *a coastal location* (17:5), *suitable for an initial seashore encampment in tents* (17:6) *but also with shelter available on higher ground in more substantial dwellings. It had to also offer a suitable place for the construction and launching of a sizable ship* (18:8). Large vessels cannot easily be constructed over a year or more on a beach exposed to monsoon storms; in ancient times the only practical solution was usually the shores of a sheltered inlet or lagoon that protects from tides and storms while still allowing ready access to the ocean.

5. Bountiful was much more than just a suitable place to build and launch a ship; it derives its name from its fertility, specifically its "*much fruit*" and *honey* (17:5-6, 18:6) and perhaps also small game that could be hunted (18:6). As noted later in item 11, the strong likelihood is that Bountiful was uninhabited when Lehi arrived; this would require that the fruit mentioned was not cultivated but grew wild. The Hebrew term for "fruit" normally refers to *edible* fruit and Nephi's use of the singular "fruit" may imply that there was not necessarily a great *variety* of fruits. The apparent immediate availability of fruit upon arrival may explain the lack of any mention of the growing of crops at Bountiful by the group -unlike the description of their later arrival in the New World (18:24). However, some agricultural and fishing pursuits for addition food during the years of their stay at Bountiful are certain. The group's camels, of course, could still provide milk, hides, and hair, throughout their time at Bountiful.

6. Enough *shipbuilding timber* of types and sizes to permit building a vessel able to carry several dozen persons and remain seaworthy for at least a year were available (18:1-2). While teak was imported from India for shipbuilding in *northern* Oman since about the third millennium BC, the clear implication is that this place “prepared of the Lord” had all the materials needed for the ship without recourse to obtaining timber from elsewhere. The wording of 18:1 conveys the impression that the timber was at hand. It is also worth noting that Nephi uses the plural whenever timber is mentioned, suggesting that more than one type of wood was involved, as is usual in shipbuilding.

7. *Year-round freshwater at the site* is required by the flora described. It would also have been necessary for the extended stay required by the group to construct the ship without diverting significant energy and time to carrying it in from elsewhere.

8. *A mountain*, distinctive enough to justify Nephi’s references to it as “the mount” (17:7, 18:3) must be near enough to the coastal encampment to allow him to go there to “pray oft” (18:3).

9. The incident of Nephi’s brothers attempting to take his life by throwing him into the depths of the sea (17:48) makes no sense unless there were *substantial cliffs* overlooking the ocean from which to throw him. Cliffs typically have rocks at their base from erosion and would constitute a real danger to anyone falling on them from a height, whereas a sand beach would not, especially for a young man who is described as being “large in stature” (2:16) and “having much strength” (4:31), regardless of any lack of swimming ability.

10. *Ore*, from which metal could be smelted to construct tools, was available in the vicinity (17:9-11, 16), perhaps with some type of *flint* (verse 11), seemingly near the ore source. While it remains possible that he carried some type of flint with him to make fire, his wording

implies that it was available at, or near, the location of the ore source. Nephi does not specify the metal he used to make the hatchets, adzes, chisels, twist-drills, hammers and so on needed, but an iron alloy seems the most likely.

11. Despite the attractiveness of the place, the 17th chapter of First Nephi is full of clues indicating that Bountiful apparently had *little or no resident population at that time* who could contribute tools and manpower to the ship building process. Beyond the obvious fact that it required a specific revelation to show Nephi where ore could be found (17:9-10), great effort was then expended by him to fashion his own bellows, locate the ore, smelt it and then manufacture the tools he would need. Such basic items could surely have been easily obtained by anyone living in or near a populated sea-port. It is also clear from the record that Nephi *needed* the labor of his brothers and Zoram; a populated location would offer other sources of labor.

Of course, Lehi could also easily have been directed to bring sufficient wealth from his estate in Jerusalem to purchase an entire ship, or commission the building of one had the group been headed for a shipbuilding area. While one could argue that the shipbuilding stage was part of their preparation for the New World, the group had already faced some eight years of difficult travel dominated by hunger and privation. The more likely reason that they had to construct their own is that no vessels being built in that part of the world were adequate for a journey of the magnitude required.

The continually dissenting Laman and Lemuel seem to have left Bountiful readily enough for a long and dangerous sea voyage, surely their first time on the open sea, when the time came. This suggests that there was little at Bountiful either to distract them from assisting Nephi in building the ship or to entice them to remain. Eight years of encounters with mostly Arab peoples on their journey must have

broadened their cultural outlook; had they been living some time in or near a thriving port, commercial opportunities for wealth would have surely appealed after years of desert privation. Living in or near a center for trade would have given them an easy opportunity to return to their beloved Jerusalem.

Finally, it also seems unlikely that Lehi's group, at such a critical juncture in their journey, would have been intended to settle where they would be exposed to the pagan beliefs then prevalent in Arabia. Rather, the place "prepared" of the Lord may have been intended to keep them apart from other people for that very reason. The fact that any water source in Arabia attracts people, however, requires us to understand why such an attractive place would remain uninhabited most of the time.

12. Coastal conditions had to allow a ship ***access to the open ocean and to suitable winds and currents*** (18:8-9) which could carry the vessel in an easterly direction toward the Pacific coast of the Americas, as Alma 22:28 seems to stipulate when it mentions that the west coast of the land was the place of "first inheritance." However, travel in an eastward direction from the Indian Ocean onwards appears problematic as the prevailing winds and currents generally restrict travel to a westerly direction. A solution to this dilemma is discussed later in the book.

Such a detailed and comprehensive description of a locale is without precedent *anywhere* in the Book of Mormon narrative. None of the criteria are at all peripheral. Archaeologically, only an inscription could normally definitively establish the presence of a small group at a specific location about 600 BC. The Lehiite Bountiful, however, could plausibly be marked by the remains of the rock dwelling places that must have been built for the months of monsoon rain and high winds annually, together with the inevitable detritus found at any inhabited site anciently: broken pottery. Furthermore, traces of the ship construction site and even of Nephi's smelting of metal ore might still be discernable. Even if

located, however, such traces would still require a dating method to link to Nephi's era; after two and half millennia such dating may remain forever tentative.

From *scriptural* perspectives, however, Nephi's account of the place is so specific that locating such traces is not a necessary prerequisite to establishing its plausibility. The numerous details embedded in Nephi's record are the invitation to locate his Bountiful in the real world. Of course, by describing in precise detail a particular location in Arabia, together with the route to get there from Jerusalem, specific directions and even a place-name en route, Joseph Smith put his prophetic credibility very much on the line. Could this young, un-traveled farmer in rural New York State in 1830 somehow have known about a burial area named Nahom and a fertile site on the coast of Arabia? Could a map or some other writing other than the Nephite record have been a source for him? When all of the evidence is examined, the answer is a clear no.⁶ In fact, long after publication of the Book of Mormon, maps of Arabia continued to show the eastern coastline and interior as mostly unknown, unexplored territory. Until the advent of satellite mapping in recent decades, even quite modern maps have misplaced toponyms and ignored or distorted major features of the terrain.

Classical Writings as Possible Sources

From traveler's reports, the Greek and Roman writers knew that not all of Arabia was barren desert. They divided Arabia very roughly into *Arabia Deserta* - the largest part of Arabia, mostly desert - and *Arabia Felix* ("Happy or Fortunate Arabia"). The latter was the near-mythical source of incense, reputedly a place of great wealth, that they supposed was somewhere south of Arabia Deserta. They did not know, as we now do, that the incense came not from the kingdoms in the south but actually originated from much further to their east. The classical

writings are therefore unhelpful in locating a fertile area in Arabia and most were unavailable to Joseph Smith.

The holdings of the libraries that Joseph Smith, his family and associates could have accessed prior to 1830 are now known. With the possible exception of the *Periplus Maris Erythraei* (“*Circumnavigation of the Erythraean Sea*”), a detailed account or guide written by an unknown first-century AD sailor,⁷ other sources such as the earliest, Herodotus (who died about 430 BC), Theophrastus (372-287 BC), Strabo’s *Geography* (ca. 64 BC-AD 19) and Diodorus Siculus’s *Bibliothēke* (ca. 60-30 BC) were based on the reports of others. Pliny the Elder, who wrote *Natural History* (ca. AD 23-79), reportedly had access to some 2,000 books, for example. Some of these writings contain fanciful hearsay elements such as describing “winged serpents” guarding the incense trees. Needless to say, such mythical elements stand in stark contrast to Nephi’s straightforward, vivid, account.

Similarly, the *factual* elements in these writings fail to account for Nephi’s account. In the *Periplus* the incense land is described only as a “mountainous country, difficult to cross, wrapped in thick clouds and fog.” This is true enough during the monsoonal period, but that fact nowhere makes an appearance in First Nephi. The *Periplus* was translated into English in 1807, but was not acquired by any of the libraries accessible to Joseph Smith until 1908. Likewise, Pliny’s account was in print, but unavailable to Joseph Smith. It referred to the land of the people of Minaei as being “fertile in palm groves and timber” and to the land of the Sabaei [Sabaeans] as “irrigated agricultural land” that produced “honey and wax.”⁸ These references actually originated in reports from the irrigated fertile region of Marib, hundreds of miles distant in the Yemen interior, and would not inform anyone of coastal conditions. Not a single early text describes a fertile location on Arabia’s eastern coast. In essence then, the information sources that *could* have

informed Joseph Smith about ancient Arabia were unavailable to him, and were largely misleading and inaccurate in any case.

Later and Contemporary Writings as Possible Sources

Fourteenth-century Moroccan traveler Ibn Battuta passed through Dhofar twice, describing some of the cultivated crops that he saw and the local custom of feeding sardine to cattle. Nothing, however, in his account signals unusual fertility. Nor did the accounts of other travelers, both before and after Battuta. Marco Polo in the thirteenth century, and two Jesuits passing through Dhofar en route to Yemen in the sixteenth century, for example, described aspects of the incense trade, but never the fertile vistas that Joseph Smith ascribed to Nephi.⁹ In the early decades of the nineteenth century, a number of British ships began surveying the southern Arabian coast, among them the survey ship *Palinurus*, without noting any locations of uncharacteristic fertility. In 1833, geographer Andrew Crichton expressed the prevailing view when, after sailing the southern coast of the Arabian Peninsula, he wrote: “The whole southern coast is a wall of naked rocks as dismal and barren as can well be conceived.”¹⁰

The first note of a fertile coastal location was not recorded until 1844, when a survey of the coast was made by Dr. H. J. Carter for the “government of Bombay.” Buried within his detailed report, *A Geographical Description of certain parts of the Southeast coast of Arabia*, is Carter’s description of this fertile area:

A little further, west of the Kais ibn Ammar comes a third ravine or valley, which has a west northwesterly direction. It is called Kharifot and has a stream of water running through it. It appeared rich in vegetation and at its entrance was a large grove of date trees. . . . the ravine of Kharifot, which is separated from the Kais ibn

Ammar by a low mountainous ridge covered with long grass and stunted trees, and scarped upon the sea...

This description was published in Bombay in 1851, twenty-one years after publication of the Book of Mormon.¹¹ Carter's more extended description of the Salalah area generally as "a land of groves, well watered, with lush vegetation" (later echoed in Bertram Thomas's 1928 description) ensured that the focus remained on the larger and more readily accessible Salalah region whenever fertility was discussed.¹²

In 1895, an English couple, Theodore and Mabel Bent, traveled by boat from Salalah in Oman westward to Qishn on the Yemen coast. In addition to general comments about the fertility of Dhofar compared to the arid interior, they noted during their slow sailing along the coast "vegetation here and there," anchoring one night off Rakhyut. They made no mention of Kharifot in particular. Their account reveals another reason that the Mahra coast remained rarely visited: the tribes along the coast had a well-deserved reputation as plunderers and slave traders ("no wise captain ever ventures to land about here if he can help it.")¹³

Long after publication of the Book of Mormon, therefore, descriptions of the eastern Arabian coast continued to be incomplete and selective. The 1952 expedition led by the American Wendell Phillips was the real beginning of scientific research in southern Oman, but this was limited to the Salalah area and only as far west as Mughsayl. His conclusion, sometimes still quoted: "the narrow half-moon shaped plain of Dhofar...[is] the only major fertile region between Muscat and Aden" is thus ultimately misleading. At about this same time, the English explorer Wilford Thesiger reinforced this view with his statement that of the entire 1,400 miles/2,250 km of Arabian coast, only the 20 miles/32 km [of the Salalah area] "get regular rainfall."¹⁴ There are many subsequent accounts from Europeans in Dhofar that

make it clear that the Qamar coast west of Salalah remained very much *terra incognita*, even to the people and leaders of Oman.¹⁵ Hidden by the Qamar Mountains, the most fertile region of all, the one that most closely mirrors Nephi's Bountiful, was not seen by these men. It would remain unknown to the outside world for more than three decades longer.

Was Bountiful where Frankincense Grew?

It is not exaggerating to state that until quite recently almost all that was known about southern Arabia was in connection with the historically important incense trade. Scholars naturally assumed that a frankincense-growing area would be very fertile and would therefore also have the timber and other vegetation that Nephi describes. Furthermore, it was often assumed that incense production in Arabia was limited to the southern province of Dhofar in Oman; LDS scholars reasoned that Lehi had essentially followed the incense trade route in reverse. On this basis, the Dhofar province, which includes the regional capital Salalah, was first proposed as the most likely area of "Bountiful" in 1950 and most writers on the subject since then - including some very recently - have followed this line of reasoning, sometimes refusing to consider other possibilities.¹⁶ In fact, each of these assumptions has proved incorrect.

In his definitive work on the incense trade, Nigel Groom established that both frankincense and myrrh were grown anciently in parts of a coastline that extended from Dhofar in Oman some 500 miles/800 km west to the Hadhramaut region in Yemen. Some limited production of frankincense, for domestic consumption only, also took place on the remote island of Socotra off the coast of Yemen.¹⁷ The trees also grew in small areas of Somalia and Ethiopia, although neither place developed

any significant trade as a result. Today myrrh and frankincense trees continue to be found growing in areas of Dhofar as a local cash crop.

Nigel Groom also demonstrates that the most frequently quoted sources on the incense trade, first and second century accounts such as the *Periplus* and writings by Ptolemy and Pliny, contain errors. Their vagueness when describing where incense was actually grown is a case in point and has resulted in wrong conclusions being made by later commentators. For example, Pliny’s description, usually applied to Dhofar, actually fits the Hadhramaut area in Yemen better. Pliny, writing in the first century after Christ, described the area as follows:

*Eight days’ journey from Sabota [Shabwah] is a frankincense-producing district called Sariba – according to the Greeks the name means “secret.” The region faces north-east, and is surrounded by impenetrable rocks, and on the right hand side bordered by a sea coast with inaccessible cliffs...there are hills rising to a great height, with natural forests on them running right down to the level ground.*¹⁸

Sariba, the frankincense-growing region, is here described as being eight days’ journey from Shabwah. Early writers attest that an overland journey from Dhofar to Shabwah would have required as much as *thirty* days travel. On the other hand, eight days of travel fits a journey from the Hadhramaut area to Shabwah perfectly.¹⁹ In another account, Pliny described the port of Qana, the modern Bir Ali, near Wadi Hajr in the lower Hadhramaut, as actually being “*in* the frankincense producing district.”²⁰ Groom summarizes the situation as follows:

The belief that Arabian frankincense of classical times came only from Zufar [Dhofar] is incorrect. From Zufar the ancient frankincense growing region extended as far west as the Wadi Hagr [Hajr] area of Hadhramaut, where it has recently been found

*growing. The contention that it grew only at an elevation over 2000 feet is also incorrect, although the quality of gums from trees on the coastal plains may be inferior.*²¹

Additionally, the incense bushes grow under such a highly specific range of soil and climatic conditions that they are usually not found growing with other tree types; in fact they can be absent in the most fertile valleys on the Qamar coast of Oman. Rainfall along this coast is often too high for frankincense and myrrh to grow except on well-drained slopes.

While more remains to be learned about trade routes anciently, it is now clear that the major overland route for the transportation of incense began at the port of Qana in the Hadhramaut, rather than in Dhofar. The lack of water sources and settlements in the interior of Dhofar meant that incense from there (mostly frankincense, with smaller quantities of myrrh) was usually shipped by *sea* westward to Qana and the smaller ports at Shihr and Sayhut. Only then was it transported overland to Shabwah and beyond. According to the *Periplus*, which dates back to near the height of this trade, the precious gums were shipped to Qana by small boats and on rafts supported by inflated skins.²²

The following map based on the *Periplus* summarizes the extent of Western awareness of the region in about the first century AD, some seven centuries after Lehi’s day.



A reconstruction based on the 1st century AD *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* shows the major locations and their primary exports. *Moscha*, situated roughly halfway on the eastern Arabian coast, marks the approximate location of southern Dhofar. Image courtesy of PHGCOM and Wikimedia Commons.

The widely-heralded 1992 claim that the lost city of “Ubar” of Arabian legend had been discovered in southern Oman is very relevant to any discussion of the incense trade. Known today as Shisr, the ruins are of a small caravanserai or watering post built at an oasis spring on limestone plains about 95 miles/150 km inland of Salalah. However, the best authorities today, including the original archaeologist involved, dispute that Shisr was ever more than this, much less a “lost city,” pointing out that “Ubar” actually referred to a general land area and not a “city.”²³ Accordingly, in the view of Nigel Groom, Shisr provides no new reason to believe that this place provides confirmation of major land trafficking of incense from Dhofar at any time.²⁴

It therefore seems very unlikely that large or regular shipments of incense from Dhofar reached Shabwah by the difficult direct land routes at any time. This lack of water sources inland of Dhofar actually provides historical confirmation of the very reason that travel (albeit in the reverse direction) from Nahom to Bountiful was the most difficult

stage of Lehi’s journey. Taking all of these data into account it is obviously incorrect to propose the Dhofar region as Bountiful on the basis of incense production, as has sometimes been done in the past.

The 1988-1992 Exploration of the Arabian Coast

It became apparent very early during the author’s first visit to Oman in 1987 that the Salalah area failed to match the description of Bountiful preserved in First Nephi. The only previous visit to the southern region of Dhofar by Latter-day Saint researchers had been the one day visit in 1976 by Lynn and Hope Hilton; they had time enough only to establish that many of the features required were present. These elements, however, were not found in any one area as the text implied. More seriously, several of them, such as timber trees, natural vegetation, fruit and a nearby mountain, seemed altogether absent. It was evident that further exploration was needed before conclusions could be drawn.

Accordingly, the following year, 1988, exploration by the author of the coast west of Salalah commenced. Almost immediately, this determined that the Qamar ranges in the west had greater fertility than the Qara ranges inland of Salalah, demolishing the prevailing belief among LDS and non-LDS scholars alike that the Qara hills were the only place where large trees grew in Arabia. This find reinforced the need to continue exploration further west along the Dhofar coast and into Yemen. It was clear that only ground examination would give reliable data, rather than relying on inadequate mapping and writings by observers with motives and interests far removed from the Book of Mormon.



From 1988 to 1992, the author explored, in stages, the entire east coast of southern Oman and of Yemen, using 4WD vehicles and boats, sometimes accompanied by an armed guard.

Over the following four years, the entire east coast of Yemen, to Aden near the southernmost tip of the Arabian Peninsula, was examined in stages, on the ground, by the author. A brief civil war in 1990 resulted in the timely political reunion of the two Yemen republics, facilitating access to areas long closed to any outsiders. However, military restrictions and the lack of road infrastructure in one of the most isolated and undeveloped parts of the world made progress difficult and slow. The remote nature of this region is further illustrated by the fact that up

to six ancient *non*-Arabic tongues, usually termed the Modern South Arabian Languages (MSAL), are still in use by small numbers of people in the northernmost province of Yemen (al Mahra) and the southern Dhofar province in Oman. During this period of exploration, parts of the remote desert interior of the Mahra province were also explored, yielding significant new insights into conditions related to the final stages of the Lehi’s desert journey.

Finally, in April 1992, the last stage of the survey, the Mahra coast ending at Hawf in Yemen on the border with Oman, was completed. For the first (and so far, only) time the entire eastern coast of the Arabian Peninsula had been explored from LDS perspectives, making objective data about coastal conditions available.²⁵ In fact, the first non-LDS attempt to thoroughly examine the Dhofar coast did not come until the “TransArabia Coastal Survey” from 1992-95. But even this survey was restricted, however, to the coastline between Hasik west to Ras Sajir and thus the remainder of the Qamar coast remained unexamined.

At the conclusion of the author’s exploration the fertility of southern Oman was established as unique; and the place noted by Dr Carter, Kharifot, now known as Khor Kharfot, remained the most plausible Bountiful candidate.

Climate and Coastline Change since Lehi’s Day

Dhofar, the southern region of Oman, is climatically unique. The annual monsoon that sweeps across the Indian Ocean affects the Arabian landmass only in this one area. Three mountain ranges comprise a chain that lies between the interior plains and the coast: from east to west, the Samhan, Qara and Qamar mountains. The westernmost, the Qamar mountains, extend into present-day Yemen. This mountain geography ensures that the winds from the southwest release their

contents (up to 15 inches/38 cm) over a four-month summer period, from approximately June to late August. The lower temperatures from months of mists, dense fog and rain storms provide ideal conditions for vegetation growth. From mid-September to May of each year little rain falls.

A natural question that arises is: has the climate in this part of the world changed appreciably over the last 2,600 years since Nephi wrote his account? Could changes mean that areas now barren were once fertile? Could the coast be different now in ways that would mask the location of Bountiful? The short answer to these questions is no. The Arabian gulf region experienced a moist climatic period from around 800 BC to AD 200, bracketed by longer arid periods; thus Lehi's day fell in a period that makes a fertile "bountiful" easier to understand. Since around AD 200, therefore, there has been widespread reduced rainfall, but otherwise there has not been any significant or appreciable change to the Arabian climate during the last two millennia or longer. And, aside from localized areas of gradual geological movement, such as noted earlier in discussing the Valley of Lemuel, the Arabian shoreline has changed little, if at all, since Lehi's era.

Some data has been reported that suggests that the sea level on the other side of the peninsula in the Arabian *Gulf* may have been perhaps two feet lower ca. 600 BC than at present, although the data there remain unclear in many areas.²⁶ Other variables such as erosion rates and tectonic movement also come into play. In the case of the southern coast of Oman, however, the ruins of coastal cities and buildings, firmly dated more than two thousand years ago, assure us that both coastline and sea levels there have changed little since Lehi's day.

Nephi's Paradigm Applied to the Candidates for Bountiful

By applying the minimum requirements—an accessible coastal inlet with a freshwater source—only seven locations resulted from the survey of the Arabian coast. Within these seven sites there are wide variations with respect to how well they fit the scriptural profile given to us by Nephi. But here, if nowhere else, there can be absolute certainty in one thing—one of these seven places *must* be the original Bountiful—there are no other possibilities. Following is an overview of the seven locations, listed geographically from west to east:

Wadi Hajr, Yemen

Wadi Hajr is one of only three perennial streams reaching the ocean on the eastern coast of Arabia, the others being at Khor Rori and Khor Kharfot in Oman. Nearby lie the prominent promontory of Bir Ali and the ancient sea port of Qana to which incense and other goods were shipped the real beginning of the "frankincense trail." At the port of Qana the overland caravans assembled and began their long desert journey toward the next major staging post -Shabwah.

At Wadi Hajr low hills approach the coast to within about 3 miles/5km. Despite year-round shallow streams, the vegetation at the coast consists only of bushes and small trees; pure desert resumes immediately on each side of the vegetation. There are areas of cultivated palm groves and crops near the small village of As Sufal nearby and further inland.



Wadi Hajr sits amidst a distinctive volcanic landscape in southeastern Yemen. This was the ancient port of Qana, now named Bir Ali, where incense arrived by sea to begin the long overland journey across Arabia.

At a little more than 14 degrees north latitude, Wadi Hajr may be too far south to be described as “nearly eastward” of Nahom/Wadi Jauf and, despite its historical importance to the incense trade, it lacks most of the scriptural criteria for “Bountiful.”

Wadi Masilah, Yemen

Wadi Masilah is the largest wadi system reaching the coast on the Arabian Peninsula. A continuation of Wadi Hadhramaut, Masilah cuts its way dramatically through hundreds of miles of desert plateau until it reaches the coast at 15 degrees and 10 minutes north latitude, near the small village of Al Aiss, about 8 miles/14 km west of Sayhut. The valley carries seasonal run-off through much of its course and has small standing streams at places inland, but it becomes less defined as the dry coastal delta is reached. Aside from stands of date palms, natural vegetation is minimal and the nearest mountains are about 5 miles/8 km from the coast.

Viewed on a map, Wadi Masilah appears to offer a natural and distinctive pathway to the coast. In reality, however, travel through much of it is difficult, as the first Europeans to do so learnt in 1936.²⁷ Furthermore, the coastline here offers no more than dozens of other wadis in Yemen do in terms of vegetation (unimpressive) and timber (none). Travel from the interior through the Hadhramaut/Masilah route would thus give a picture exactly *opposite* to Nephi’s account: the highly cultivated and populated Hadhramaut valley giving way to the much less fertile Masilah valley to terminate at a barren and unremarkable coast.



Wadi Masilah, a continuation of the largest wadi on the entire Arabian Peninsula, the Hadhramaut, reaches the coast in eastern Yemen near Sayhut.

Dhalqut, Oman

Dhalqut is the most westerly coastal town in Oman, only 13 miles/21 km from the Yemen border. Along with the other two candidates on the Qamar coast, Dhalqut's latitude of 16 degrees 42 minutes north is almost exactly east of Nahom. It lies on a narrow coastal strip about 2 miles/3 km long, backed by the flat-topped Qamar mountains that average 3,500 feet/1,100 meters in height, making access to the ocean from the interior difficult. However, the high rainfall and long periods of fog cover has resulted in extensive areas of luxuriant vegetation and trees, including some of the largest remaining trees in Dhofar. Areas of dense woodland extend to the hills behind Hawf, a few miles inside Yemen. A small permanent spring lies on the coast nearly halfway between Dhalqut and Kharfot. Today, dairy farming is practiced in several small settlements in the surrounding hills. Despite lacking a natural harbor, Dhalqut may have once functioned as a small port from which local products such as incense, honey, figs and leather were traded by sea.



The coastal town of Dhalqut in Oman near the Yemen border has some heavily vegetated areas. Visible in the satellite image is Dhalqut's new harbor east of the town and recent road construction across Wadi Sayq.

Wadi Sayq, the valley leading to Kharfot, lies just a few miles inland. Despite lacking a solitary mountain and any natural sheltered inlet suitable for ship-building, Dhalqut's fertility commends it as a serious candidate for Bountiful.

Khor Rakhyut, Oman

A roughly triangular bay about 1 mile/1.5 km across, Rakhyut, at 16 degrees and 15 minutes north latitude is the mouth of Wadi Jinin. Today it is a village of several hundred people based mainly on fishing. The bay offers some shelter from heavy seas and was used as a port in times past, probably shipping incense. In common with all the other *khors* (inlets) in Dhofar a sandbar now separates a small lagoon from the open ocean.



The bay of Rakhyut in Oman. When the monsoon weather makes fishing impossible, local people often camp in the surrounding hills.

The bay and its interior have become seriously degraded by development; natural vegetation is limited to small trees and bushes. Some larger trees grow in the surrounding hills but Rakhyut lacks the fertility of the Dhalqut area. A small isolated peak overlooks the west side of the bay. Access from the extremely rugged interior is quite difficult.

The Salalah Inlets, Oman

Until the author's work in Oman began in 1987, commentary on the likely location of Nephi's Bountiful referred to the general area of Dhofar province or to its capital, Salalah, as the only place fertile enough to be considered a candidate. The 1976 visit by the Hiltons to Salalah reported that several of the features reported by Nephi could be found around Salalah. For example, access to the coast along the wide Salalah bay from the interior deserts is relatively easy; numerous wadis and the rolling Qara ranges offering an easy descent to the crescent-shaped plain. The plain is from 5-12 miles/9-18 km wide, stretching some 45 miles/72 km from Mughsayl in the west to Mirbat in the east.

Freshwater streams flow in the foothills following the annual monsoon period. The closest year-round freshwater source to the coast is the spring of Ayn Razat about 3 miles/5 km inland. Aside from areas of small trees and bushes in the inland valleys, the plain itself is otherwise barren and dry except where modern irrigation is practiced. The hinterland supports numbers of people whose economy is mostly based on simple grazing rather than agriculture.



Most of the inlets on the Salalah bay are visible in this satellite image.

Interspersed with beaches and cliff areas, a series of inlets (*khors*: without mangroves and *qurms*: with mangroves), lie along the coast. The inlets are a focal point for wildlife; birds in particular. From west to east they are:

Khor Mughsayl (0.6 km in area) is a picturesque bay marking the westernmost extent of the Salalah plain and the beginning of the Qamar Mountains. The small inlet is the mouth of Wadi Ashawa where small-scale human traces are visible near the small inlet. Excavations of those traces concluded early in 2013 and determined the dating to be totally within the Islamic period, not earlier.²⁸



Khor Mughsayl lies at the base of the Qamar mountains at the western end of the Salalah bay.



BYU recently excavated atop this headland overlooking Mughsayl.

Qurm as Sagheer and Qurm al Kabir are twin lagoons with a combined area of 0.175 km, bordered by mangrove trees forming an important sanctuary for migrating birds.

Khor Awqad joins two lagoons (0.16 km in area). They mark the western boundary of modern Salalah and the ancient city of Awqad.



Qurm As Saghir is bordered by mangrove trees.



This aerial view shows Qurms As Saghir and Al Kabir with the Hilton hotel between them.



Khor Awqad.



Khor Salalah is an important sanctuary for resident and migrating bird species. In this view
va Grey Heron swoops over Cattle Egrets; both are migrating species.

Khor Salalah is a large inlet in central Salalah, now reserved as a bird sanctuary.

Khor al-Balid is one of the largest of the inlets (1 km in area). Along its banks in the late Iron Age (ca. 2000 BC) arose the original capital of Dhofar, the rectangular city of *Zafar*. Almost surrounded by water, its natural harbor, described by Ibn Battuta and Marco Polo, made al-Balid a leading port on the Indian Ocean. The extensive ruins of the city and its port were excavated and restored until 2012.



Khor al-Balid is one of the largest inlets along the coast of the Salalah bay. It includes the
extensive ruins of Zafar, the ancient capital of the Dhofar region for over a millennium.

Khor Ad Dhahariz (0.6 km in area) marks the eastern boundary of modern Salalah.



Khor Ad Dhahariz lies on the coast at the eastern end of Salalah.

Minor inlets **Khor Razat**, **Khor Sha'a**, **Khor Awsatt**, **Khor Za'atri**, **Khor al-Asla** and **Khor Janaif** cluster along the coast east of Khor Dahariz.



One of several small coastal inlets east of Salalah.

Khor Sawli (1 km in area) may have once functioned as a small port; extensive pre-Islamic burials and traces of other structures line its banks.



A field of ancient, still unexcavated, ruins lies adjacent to Khor Sawli.

Khor Ali bin Mohammed is a minor inlet near the Taqa inlets.

Khor Taqa consists of four separate inlets (over 1.07 km in area) and lies close to Khor Rori. The largest lagoon is fed by a large spring and has extensive freshwater vegetation.

Khors Hassan and **Sabkhar** are minor inlets on each side of Khor Rori.

None of these inlets offer all of the features described in Nephi's account, or any indication that they were ever any different. In particular, they lack the abundance of fruit and timber trees that Nephi described. This continues to be true of **Khor Rori** (discussed next) further east and other inlets further east and north. A typical example is **Qurm Kalba**, a large inlet in Sharjah in the United Arab Emirates, almost exactly on the northern border of Oman, where extensive mangrove trees and reeds grow.



Lined with mangrove trees, Qurm Kalba lies in Sharjah in the United Arab Emirates, next to the northern border of Oman (visible in the background).

Clear evidence that the coastline and sea level has not changed appreciably for several millennia comes from the ruins on the present shoreline of some of these inlets, including the former ports at Khor Rori and Khor al-Baleed. Today, all the inlets are closed to the open sea by sand bars, although it remains unclear whether this resulted from a singular weather event in the past or just from the normal processes of time. There are, for example, indications that the city-port at Khor Rori was gradually abandoned in the fifth century AD as the inlet began to silt up. Whether this is when the other inlets also became closed to the ocean presently remains unknown, but seems likely.

Khor Rori, Oman

On the entire Qara coast, the only specific location that has been seriously proposed as a candidate for Bountiful is the ancient incense port of Khor Rori. Overlooking this large inlet (8.2 km in area) are the ruins of the city-port known anciently as *Sumburam* (or *Samhar*) in early texts. It lies at the end of Wadi Dharbat, which descends across the Salalah plains from the Qara hills. During the monsoon, water descends over a prominent geological feature, an impressively straight “waterfall” rock-face, before running across several miles of barren plain to the coast. Nearing the coast, small trees and bushes begin to proliferate around the large sea inlet, now closed from the open ocean by a sand bar bridging two high cliffs.



This satellite image of Khor Rori shows its source, Wadi Dharbat, in the Qara hills inland.

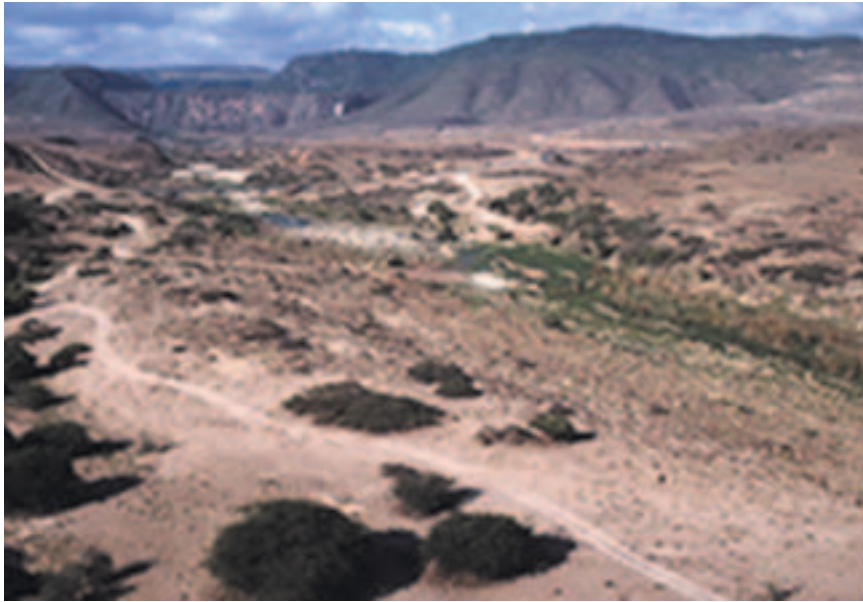
At least from about AD 50 onwards, Khor Rori developed into the major port of the Dhofar area, shipping incense west to Qana. As at 2015 the multi-level ruins of Sumhuram are still being excavated, but are believed to date no earlier than the beginning of the third century BC through the fifth-century AD. Clearly, this dating is too late to have any direct relevance to Nephi’s sixth century *BC* account. And, importantly, there is no evidence that any ocean-going ships were ever *constructed* there or elsewhere in southern Oman.

While Khor Rori is usually equated with the port called *Moscha* in some classical texts, at least one scholar proposed that *Moscha* may lay further west. If that had been the case, it would be another reason why

Khor Rori could not have provided ship-building expertise and sailing information around 600 BC.²⁹ Until the decline of the incense trade Khor Rori was the largest port in Dhofar.³⁰



Monsoonal rain collects in the upper part of Wadi Dharbat before descending across the Salalah plains to Khor Rori. After monsoonal rains, water cascades over the cliff face.



A view looking inland from Khor Rori .



Khor Rori inlet showing the cliffs on both sides of the inlet.



Like all other inlets in Oman, Khor Rori is now closed from the ocean by a sand bar. Aerial image courtesy of the Italian Mission to Oman (IMTO), University of Pisa.



The ruins of the city fortress of Sumhurum looking over Khor Rori. It developed into a major trading port from the 3rd century BC onwards and supported a high population.



A lone Frankincense tree stands among the ruins; a reminder of the port's role in shipping incense.



Unexcavated ruins lining Khor Rori lie below Sumhurum.

In some respects, Khor Rori has much to recommend it as a possible Bountiful. Centuries ago it was a suitable port where ships took on water before transporting incense and other trade items to regional destinations. High cliffs stand at each side of the present sand bar. If climate conditions were more favorable in the past it is possible that timber trees could have grown somewhere inland. Some limited crop growing is probable; however it must be emphasized that even today, the poor soil of the Salalah plains results in little natural vegetation and crops grow only where irrigated. In fact, chapter 29 of the *Periplus*, written within a few hundred years of Nephi's day, describes *Sachalites* - the Salalah bay - generally as a place where locals “perish often from want of food.” Because it had a good harbor and was a source of fresh water, Khor Rori prospered as a *port*, but there are no indications that it ever became a city or settlement of any size.

A straightforward reading of Nephi's account makes it seem highly likely that “Bountiful” had no resident population at the time the

Lehites arrived; if this is so, highly populated Khor Rori is ruled out as a possibility. There is also no elevated place anywhere near the coast; the Qara hills some six miles inland lack any obvious candidates for Nephi's "mount" where he prayed "oft." The nearest distinguishable mountain are the multiple peaks of *Jabal Samhan*, some 25 miles/40 km distant inland, thus requiring a more than 50 mile/80 km round-trip for anyone wishing to pray there. The highest Samhan peaks, about 6,990 feet/2,100 meters high, are not visible from anywhere in this area.



A view from the Samhan mountains overlooking Mirbat, a historic town marking the eastern end of the Salalah bay.

It is interesting to reflect at this point on the situation facing the believer in the divine origin of the Book of Mormon if these six areas were all that Arabia offered. None fulfils all the criteria, and even the best of them falls well short of reflecting the detailed picture Nephi gives us of the place. While most of the requirements for Bountiful can be located scattered over this large region at roughly 17 degrees north latitude, they are not found together in any one place. With the

exploration of the Arabian coast complete, we would have to conclude that either:

The peninsula coast has undergone significant climatic and topographical changes over the past two millennia (for which there is no evidence),

or

Nephi's account is not based on historical reality, but is fictitious.

The skeptic of the Book of Mormon would do well to consider why a consciously fraudulent text would include so many particular and necessary geographical details when its setting, Arabia, was essentially unknown at the time. Logically, a fictional work would keep details to a minimum and descriptions as vague as possible. Instead, we find a text that inadvertently records a wealth of detail, including the names of places, very specific directions and, in the case of Bountiful, extensive descriptive detail. These details have proved to be the means of demonstrating that Nephi's account must have been written by an eye-witness to the events and places recorded.

It was not until the completion of the author's coastal survey in 1992, however, that Latter-day Saints knew that there is another place on the Arabia coast that we can, in the light of scripture and reason, consider as a plausible Bountiful. Hidden from the outside world and remaining largely unknown even within Oman today, unlike the other candidates, this seventh candidate meets all the criteria unusually well. It matches Nephi's description detail for detail. It has also begun to provide us with new insights into the story of Lehi.

Khor Kharfot, Oman



The fertility of Dhofar is evident even from space, in particular the Qara mountains behind the Salalah plains and the Kharfot/Wadi Sayq area. Image courtesy of NASA.



All possible locations for the Old World Bountiful are shown here in relation to Nahom.



The entire length of Wadi Sayq, the primary drainage for the Qamar mountains, stretching eastwards from the interior desert to reach the Dhofar coast is visible in this satellite image.

This remarkable place is the inlet of *Khor Kharfot*. The name *Kharfot* comes from a pre-Arabic *Mahri* term, *Kharifot*, meaning “the monsoon rains have brought abundance to this place.” It is the coastal mouth of *Wadi Sayq* (“River Valley”), a valley some 23 miles/38 km in length stretching eastwards from the interior desert to the Qamar coast of Oman. A much shorter tributary wadi, *Wadi Kharfot*, intersects Wadi Sayq from the north east shortly before the coast is reached. Situated roughly half-way between Dhalqut and Rakhyut, these two valleys provide the major drainage for the Qamar Mountains.³⁰

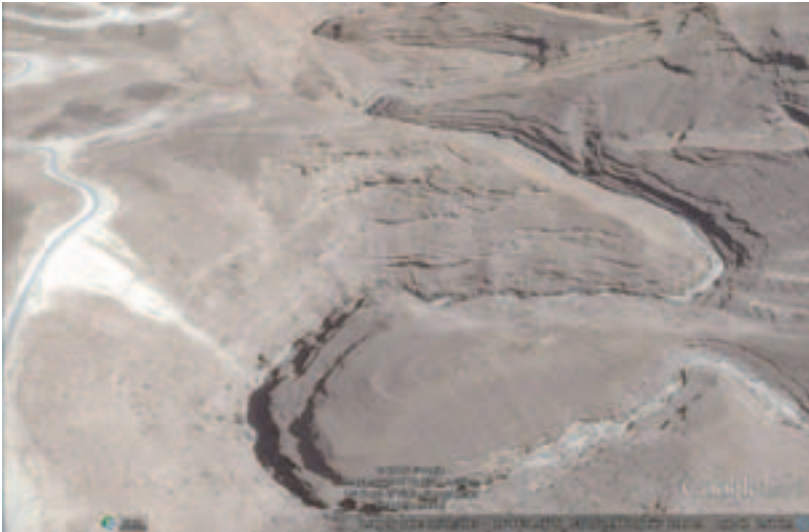
Along with Rakhyut, Kharfot is the only major inlet that lies within the monsoonal zone of Dhofar. This direct rainfall and run-off from the surrounding mountains water results in Khor Kharfot being the *most* naturally fertile coastal location on the Arabian Peninsula, with springs, large trees, fruit and other vegetation.

Even today, our knowledge of the history of the Arabian coast is scant. Politically, for example, over recent centuries Dhofar has suffered periodic occupation and exploitation from the Persian Sassanians, various regimes in Yemen and the Portuguese. Much of the coastal areas of both Yemen and southern Oman have still not been properly examined by scientists of any discipline, and what work has been done is necessarily very tentative. Kharfot lies in the very heart of the most unexplored section of coastline in southern Oman, the Qamar coast at the western extremity of the country. It was not until 1989 that this southernmost region of Oman was properly linked by road to Salalah; previously it could only be reached by sea, or overland by a daunting and circuitous route via the inland settlement of Mudayy. The new road was magnificently engineered to cross Wadi Afawl, a chasm so deep that it almost severs the region from the remainder of the country, and thus real development in the Qamar region became a possibility.

A unique and impressive set of circumstances has kept Khor Kharfot isolated and unpopulated. Enclosed by rugged mountains, land access is very difficult except by traveling through Wadi Sayq from the interior desert, as Lehi would have done. Today this special place remains hidden and unexploited therefore, except for brief visits by local mountain people who bring their livestock down to the coast to graze.



Convex terrain often prevents travel across the Qamar mountains except through the wadis.



Facing eastward, these views of the very beginning of Wadi Sayq show the boundary between the desert plateau and the Qamar mountains.



Within the space of about 2 miles Wadi Sayq changes from pure desert to lush natural vegetation. This sequence of pictures, all taken facing in the direction of travel, eastwards to the coast, makes it clear that terrain and vegetation offer no barriers to a group on camel, or on foot.



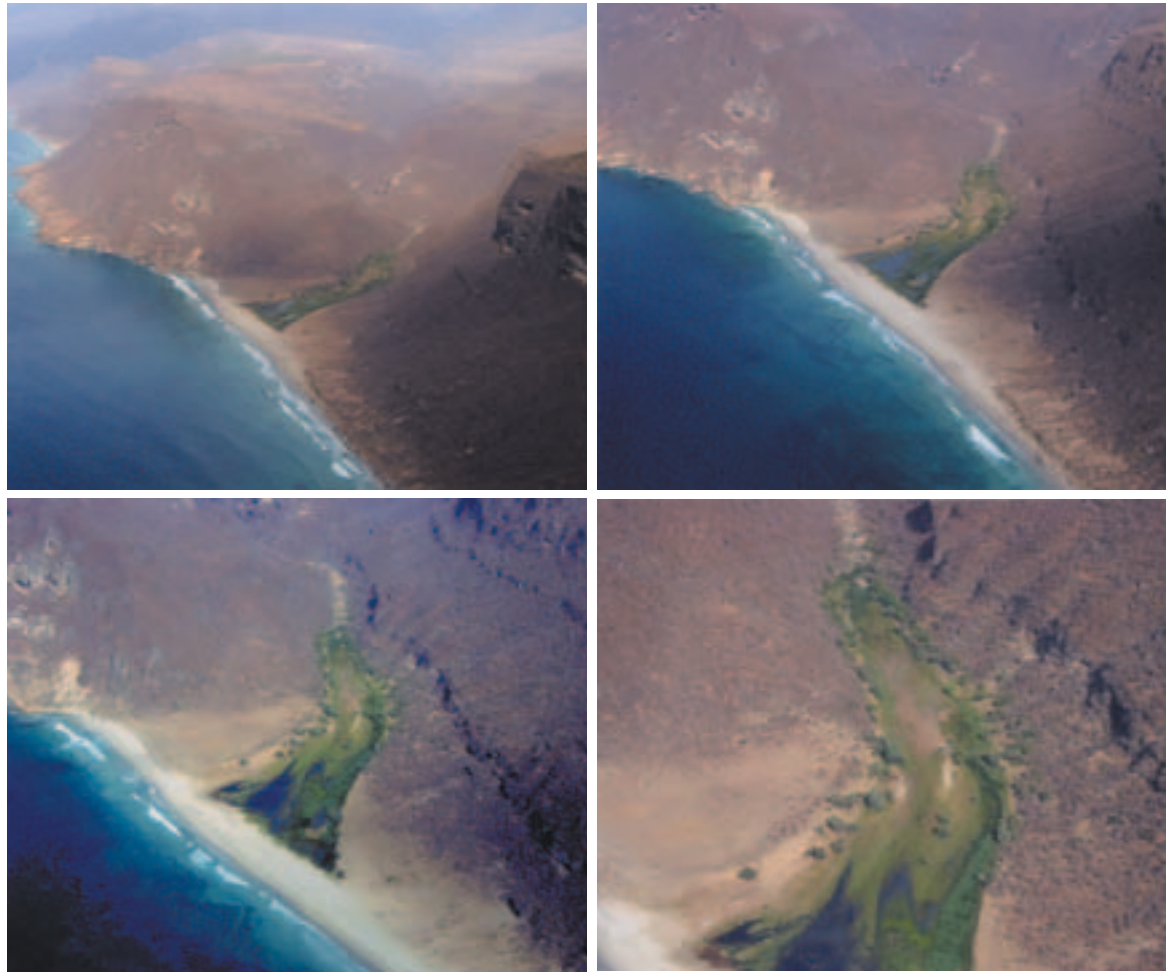
The rocks at the base of Wadi Sayq have been scoured smooth by thousands of annual monsoon floods.

Kharfot itself has escaped attention for another reason. When viewed from the sea, the only other way to access the place, the valley entrance is hidden from view by the oblique angle at which it reaches the coast. The high sand bar across the bay obscures the freshwater lagoon and springs, the trees and most other vegetation from the view of passing vessels. As already noted, early voyages along the Qamar and Mahra coasts typically mention the small port of Rakhyut, but not Khor Kharfot only about five miles away,³² suggesting that not only was no harbor or port then in operation at Kharfot, but also nothing else of particular interest visible to attract attention. In fact, with its most significant features not visible, Khor Kharfot looks rather ordinary when viewed looking inland from the sea. Kharfot's unique characteristics become evident when it is evaluated against Nephi's criteria:

At 16 degrees and 44 minutes north latitude (and 53 degrees 20 min east longitude), Khor Kharfot, lies within one degree of being *eastward from Nahom* which is centered at about 15.6 degrees north latitude. "Nearly eastward" is thus an accurate description of the directional link between the two places. Additionally, the entire roughly 600 miles/970 km route over which a traveler would access Kharfot from Nahom lies in a substantially easterly direction, with no significant detours required by the terrain.

Despite erosion in places, *access from the interior desert* to the coast at Kharfot is feasible even today. As already noted, Wadi Sayq provides a natural, east-bound pathway through

the mountains of the Qamar ranges, easily accessed on foot or on camelback. Scoured by annual run-off floods from the surrounding mountain system that typically reaches 6 feet/2 meters deep, the valley is often less than a hundred feet across. It remains arid until about two miles from the coast. At the junction of Wadi Sayq and Wadi Kharfot are collections of huge rocks carried by annual flash flooding; however these do not prevent movement. Villagers living in the surrounding hills today use narrow trails to bring their livestock down to graze at



These aerial views of Khor Kharfot facing SW show its origin in the Qamar ranges as the end of Wadi Sayq and Wadi Kharfot. The green base of the valley shows the approximate extent of the original sea inlet. Aerial images courtesy of Kim Hatch.

Kharfot. However, Khor Kharfot has remained uninhabited most of the time simply because Wadi Sayq’s beginning lies far out in the desert. For anyone other than a divinely-led prophet, the long miles of travel through the arid valley, with no route out other than by sea, would make little sense. At the present time, the actual beginning of Wadi Sayq lies in a restricted military area almost on the present border with Yemen.



Khor Kharfot can also be accessed via the shorter Wadi Kharfot which intersects Wadi Sayq about a mile before the coast.



This view facing north-east shows Wadi Sayq’s arrival at the coast.

Wadi Sayq has a remarkable concentration of lush vegetation and trees in its coastal delta. Fed by three major springs, the freshwater lagoon stretches to the edge of the beach. Khor Kharfot, and much of the coastline for about 10 miles/16 km further west to Hauf in Yemen, is uniquely fertile. While Kharfot itself best matches Nephi’s description of the “place” Bountiful where they lived and built their ship, *the general area also has remarkably luxuriant vegetation* as Nephi implies in his description. The vegetation includes timber trees at Dhalqut. Otherwise, many hundreds of miles of unrelenting barrenness stretch along the coast in each direction from this one green coastal location in all Arabia.³³



Khor Kharfot is a uniquely-fertile pristine coastal location. Flamingo image courtesy of Sherry Chew.



Although now closed from the ocean by a beach, the lagoon marking the original inlet lies below sea-level, evident in this view facing almost west.

Kharfot was a *sea inlet* until a sand bar formed across the bay and created the present beach. As the coast of Oman is gradually submerging,

allowing the sea to flood the mouths of wadis, long-shore currents soon deposit sand across the mouth of the wadis. The sand bar must certainly have been in place prior to the nineteenth century visits noted earlier; their detailed descriptions of the coast ensure that Kharfot would certainly have rated a mention if it was still then an inlet.³⁴ As a sea inlet, Kharfot would offer the ideal situation for construction of a ship, one sheltered from monsoon storms but still providing ready access to the open sea. Today, the contours of the sea inlet are easily determined; the bay remains from 20-40 feet/6-12 meters below sea level.



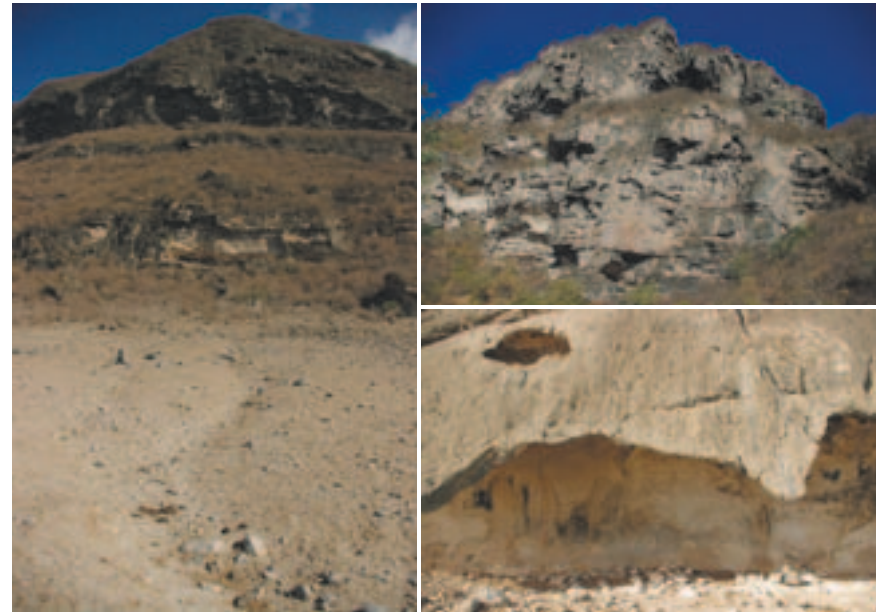


Kharfot is depicted as it may have appeared in Lehi and Sariah's day, a sea inlet with less-eroded cliffs on the western plateau. Original oil painting by Barbara Packham.

Khor Kharfot and its immediate surrounds have a unique biodiversity constituting the most naturally-fertile location anywhere in Arabia. At any time of the year, the vegetation in and near Kharfot is impressive, but - like the remainder of the Dhofar province - it is especially luxurious late in the year, after the monsoon rains. Nephi's enthusiastic description of Bountiful makes it seem highly likely that the Lehites arrived there in the months of September or October, before the dry winter season begins.



The moist summer period in the Dhofar region in southern Oman results from the edge of the monsoon reaching the land. The “Coriolis Force” from the rotation of the earth opposes the direction of the NE monsoon and forces the ocean surface to move eastwards. The up-swelling of colder ocean water results in low clouds, fog and mist that release their moisture along a narrow band of coastline when they encounter the mountains, as in these views of monsoonal mists at Kharfot and near Mughsayl. The landscape also bears the imprint of heavy rain as numerous drip-curtains and eroded gullies. Map courtesy of Shahina Ghazanfar.



Water erosion in the limestone cliffs and gullies show the effects of substantial water activity at Kharfot over a long period.



Bees swarm a date palm and flowers next to the beach at Kharfot. Bumblebee close-up courtesy of Judith Grimes.



A rarely-seen bee honeycomb in a fig tree at Kharfot.

Only at this place could a traveler arrive in ancient times and find uncultivated *fruit* already near the ocean as Nephi indicates, the prime factor giving rise to the descriptive name “Bountiful.” The fruit referred to was noteworthy for its abundance, not necessarily its *variety*. Three species of wild fig, a familiar staple in Lehi’s world, are prolific in this area today and, along with dates, tamarind and passion-fruit, probably constituted most of the “fruit” that Nephi referred to. The mention of honey may refer not only to the obvious wild bee *honey*,³⁵ which is readily found at Kharfot, but also to the heavy syrup extracted from fruits such as figs, dates and grapes.

Other edible food sources include reed bulbs, palm hearts, nuts, berries, seeds, herbs and roots, many of which are used by people in Dhofar today. Reeds in particular had high value in ancient societies as a source of food, fuel, thatch and medicine. A handful of the almost-extinct Arabian Leopard (*Panthera pardus nimr*), together with wolves,

porcupines, rock hyrax and striped hyenas still live here and there is a variety of other small game and over 100 bird species, some of them potential food sources.

Additionally, there remains the strong possibility of an additional and very significant resource for the Lehite group -the coconut palm (*Cocos nucifera*). If the coconut, either wild or cultivated, existed at Kharfot in that period the group would have had a resource whose usefulness can hardly be overstated. As one recent study notes, the coconut’s impact on “the history of human dispersal in the humid tropics is unparalleled in the plant kingdom.”³⁶ Its scores of uses include food, water, oil, medicine, rope, cloth, building materials, utensils and charcoal.

While little is yet certain about the earliest arrival of the coconut in southern Oman, three logical possibilities exist. Firstly, before human settlement, a thick-husked, slow-germinating type may have arrived naturally as floating nuts were carried by Indian Ocean currents, becoming established on the monsoon-watered Dhofar coast, a near-perfect environment for a species that thrives in high humidity, heat and salinity. In the second process, if no coconuts were already present, human settlers bringing seed nuts or seedlings may have been the agent for its introduction. The third possibility would be that wild palms were already found when human settlers brought a thinner-husked, quicker-germinating type with them. Both types can cross-pollinate and be improved by settlers on the coast.



While the coconut is not present at Khor Kharfot in modern times, palms are cultivated a few miles away at the settlement of Khor Rakhyut.

Of course, these three possibilities are not mutually exclusive. In Dhofar today, most coconut plantations are of recent imported varieties, however, the coconut's presence is attested from earlier periods. The fourteenth-century traveler Ibn Battuta's account mentions, for example, seeing coconut groves in Dhofar,³⁷ but there are much earlier historical sources from the surrounding region. The earliest seems to be an ancient text on Indian medicine, the *Susrutas Ayur-Veda* dated to around 1400-1000 BC, which names the coconut as a medicinal plant. This links with the report from a Greek physician named *Ctesias* about 415 BC that he had seen coconuts while traveling in India. Other reports make

it clear that the coconut was well-known and being utilized in the region long before Lehi and his group arrived.³⁸

Although largely overlooked in historical studies, a potentially significant aspect of the coconut's presence lies in its hard, close-grained, outer timber. As with its highly-valued fiber, the palm timber is seawater-resistant and is ideal for boat building. In widely separated places such as the Maldives, Sri Lanka, Hawaii and the east African coast, coconut timber was long used to build ships as large as the large lateen-rigged *dhow*s that traded across open oceans. The wood was used not only for masts, yards, oars and anchors, but the hulls themselves. Some accounts describe the importation of coconut timber from Indian Ocean islands and from Yemen for ship construction; other early records have Arabs journeying to Sri Lanka to harvest the timber and build vessels.³⁹

Genetic studies suggest that the earliest coconut species in Dhofar "shares ancestors with those in East Africa and in the islands of the South-Western Indian Ocean" and likely first arrived by ocean dispersal.⁴⁰ This makes it seem certain that ca. two and a half millennia ago at least *wild* coconut palms were probably present there, something that only dateable coconut shells or *phytolith* (plant micro-fossils) analysis could now confirm. The fact that Kharfot has seen periodic human settlement since at least the Neolithic era also increases the possibility that coconut palms may have been cultivated there, and thus improved, by the time of Lehi and Sariah's arrival. In either case, the Lehites may have had not only all that this remarkable plant offers, but also an additional source of hardwood timber for shipbuilding.

All these land resources are further augmented by what the *ocean* offers anyone camped on its shores. In addition to nesting turtles, shoals of sardine and other small fish can easily be caught by nets from off the beach and could also have been herded into nets in the shallow inlet waters, providing a ready food source not only for the group but for their

animals, just as local people do today. A small canoe or boat would have allowed larger fish to be caught only a short distance offshore outside of the monsoon period. While the abundant lobsters would likely not have been eaten by the Lehites, shell-fish and crabs would provide bait meat and shells for implements. In fact, the plentiful sea life all along the coast likely holds the key to understanding how Lehi's group with its limited manpower could derive enough protein from their environment without diverting substantial time and energy to hunting. Fish not proscribed by Mosaic Law likely formed a large part of the Lehiite's diet once they lived at Bountiful.



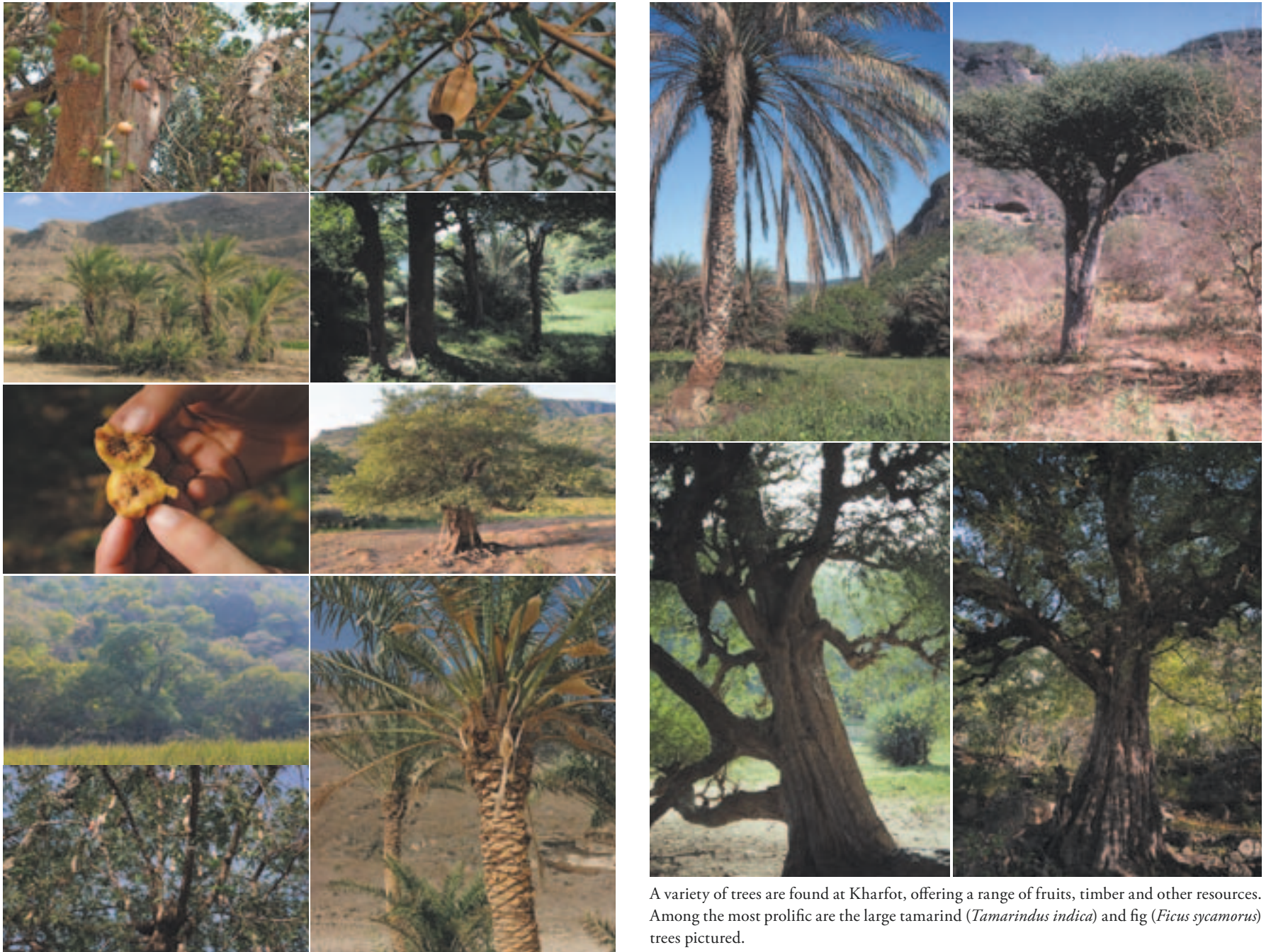


Glimpses of the floral and faunal abundance found at Kharfot today. Flower image courtesy of Alana Aston Orth; butterfly, chameleon, caterpillar images courtesy of Paul Hume; offshore fishing image courtesy of Leah Aston Puikkonen; gecko image courtesy of Brandon Richards; Blue-cheeked Bee-eater (*Merops persicus*) bird image courtesy of Scot Facer Proctor.

Only limited botanical surveys have so far been made at Khor Kharfot itself, but some 850 species of plants are believed to grow in the region. Eventually it is hoped that *phytoliths* will eventually reveal the various species present around 600 BC. But even what we do know paints an impressive picture of abundance.

Kharfot is the last remaining pocket of the subtropical deciduous woodland that existed anciently in parts of Oman. Small pockets of this forest also survive in three locations in Yemen (at nearby Hawf, at Jebal Bura'a east of Hodeidah and on the island of Socotra), but Kharfot is the only remnant in Oman. In addition to the possibility of coconut timber (*Cocos nucifera*) discussed earlier, major **timber** species still growing at Kharfot offer both hard and soft woods; they include the tamarind (*Tamarindus indica*), three fig species including *Ficus sycamorus* - the biblical sycamore tree and various acacia (*Acacia*) species). The heartwood of the tamarind, for example, is highly valued for planking, axles and wheels.

The largest surviving tree in the area today, a relic baobab (*Adansonia digitata*), a few miles away near Dhalqut, measuring over 45 feet/14 meters in circumference, is useful but most of its timber is unsuitable for shipbuilding. However, other tree species at Kharfot ranging up to about 22 feet/7 meters in girth grow almost to the very shores of the inlet. They could thus have been cut and dressed on the spot, allowing Nephi and his brothers to use their time and energy to the maximum in construction. No need whatsoever exists to consider importing timber from outside the area, as was necessary in northern Oman.



A variety of trees are found at Kharfot, offering a range of fruits, timber and other resources. Among the most prolific are the large tamarind (*Tamarindus indica*) and fig (*Ficus sycamorus*) trees pictured.



This large baobab tree measuring over 45 feet/14 meters in circumference grows a few miles west of Kharfot. It is one of only 27 baobabs remaining in Dhofar, a relic of the extensive forests of earlier times.

Kharfot is the largest natural *fresh water* source on the Arabian Peninsula, surpassing all of the other wadis in terms of the volume of water reaching the coast. Drip-curtains on the limestone cliffs overlooking the bay and gullies are clear indications that substantial water has drained down into the valley in the past. Today, water remains abundant all year-round from three large natural springs in the last mile of Wadi Sayq. Its collection would have required little or no effort for anyone encamped there for an extended period. Wadi Sayq serves as the outlet for a large area of the Qamar Mountains and major flooding down the wadi occurs during the monsoonal months. Aside from grass, trees and bushes, there are dense stands of reeds (*Phragmites australis*), rush (*Juncus*) and cattail/bulrush (*Typha*), growing according to the salinity of the groundwater. All are useful species, known in various cultures as sources of food; thatch for roofs, mats and baskets; material for spears, bows, arrows, fencing and tinder.



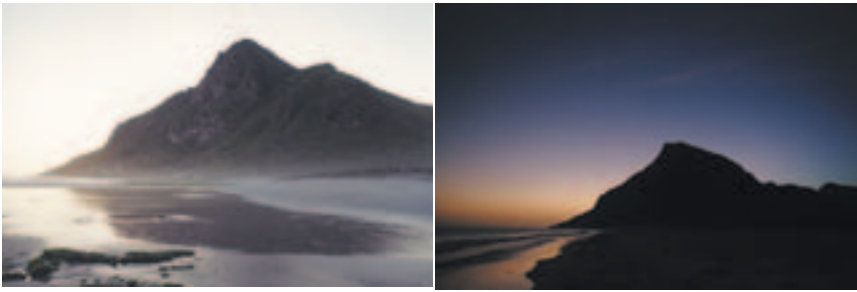
Three springs at Kharfot supply abundant fresh water year-round.



Reed and cattail (bulrush) species are prolific at Kharfot.

On the west side of the bay stands *a prominent mount*, the obvious candidate for the “mount” that Nephi retired to pray “oft.” Towering over the small plateau that is the most likely place for an encampment, this peak would offer seclusion without using valuable time to reach it. The rocky peak contains several natural cavities and platforms that would offer readily-accessed privacy for anyone wanting a place to pray and receive revelation.

At the edge of the small plateau lie *cliffs* averaging 50-60 feet/15 18 meters high with sharp rocks at their base, providing an eminently suitable place to dispose of a troublesome younger brother. Erosion of the cliff face is clearly evident, indicating that the plateau would have extended out further several thousand years ago.



The prominent mount on the west side of the bay.



Seen here in the dry season, the mount's irregular terrain offers a variety of cavities and platforms to anyone seeking solitude. The second view looks down from the summit over one such area.



The level areas of the western plateau beneath the mount would suit a sheltered encampment. Ruins of ancient structures are found there in abundance and cliff erosion leaves a formidable drop to the rocks below. Panorama from cave courtesy of Colin Ligertwood.

Nephi, who may have been a smelter of metals like his father,⁴¹ was familiar with gold, silver and copper for he mentions their presence in the New World (18:25), yet he says only that "ore" was smelted at Bountiful. Long before Nephi's day the smelting and use of bronze (copper hardened with the addition of another substance, usually tin) from about 2500 BC onwards and iron, from about 1300 BC onwards, is attested in Oman. In particular, significant quantities of copper were

LEHI AND SARIAH IN ARABIA

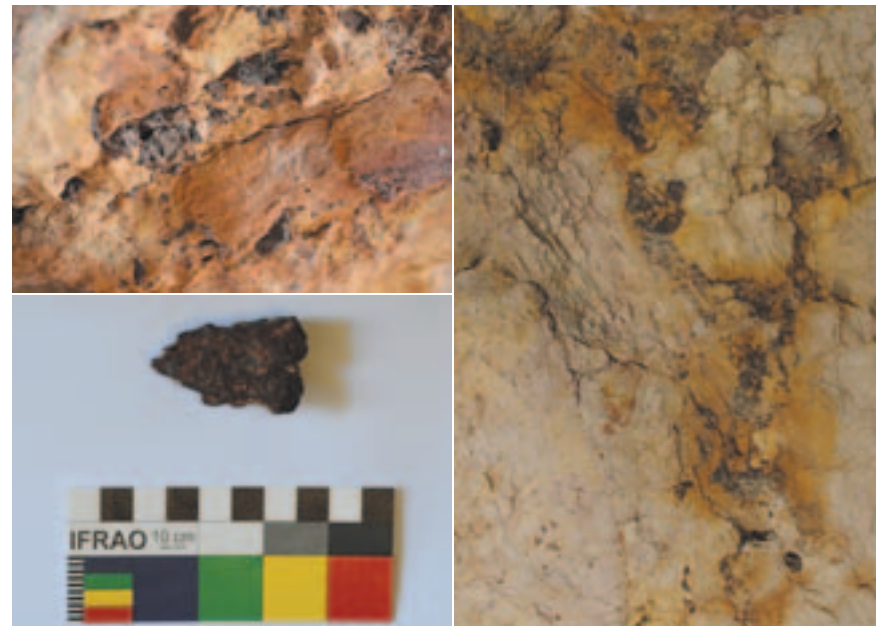
mined and smelted in *northern* Oman. The process that Nephi describes closely mirrors the ancient copper smelting technique. Excavated sites show that small pear-shaped furnaces about 2 feet/0.6 meter high were built. Skin bellows fanned the wood fire to around 1,500 degrees C, allowing small pieces of sulphidic ore, mixed with charcoal, to be repeatedly refined until a fairly pure copper resulted. The copper was then poured into a hole in the ground to cool.

While Nephi's text describes a very similar smelting process, "Bountiful" can only lie hundreds of miles south in the fertile Dhofar region of *southern* Oman. Geologically, the south of Oman is very different from the north and the presence of metals, including copper, has remained almost unknown. However, LDS exploration over the last decade has identified previously unknown iron deposits at several sites, including locations east of Rakhyut and at Mirbat.⁴² While a complete mineralogical survey of Dhofar has yet to be made, beginning in 2009 a variety of iron ore traces were also found in the bay of Kharfot. Any of these locations would have yielded smelt-able iron in the quantities needed to make tools.

A few miles inland of Kharfot, above the folds of Wadi Sayq, are significant *flint deposits*. Here huge quantities of reddish chert (the color probably indicating the presence of iron) lie exposed in limestone seams and nodules. They would have been readily available for use in making fire. Geologists are still beginning to understand the structure of the Qamar ranges in which Kharfot lies; one geological outline of the Kharfot and Wadi Sayq area suggests the potential not only for metals, but hydrocarbon deposits.⁴³



This reconstruction of Early Bronze Age copper smelting closely parallels Nephi's account.



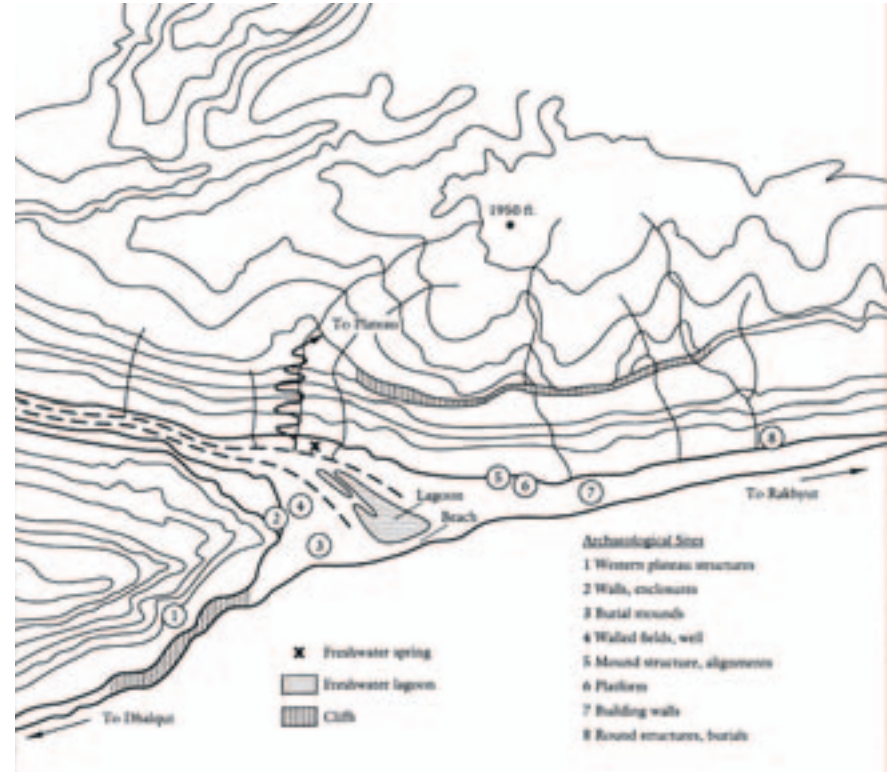
Examples of iron ore recently identified at Kharfot.
Reconstruction image courtesy of Deutsches Bergbau-Museum.



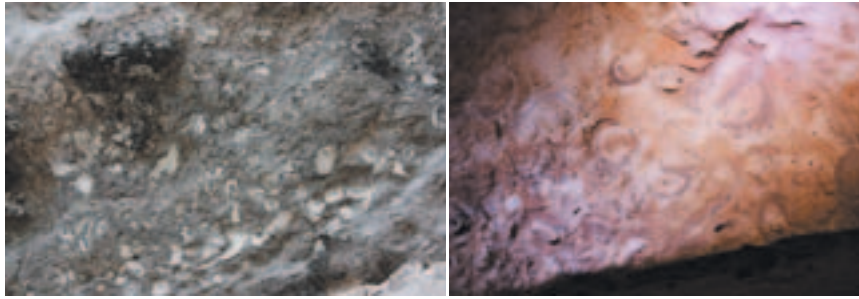
Extensive flint deposits are found inland of Kharfot.

As noted it is evident, for several reasons, that Kharfot has been *unpopulated* for most of its history. These brief periods of occupation increase the likelihood to near certainty that it was uninhabited when the Lehitites lived here, thus explaining why Nephi needed a revelation to locate ore and the work involved in producing basic items like tools. Traces of past occupation are easily observed at Kharfot and seem to be confined to the area immediately adjacent to the coast. The largest and most prominent structure, standing some 20 feet/6 meters high, sits on an elevated vantage point above the beach on the east side of the bay. A rectangular platform is clearly visible at its base and radiating out from it (or to it) are rock-lined channels, some stretching hundreds of feet, where water may have been directed. It has been variously suggested as being the remains of a watchtower, a "fort" or the base of a pulley system to bring goods down to the shore - all unlikely - or as some kind of ceremonial place. Its purpose remains unclear.

Kharfot may have operated at some time in the past as a collection point for incense brought from the interior, perhaps functioning as a small port from where the product was shipped further west along the coast. The structure may be somehow related to this activity. Elsewhere, the outlines of small buildings and animal enclosures are found; along the highest point of the beach are graves and the remains of a small mosque oriented toward Mecca. These structures thus date to a period of occupation since the arrival of Islam. On the small western plateau, however, are the remains of much older buildings, possibly dating to the Iron-Age, reminding us that most of the history of this place remains to be revealed.⁴⁴



A basic map of the human traces at Kharfot, courtesy Paolo Costa.



Hints of fertility in Kharfot's distant past show in these fossil deposits. The left image shows a variety of shell fossils (image courtesy of Paul Hume); the right image shows ancient marine organisms, possibly tubular *Rudist* bivalves or *crinoids*, inside two small caves (image courtesy of Varian Aston).



Traces of human occupation at Kharfot are varied, abundant and still only partially understood.

Only one example of “rock art” exists at Kharfot, a collection of pictograms depicting animals, a ship and a double inscription - one in

Arabic and one in an older, unidentified, script - on a sheltered rock wall that overlooks the eastern side of the bay. The age of the graffiti and possible relationship to the other human traces remains unknown. Various specialists have noted some similarities of the older script with *Musnad* (the monumental South Arabian script) and various ancient North Arabian scripts, but believe it may have developed locally in Dhofar at an early period.⁴⁵



The rock-art and graffiti at Kharfot includes a ship with a sail and a double inscription; the lower script and its dating remains uncertain.

At this time there are no data to indicate that *winds and currents* currently vary appreciably at various parts of the Dhofar/Mahra coast where the only Bountiful candidates can be found. The major climatic event each year is the monsoon in the June to August summer months. A combination of the SW winds and the earth’s rotation, the *Coriolis Effect*, generates a movement of the ocean surface in a SE direction, generating winds that have carried mariners east across the Indian

Ocean for thousands of years. They made it possible for Oman to develop as a major center for maritime trade that extended as far east as China and south to the African coast and to Egypt. In fact, the word monsoon derives from the Arabic *mawsim*, meaning “the date for sailing from one port in order to reach another.” In Dhofar, however, the monsoons bring storms, rain, fog and heavy seas, making launching a boat dangerous. A more significant concern is that the construction site of the ship must offer ready *access to the open ocean*, which Kharfot does.

A Totally Plausible “Bountiful” Candidate Emerges

When considered together, all these factors reveal a location that is totally appropriate for the events that Nephi describes, conforming to *every* detail found in the scriptural account. There are no inconsistencies, nor has there been any need to exaggerate the virtues of the place. Of the candidate sites, Khor Kharfot most closely fits the Book of Mormon Bountiful and does so in impressive detail. Unique circumstances seem to have set this place aside for the special purpose of allowing Lehi, Sariah and their family a place to rest, build their ship and prepare for their monumental sea voyage without competing with others for resources and without outside distractions. While firm dating of the structures remains to be done, the possibility exists that Lehi and Sariah’s group may have even arrived to find various structures such as dwelling places, animal enclosures and fields abandoned from earlier occupants, thus allowing their full energies to focus on the ship construction. As impressive as these findings and possibilities are, however, all that can be concluded in the scientific sense is that a *totally* plausible location can now be demonstrated for Nephi’s Bountiful, effectively removing the burden of “proof” from the Book of Mormon and placing it upon the reader.

While much more fieldwork remains to be done, the LDS scholarly community has generally accepted the implications of the survey of the Arabian coast completed in 1992 and the work done since in southern Oman in connection with Nephi's Bountiful. In late 1993, for example, FARMS reported the first expedition to Kharfot in some detail, concluding:

*Khor Kharfot and its environs have all the features mentioned in the Book of Mormon in connection with Old World Bountiful. It has no features that would conflict with the Book of Mormon account. A survey of alternative sites in the Arabian Peninsula has turned up no others that come close to fitting the criteria for Bountiful so well. On this analysis, Khor Kharfot emerges as the most probable site for Lehi's Bountiful.*⁴⁶

Noel B. Reynolds, past president of FARMS and until 2005 its Executive Director, offers this assessment of Kharfot based on his participation on the April 1993 expedition:

*There now exists convincing evidence that an obscure location at the extreme western end of Oman's Dhofar coast, Khor Kharfot, is the probable location of Nephi's Bountiful.*⁴⁷

A photograph of Khor Kharfot illustrated the authoritative and quasi-official 1991 *Encyclopedia of Mormonism's* entry on "The First Book of Nephi,"⁴⁸ the section dealing with Lehi's trail in the 1992 FARMS book *ReExploring the Book of Mormon*⁴⁹ and is often used in official Church Education System student materials.⁵⁰ A January 2000 *ENSIGN* article by Daniel Peterson, "Mounting Evidence for the Book of Mormon" offered the most current and comprehensive summary of recent Book of Mormon research to the general membership of the Church. In it, he mentioned that in recent decades "Latter-day Saint scholars and explorers have refined our understanding of that route

through actual visits and systematic surveys of the area, enabling us to identify likely Book of Mormon locations in Arabia," footnoting the author's book and papers on Bountiful and Nahom and other materials that have resulted from that research.⁵¹ In 2000 the story of the discovery of Kharfot featured in a popular LDS novel, *Into the Light*.⁵²

Wadi Sayq/Kharfot was referenced in regard to the Old World Bountiful in the 2005 publication of the "Reader's Edition" of the Book of Mormon⁵³ and a photograph of Kharfot was used to depict a possible Bountiful site in the anthology *Glimpses of Lehi's Jerusalem*, published by FARMS in 2004.⁵⁴ The January 2008 issues of the Church magazines *New Era* and *Liahona* contained photography of Kharfot to represent how Nephi's Bountiful may have appeared.⁵⁵

Kharfot's unique features have not gone unrecognized by the scholars and government of Oman either. Beginning in 1987, Kharfot was designated a "Site of Special Value" by the government's Planning Committee for Development and Environment in the Southern Region. In 1990, noting that Khor Kharfot was "unusual in that it is the only major Khawr that lies within the monsoon zone of Dhofar (other than Khawr Rakhyut, which is environmentally degraded)," it and Wadi Sayq were named as a "Nature Reserve" within the larger Jabal al-Qamar Scenic Reserve. This action gave it formal protected status.⁵⁶ In the years since then, Khor Kharfot has regularly garnered attention in the Omani media as a site with unique characteristics and one that is environmentally sensitive.⁵⁷ On November 4th, 1991, Kharfot was the site in the Qamar area chosen by Omani officials for a visit by HRH The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince Philip, in his role of International President of the Worldwide Fund for Nature.



In his role as International President of the Worldwide Fund for Nature, HRH Prince Philip visited Kharfot on Nov 4, 1991.

Comparing Khor Rori and Khor Kharfot

In his archaeological evaluation of Kharfot, Dr. Paolo Costa noted that its features are “indeed comparable to Khor Rori, although on a much smaller scale.” Re-stated, Khor Kharfot is an inlet offering a sheltered harbor with significant natural timber resources on hand and all the food commodities needed to supply a sailing ship. It differs from Khor Rori in its smaller size and in the fact that Khor Rori’s few fertile areas seem to have always existed only well inland. As noted earlier, from a scriptural perspective, Khor Rori also lacks the “mount” that Nephi refers to.

To propose that Khor Rori was where Nephi built his ship and that this area was the place “Bountiful” we must propose major changes in the vegetation of the area from the present day. No evidence for

such changes has yet been identified. Fruit and timber trees must have been present where none are today in a similar climate. Nephi would have required a fifty plus mile round trip journey to reach a mountain where he could pray often. Finally, the last years of the Lehite’s land journey would thus have been spent in the midst of a pagan community who were probably primarily a small livestock farming and fishing community with commercial harvesting and shipping of incense still developing. The entire Lehite land route would thus be reduced to little more than following a trading route in reverse.

Against this improbable scenario the conditions found some fifty miles further west at the indisputably more fertile Khor Kharfot in the Qamar ranges contrast strongly. Here, *all* the elements of Nephi’s description come to light and remain visible to this day. The unique location and features of Wadi Sayq and Kharfot would require divine guidance to locate and could thus truly be described as a place “prepared of the Lord.” It is revealing that the only attempt to link Bountiful to a specific location other than Kharfot came in 2003, not only ignoring significant features from Nephi’s account, but misrepresenting a significant number of facts about Khor Kharfot in order to make its case.⁵⁸ By so doing, the authors inadvertently underscored the fact that Kharfot (a place they had never actually visited themselves until early 2010), remains the most credible candidate for Bountiful.

Of course, as the only two candidates that have been seriously proposed as the Old World Bountiful, they share some commonalities. Both are close enough to being “nearly eastward” from Nahom; both are sheltered inlets accessible from the desert interior. Additionally, both sites have freshwater sources, flint sources, cliffs and offer ready access to the Indian Ocean. Both also have adjacent caves, a valuable resource that ancient peoples in a hot climate would have utilized. The *differences* between the two places, however, are striking. These are summarized below:

<u>Scriptural feature</u>	<u>Khor Rori</u>	<u>Khor Kharfot</u>
Surrounding area also fertile	No	Yes
Much fruit and wild honey	No	Yes
Shipbuilding timber on hand	No	Yes
A nearby “mount”	No	Yes
Metal ore	Nearby	Yes
Unpopulated location	No	Yes

When measured against Nephi’s detailed word-picture of Bountiful, Khor Kharfot overwhelmingly emerges as the better of the two candidates. The fact that such an improbable place exists at all is remarkable enough; that it meets Nephi’s description in every regard, and particularly that it lies almost directly “eastward” of Nahom, marks its discovery as a major development in the unfolding of evidence concerning Nephi’s record.

NOTES

1. *The welcome contrast of abundant greenery after periods of desert travel has been noted in this area by others since Nephi. Compare the elation and relief expressed by Bertram Thomas arriving at the Dhofar coast after only a few weeks in the desert, in Arabia Felix: Across the Empty Quarter of Arabia (New York: Charles Scribner & Sons, 1932), 48-49. Thomas and his party arrived near modern Salalah, a place significantly less verdant and impressive than Khor Kharfot. He did not venture further west of Salalah than Raysut (see p. 101 and main map).*

For evidence that vegetation in the region was sometimes more luxurious anciently, see Margareta Tengberg, “Vegetation History and Wood Exploitation in the Oman Peninsula from the Bronze Age to the Classical Period” in “Charcoal Analysis, Methodological Approaches, Palaeo-ecological Results, and Wood Use,” in S. Thiebault, ed. British Archaeological Reports (BAR) International Series no. 1863 (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2002), 141-145.

2. *Paul Y. Hoskisson, with Brian M. Hauglid and John Gee, “Irreantum” in JBMS 11:1 (2002), 90-93. The Book of Mormon Onomasticon listing for “Irreantum” summarizes possible derivations and sources at <https://onoma.lib.byu.edu/onomal/index.php/IRREANTUM>*
See also “Bountiful” <https://onoma.lib.byu.edu/onomal/index.php/BOUNTIFUL> noting a possible Old Testament analog for the conjunction of the words Bountiful and Irreantum in 1 Nephi 17:5.
3. *The statement by the Rev. Elisha Andrews (1787-1840) appeared under the pseudonym of “Gimel” in a piece titled “Book of Mormon” in The Christian Watchman (Boston, 7 October 1831), 268-274 (emphasis added). It can be accessed at <http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/BOMP/id/406>.*
4. *See the entry “Arabia” in Encyclopaedia Britannica, 14th ed. (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica Inc, 1959); also see the Encyclopaedia of Islam, 2nd ed. vol.1 (1960), 538 to see how Arabia was viewed. The attack on the possibility of an Arabian “Bountiful” comes in Thomas Key, A Biologist Looks at the Book of Mormon (Issaquah, WA: Saints Alive in Jesus, 1985), 1-2. This quote originates in a longer article cataloging a long list of supposed scientific problems in the Book of Mormon; see “A Biologist Examines the Book of Mormon,” in Journal of American Scientific Affiliation 37 (Wheaton, IL: The Affiliation, June 1985), 96-99. For another example of arguments against the Book of Mormon, see Tal Davis, A Closer Look at The Book of Mormon (Atlanta: Home Mission Board, Southern Baptist Convention, 1993).*

More recent works of this genre typically now ignore the claimed Old World setting to focus almost exclusively on the New.

5. *See, for example, the maps published in S. Kent Brown & Peter Johnson, eds. Journey of Faith: From Jerusalem to the Promised Land (Provo: NAMIRS, 2006), inside front cover; S. Kent Brown, “Jerusalem Connections to Arabia in 600 BC” in Glimpses of Lehi’s Jerusalem, 627; S. Kent Brown, “Voices from the Dust” (American Fork, UT: Covenant, 2004), 29 and his “New Light from Arabia on Lehi’s Trail” in Echoes and Evidences of the Book of Mormon, 58; in Potter and Wellington, Lehi in the Wilderness, 114 and in Hilton and Hilton, Discovering Lehi, 133.*
6. *Eugene England, “Through the Arabian Desert to a Bountiful Land: Could Joseph Smith Have Known the Way?” in Noel B. Reynolds, ed. Book of Mormon Authorship (Provo: BYU Religious Studies Center, 1982). Writing before the discovery of Kharfot, England made his point using the scattered features of the Salalah area; a much stronger case could be made with what has been learned since then about both the coast of Oman and Nahom.*
7. *See the original account by a Greek merchant, The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea, Travel and Trade in the Indian Ocean by a Merchant of the First Century, trans. W. Schoff (New Delhi: Oriental Books Reprint Company, 1974). The Periplus can be accessed online, annotated, at <http://lorias.berkeley.edu/spic/textobjects/periplus.pdf> The holdings of various libraries ca. 1830 potentially available to Joseph Smith and his contemporaries is discussed in S. Kent Brown, “New Light from Arabia on Lehi’s Trail” in Echoes and Evidences of the Book of Mormon, 69-76.*
8. *Pliny, Natural History, 37-63. Pliny the Elder (AD 23-79) commanded a Roman fleet at the time of his death during the eruption of Vesuvius. Of his writings, only Natural History, completed in AD 77, survives. See note 6 (Eugene England) regarding its availability in Joseph Smith’s area and the lack of correspondences to Nephi’s account.*
9. *John Larner’s Marco Polo and the Discovery of the World (London: Yale University Press, 1999) offers a comprehensive perspective on the influence of Polo’s book on European thought and overseas expansion.*

The full text of Ibn Battuta, Al Rihla (“The Journey”) was published in English translation by H.A.R. Gibb, trans. ed. The Travels of Ibn Battuta, A. D. 1325-1354, 4 vols. (London: Hakluyt Society, 1958-1994). An excellent summary is provided by Ross E. Dunn, The Adventures of Ibn Battuta: A Muslim Traveler of the 14th Century (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1986). For the Jesuit account, see R. B Serjeant, “A Journey by Two Jesuits from Dhufar to

- Sana'a in 1590*" *The Geographical Journal* (London: Royal Geographical Society, June 1950).
10. Wendell Phillips, *Unknown Oman* (New York: David McKay Co, 1966), 168 carries the Crichton report. The 1833 survey of Arabia's southern coast by the Palinurus and land explorations of Oman in 1835 are recorded in Second Lieutenant James R. Wellsted's *Travels in Arabia* (London: J. Murray, 1838), 2 vols. See also Rev. Charles Forster, *The Historical Geography of Arabia*, vol. 2 (London: Duncan & Malcolm, 1844), 82, 85, 185, 194.
A useful summary of the exploration of the Arabian coast and the papers consequently published is contained in Brian Marshall, "European Travelers in Oman and Southeast Arabia 1792-1950: A Bio-bibliographical Study" in *New Arabian Studies* 2 (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1994), especially "Palinurus Surveys, 1833-1846," 12-17.
 11. See H. J Carter, "A Geographical Description of certain parts of the Southeast Coast of Arabia, etc." *Journal of the Bombay Branch, Royal Asiatic Society* 3/2 (Bombay: Royal Asiatic Society, January 1851), 44.
 12. For an 1844 landing at Rakhyut by Dr H. J Carter see his "A Descriptive Account of the Ruins of El Balad," *Oman Translations of the Bombay Geographical Society* 12/14 (Bombay: Bombay Geographical Society, December 1846), 25-27. See Bertram Thomas, *Arabia Felix: Across the Empty Quarter of Arabia*, 100. Other early seafaring accounts in this region ignore Rakhyut and Kharfot (possibly hidden from view by fog if visited in the monsoon months May to September); see, for example, R. B Serjeant, *The Portuguese Off the South Arabian Coast: Hadrami Chronicles* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963).
 13. Theodore Bent, "Exploration of the Frankincense Country, Southern Arabia" in *The Geographical Journal* vol. VI, no. 2, (London: Royal Geographical Society, August 1895), see 109-133 and the map of their explorations. The account has a sketch of Rakhyut, then the southern limit of "Omani influence." The Bent's book *Southern Arabia* (London: Smith Elder, 1900) has been reprinted (London: Kegan Paul Intl. Ltd, 2004) but lacks the details of the sea voyage westwards from Salalah found in the former account; the maps show that the Bent's land explorations in Dhofar did not extend as far west as Khor Kharfot.
 14. An outline of the 1952 Wendell Phillips expedition which excavated at Khor Rori, al-Balid, Mirbat and Mughsayl is found in Frank Albright, "Explorations in Dhofar" in *Antiquity* (York, UK: Antiquity Trust, 1955), 113: 37-39. See also Wendell Phillips, *Unknown Oman*, 169-171, 194. Personal insights into the interactions between Oman's Dhofar and the Mahra region of Yemen are discussed in Fred Halliday, "Oman and Yemen: an historic re-encounter," at www.al-bab.com/bys/articles/halliday00.htm.
 15. Wilfred Thesiger, *Arabian Sands* (Middlesex: Penguin, 1964), 47, 183. The account of a 1955 overland journey from Salalah to Muscat by the Sultan of Oman, in Jan Morris, *Sultan in Oman* (London: Arrow Books, 1990) typifies the lack of knowledge at all levels of the region west of the Salalah Bay.
 16. The assumption that Lehi's journey across Arabia essentially followed the incense trade route in reverse, in its entirety, has formed the basis of the commentary on Lehi since Hugh Nibley's *Lehi in the Desert* was first published in 1952. Lynn and Hope Hilton's writings, based upon their one day visit to Dhofar in 1976 and more recent writers S. Kent Brown, George Potter and Richard Wellington have perpetuated this concept by proposing that Nephi merely followed the circuitous trade route to Dhofar and utilized an existing incense port as "Bountiful." Such approaches fail to account for Nephi's statements and the archaeological, geographical and historical evidence. Neither Nephi's account nor history support any possible use of trade routes from the eastward turn at Nahom until Bountiful was reached. Such errors demonstrate that first-hand fieldwork remains essential in endeavors touching upon geography; it is worth noting that none of these writers have actually traveled in the area east of Nahom or inland Dhofar and, in one case, have never entered the Republic of Yemen.
Relying on such faulty data has, in turn, devalued otherwise valuable contributions by others, see for example, Dennis Largey, gen. ed. *Book of Mormon Reference Companion* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2003), 171, 511-515 which contains good treatments summarizing data about Nahom and Bountiful, but reproducing a map depicting an indefensible route from Nahom to the coast.
 17. Groom, *Frankincense and Myrrh*, 109-111. On Socotran incense production, see Miranda Morris, "Soqatra and its place in South Arabia" in *Bulletin of the Society for Arabian Studies* 5, (Spring 2000), 10. The incense-growing regions are illustrated in Juris Zarins, *The Land of Incense*, 51.
 18. Pliny, *Natural History*, 37-63. Other indications of the incense-growing area exist in the maps of Ptolemy (Claudius Ptolemaeus) in his *Geography* written about AD 90-160. On the accuracy of Ptolemy's maps, see Nigel Groom, "Oman and the Emirates in Ptolemy's map" in *Arabian archaeology and epigraphy* 5 (1994), 198-214.
 19. Groom, *Frankincense and Myrrh*, 111.
 20. *Ibid*, 110.
 21. *Ibid*, 96-120, 232 and map, 99.

22. *Ibid*, 146-147, where the harvest cycles are discussed and 165-166 concerning the transportation from Dhofar. Also see *The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea, Travel and Trade in the Indian Ocean by a Merchant of the First Century*, 29-35. For a more general summary of the trade routes, see F. Clements, *Oman the Reborn Land* (London: Longman, 1980), 27 and Robert Stookey, *Yemen – The Politics of the Yemen Arab Republic* (Colorado: Westview Press, 1978), 10 and the trade route map.

In 1997 archaeologist Juris Zarins participated in a pioneering reconnaissance of the Mahra coast and interior adjacent to Dhofar that noted numerous unreported sites and probable links to the early overland incense trade. See the *Los Angeles Times* for January 28, 1997 under the overstated title “Ancient Frankincense Trail Discovered,” pages A1 & A10.

23. Popular accounts of the “Ubar” project include Nicholas Clapp’s *The Road to Ubar and*, with much extraneous material, Ranulph Fiennes’ *Atlantis of the Sands* (London: Bloomsbury, 1992). However, team archaeologist Juris Zarins eventually concluded that Shisr could not represent “Ubar” or even “Omanum Emporium.” See his “Atlantis of the Sands” in *Archaeology* 50 (New York: Archaeological Institute of America, May/June 1997), 51-53 and his 2001 work, *The Land of Incense*, 140-141. Zarins has suggested that modern Habarut, located further inland on the western border of Dhofar may be “Ubar” see his “Environmental disruption and human response,” in G. Bawden & R. M. Reycraft, eds, *Environmental disaster and the Archaeology of Human Response* 7 (Albuquerque, University of New Mexico: Anthropological Papers, 2000), 35-47. An excellent summary of the Ubar claims and the arguments against any significant historical role for Shisr can be found in H. Stewart Edgell, “The myth of the “lost city of the Arabian Sands”” in *PSAS* 34 (2004), 105-120.

24. A carefully reasoned examination of the issues involved, Nigel Groom’s “Oman and the Emirates in Ptolemy’s map,” in *Arabian archaeology and epigraphy* 5 (1994), 198-214 and his “The Road to Ubar’ - Pros and Cons,” in *Bulletin of the Society for Arabian Studies* 5 (Spring 2000), 42-43, concludes that the Shisr site provides no new evidence of overland trade routes from the Dhofar area.

25. Warren P. & Michaela Knott Aston, *In the Footsteps of Lehi*, since released electronically in the LDS Collectors Library (2005). The book reports the author’s coastline explorations ending in 1992 and the beginning of work at Kharfot, see “New Book Describes Efforts to Trace Lehi’s Trail” *Insights* (Sep 1994) and the complete review in L. Ara Norwood, “Bountiful Found” *FARMS Review of Books* 7/1 (1995), 85-90. The Review gave it the highest commendation of 1994 books

dealing with the Book of Mormon, see Daniel C. Peterson, “Editor’s Picks.” Also see *Insights* (June, 1995), 1.

Prior to its publication the author’s research had been reported in *FARMS* papers commencing with the preliminary *The Search for Nahom and for the End of Lehi’s Trail* AST-84 (Provo: FARMS, 1984, revised 1986, 1988, 1989) and finally, in separate papers *The Place Which Was Called Nahom and And We Called the Place Bountiful* AST-91 (Provo: FARMS, 1991). In 1998 the author’s article “The Arabian Bountiful Discovered? Evidence for Nephi’s Bountiful” was lead article for the launch issue of the expanded *FARMS Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* (JBMS) 7/1, 4-11.

Since 1994 at least two other [non-LDS] efforts have been made to examine the same coast and its settlements, see for example Axelle Rougeulle, “Coastal settlements in southern Yemen: the 1996-97 survey expeditions on the Hadramaut and Mahra coasts” reported in *PSAS* 29 (1999), 123-136. A planned joint Russian, French and German project entitled “The Yemen coast in pre-Islamic times: ancient environment, human adaptation, subsistence patterns and cultural contacts” was reported in the *Bulletin of the Society for Arabian Studies* (Spring 1999), 30. Lynne Newton describes the only Islamic period non-port settlement site excavated to date in the Mahra province in Yemen in her paper, “Al Qisha: archaeological investigations at an Islamic period Yemeni village” in *PSAS* 37 (2007), 171-186. Al Qisha is NW of Wadi Masilah, a Bountiful candidate. Fieldwork by archeologist Juris Zarins in southern Oman is documented in his *The Land of Incense and* (with Lynne Newton) as “Preliminary results of the Dhofar archaeological survey” in *PSAS* 40 (2010), 247-265.

26. Michael Rice, *The archaeology of the Arabian Gulf : c.5000-323 BC* (London: Routledge, 1994) and M. J Tooley & I. Shennan, eds. *Sea-Level Changes* (Oxford: The Institute of British Geographers, Special Publication Series, 20, 1987) focus on the Arabian Gulf, but provide important context. See also Alessandra Avanzini, ed. *Eastern Arabia in the First Millennium BC* (Rome: L’Erma di Bretschneider, 2010). D. T Potts, *The Arabian Gulf in Antiquity* 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 12-16 provides a useful summary of literature dealing with ocean levels in Arabia. See especially his chart of sea-level variations in the Arabian Gulf from 7000 BC to AD 1000, Fig 1b.

Most recently, the regional studies reported in Erik J. DeBoer et al. in “Climate variability in the SW Indian Ocean from an 8000-yr long multi-proxy record in the Mauritian lowlands shows a middle to late Holocene shift from negative IOD-state to ENSO-state” in *Quaternary Science Reviews* 86 (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2014),

- 175-189 show the latest data, including sea-levels and ENSO activity, that may be relevant for southern Dhofar.
- For a current, far-reaching examination of the geological history of Arabia, see Andrew Thompson, *The Origins of Arabia* (London: Stacey International, 1998). A project with implications for the location of the Valley of Lemuel and Bountiful is reported by Geoff Bailey et al, "Coastal prehistory in the Southern Red Sea Basin, underwater archaeology and the Farasan islands" *PSAS* 37 (2007), 1-16. At this stage there are no indications of significant sea-level changes within the past 3000 yrs.
27. W. H Ingrams, "Hadhramaut: A Journey to the Sei'ar Country and through the Wadi Maseila" *The Geographical Journal* (1936), 88:524-551 gives a rare firsthand account of travel through Wadi Masilah. See also the description and images of the Hadhramaut in general in Ruthven W. Pike, "Land and Peoples of the Hadhramaut, Aden Protectorate" in *The Geographical Review* Vol XXX, no. 4 (New York City: American Geographical Society, October 1940), 627-648, with images of "Wadi Maseila," 641.
 28. In 2007, Mughsayl was proposed as a possible candidate for the "Land Bountiful" in Wm. Revell Phillips, "Mughsayl: Another Candidate for Land Bountiful" *JBMS* 16/2 (2007), 48-59. Factual errors in Phillip's article were noted in Warren P. Aston, "Identifying Our Best Candidate for Nephi's Bountiful" in *Journal of The Book of Mormon and Restoration Scripture (JBMRS)* 17/1-2 (2008), 58-64. See Part 6, notes 26 and 27, for details of the BYU and IMTO excavations at Mughsayl and their dating conclusions.
 29. After noting the "discovery of ancient sites" at Kharfot by the April 1992 team, Nigel Groom, "The Periplus, Pliny and Arabia" in *Arabian archaeology and epigraphy* 6 (1995), 184-186 makes the argument that "Moscha" must lay west of Khor Rori. Other scholars maintain that Khor Rori remains the most likely candidate, see Lionel Casson, *Periplus Maris Erythraei* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989). A review of Casson's position by M. Boukharin is contained in the thorough treatments of the history of Khor Rori and excavations there since 1997, Alessandra Avanzini, ed. *Khor Rori Report 1* (Pisa: Edizioni Plus, Pisa University Press, 2002), 323-324.
 30. The title of Alessandra Avanzini's *A Port in Arabia between Rome and the Indian Ocean* (3rd C. BC – 5th C. AD), *Khor Rori Report 2* (Rome: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 2008) reflects the dating established for Khor Rori as a port. That these data represent the earliest possible operation of a seaport at Khor Rori (ie. ca. 300 BC) was confirmed to the author from Dr Avanzini by email dated February 21, 2006. This, of course, effectively rules out any notion that an established seaport was functioning in Nephi's day, or that the place could have been a source of instruction for Nephi by experienced sailors. No evidence of ship construction there is known.
- The IMTO (Italian Mission to Oman) excavations are summarized in the *Arabia Antica Newsletter* (Pisa: University of Pisa) at <http://arabiantica.humnet.unipi.it/>. Preliminary Reports of excavations are published promptly on the same website. See also the summary by Juris Zarins, "The Latest on the Archaeology of Southern Oman" in *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 129/4 (Ann Arbor, MI: American Oriental Society, Oct-Dec 2009), 665-674. For a general treatment, see Alessandra Avanzini, ed. *Along the aroma and spice routes: The harbour of Sumburum, its territory and the trade between the Mediterranean, Arabia and India* (Pisa: MB Vision - Bandecchi e Vivaldi, 2011).
- As noted earlier in Part 3, the in situ dedication inscriptions of Sumburum contain an indirect reminder of the Lehiite journey however; noting that the city was constructed under the direction of the king of the Hadhramaut and that it is built of both rough-hewn and polished stones. In this Hadramitic text the term for polished (cut or shaped) stones appears as NHMt, thus hearkening back to the origin of NHM.
- A significant history of climate change and the resulting impact at Khor Rori and Khor al-Balid is documented by Carina Hoorn and Mauro Cremaschi, "Late Holocene palaeo-environmental history of Khawr Rawri and Khawr Al Balid (Dhofar, Sultanate of Oman)" in *PALAEO* 213 (2004), 1-36. Much of these data will be relevant to Khor Kharfot also in reconstructing the past.
- See Juris Zarins, *The Land of Incense*, especially Fig. 28 mapping the known archaeological sites in the Salalah bay. "Ship" graffiti inland of Khor Rori are pictured also, 133, with commentary on 134. See also Ali Ahmed Mahash al-Shabri, *The Language of Aad* (Abu Dhabi: privately published, 2000) for a range of cultural perspectives on Arabian history and culture, with a focus on Dhofar. Ship graffiti are pictured on 135-142, Khor Kharfot on 46. The caption for the image of Kharfot adds an incorrect reference to the Greeks mentioning it in "500 BC."
31. Satellite imagery of Wadi Sayq can be found in Farouk el-Baz, ed. *Wadis of Oman: Satellite Image Atlas* (Muscat: Office HM Sultan for Cultural Affairs, 2004), 149-150.
 32. See notes 9, 10 and 13.
 33. Years before LDS scholars became aware of it, attention had been drawn by a tiny handful of scholars to the unique fertility of the Khor Kharfot and Wadi Sayq area. See "The scientific results of The Oman Flora and Fauna Survey, 1975 (Dhofar)" in *The Journal of Oman Studies: Special Reports* 1, 1977 and 2, 1980), with photographs of Kharfot.

- A recent examination of the hydrological mechanisms allowing vegetation to grow in Dhofar is found in Elfatih Eltahir and Anke Hildebrandt, “Forest on the edge: Seasonal cloud forest in Oman creates its own ecological niche” *Geophysical Research Letters* 33/L11401 (Washington DC: American Geophysical Union, June 2006). The vegetation of Dhofar is cataloged in Anthony G. Miller and Miranda Morris, *Plants of Dhofar, the Southern Region of Oman: Traditional, Economic, and Medicinal Uses* (Muscat: Dept. Conservation of Oman the Environment, 1988) and in the works by Shahina A. Ghazanfar, *Flora of Oman* (2 vols) (Meise, Belgium: National Botanic Garden, 2003 and 2007); *A Vernacular Index of the Plants of Oman* (Muscat: Al Roya Publishers, 2001); (ed. with Martin Fisher) *Vegetation of the Arabian Peninsula and her earlier works Trees of Oman: an illustrated guide to the native trees of Oman* (Muscat: Ministry of Regional Municipalities and Environment, 1997) and *Handbook of Arabian Medicinal Plants* (Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press, 1994).
34. That Khor Kharfot had been a sea inlet until comparatively recent times has been known since the first of the 1993 expeditions to the site, reported later that year by FARMS and in the 1994 book *In the Footsteps of Lehi*. See also the mechanics of annual sand bar formation across the inlets in Juris Zarins, *The Land of Incense*, 70-71.
 35. For an insightful examination of early apiculture see Ronan James Head, “A Brief Survey of Ancient Near Eastern Beekeeping” *FARMS Review* 20/1 (2008), 57-66. On types of “honey” see *Fauna and Flora of the Bible (Helps for Translators)* (New York City: United Bible Societies, 1980). Carolyn Cartwright, “Reconstructing the use of coastal resources at Ra’s al-Hadd, Oman, in the third millennium BC” *PSAS* 34 (2004), 45-51 offers some intriguing insights into the other resources that would be available to people living on the coast of Oman in an even earlier period than the Lehites.
 36. Bee F. Gunn, Luc Baudouin, Kenneth M. Olsen, “Independent Origins of Cultivated Coconut (*Cocos nucifera* L.) in the Old World Tropics” in the open-access journal *PLOS ONE* 6(6) (San Francisco: June 22, 2011) at <http://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0021143>
 37. For Ibn Battuta, see H.A.R. Gibb, trans. ed. *The Travels of Ibn Battuta*, A. D. 1325-1354.
 38. Documentation with original sources is available at the “Coconut Time Line” website, <http://cocos.arenaceae.com/ancien.html>.
 39. Two major studies illuminating the role of the coconut in the region are David Parkin and Ruth Barnes, eds. *Ships and the Development of Maritime Technology on the Indian Ocean* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2002) and Dionisius A. Agius, *Classic Ships of Islam: From Mesopotamia to the Indian Ocean* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), especially 148-153.
 40. The observations in Ralf Buckley and Hugh Harries, “Self-Sown Wild-Type Coconuts from Australia” in *Biotropica* vol.16 no.2 (Lawrence, KS: The Association for Tropical Biology and Conservation, June 1984), 148-151 are relevant to Indian Ocean dispersals.

Lalith Perera, et al. “Coconut palms on the edge of the desert: genetic diversity of *Cocos nucifera* L. in Oman” in *Biodiversity and Conservation (CORD)* vol.27 no.1 (Jakarta: Asian and Pacific Coconut Community, 2011), 9-19 specifically notes that Dhofar was “within range” for natural sea dispersal of the coconut across the Indian Ocean.

A summary of the implications if the coconut was present at Khor Kharfot ca. 600 BC is Warren P. Aston, *Timber for Nephi’s Ship* (*Meridian Magazine*, May 6, 2014), at www.ldsmag.com/article/1/1/14306.
 41. Exploring the evidences that might indicate the multi-skilled Nephi’s trade[s], see John Tvedtnes, *The Most Correct Book: Insights from a Book of Mormon Scholar* (Springville, UT: Horizon, 2003), 78-97. After weighing the evidence including several instances where Nephi clearly appreciated fine metalwork, in addition to having the ability to make his own metal plates, Tvedtnes proposes that the most likely occupation for Nephi and also Lehi is that of “metalworker.” Hugh Nibley had earlier concluded that Lehi was a merchant engaged in caravan trade with Egypt and Arabia, see *CWHN* 6: 59-70. Of course, these occupations are not mutually exclusive, nor the suggestion that Nephi may have had scribal training in Jerusalem; see Part 1, note 36.
 42. Copper is the metal traditionally mined in Oman. See G. Goettler, N. Firth and C. Huston, “A Preliminary Discussion of Ancient Mining in the Sultanate of Oman” *The Journal of Oman Studies*, vol. 2 (1976), 43-56. The relative rarity of iron makes the finds at two sites in Dhofar and the 2009, 2010 and 2014 discoveries of ore at Kharfot all the more significant in light of Nephi’s account. A popular update of the iron find is geologist Ron Harris, “Geologists Discover Iron in Region of Nephi’s Bountiful” in *Meridian Magazine*: <http://ldsmag.com/ldsmag/articles/040728ore.html>. See also Juris Zarins, *The Land of Incense*, 61.
 43. A general summary is provided by Osman Salad Hersi, “A glimpse of the cretaceous stratigraphy and hydrocarbon potential of the Jeza-Qamar Basin, a frontier basin straddling the Oman-Yemen border” in *AL HAJAR: Geological Society of Oman Quarterly Newsletter*, Issue 18 (Muscat: GSO, March 2011), 18-23, available

at www.gso-oman.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/18_March_2011.pdf. This provides references to technical papers discussing the “Albian Kharfot Formation.”

44. Paolo M. Costa, “Khawr Kharfut, Dhofar: A preliminary assessment of the archaeological remains” in *PSAS* 24 (1994), 27-33 reports the initial evaluation of the ruins at Kharfot as indicating four distinct periods of human occupation. This data resulted from the first 1993 expedition to Kharfot organized and led by the author, in which Dr Costa participated.

For a broad summary of the extent of Iron Age settlement in Arabia (“total” p. 389), major sites, exploration, metallurgy, ceramics etc. see D. T. Potts, *The Arabian Gulf in Antiquity*, especially vol.1, chapter 10: “The Oman Peninsula, 1300-300 BC.” Although his discussion is restricted to northern Oman, the resulting picture should be indicative of the Dhofar situation for the same period.

An accessible summary of factors impacting Oman’s settlement and development since pre-history is Nicole Boivin & Dorian Q. Fuller’s 2009 paper, “Shell Middens, Ships and Seeds: Exploring Coastal Subsistence, Maritime Trade and the Dispersal of Domesticates in and around the Ancient Arabian Peninsula,” *Journal of World Prehistory* vol. 22 (Springer, June 2009), 113-180. Focused on human settlement is Jeffrey I. Rose, “The Arabian Corridor Migration Model: archaeological evidence for hominid dispersals into Oman during the Middle and Upper Pleistocene,” *PSAS* 37 (2007), 219-237 citing evidence dating human migration from Africa into Arabia between 40,000 and 70,000 years ago. Juris Zarins documents settlement data in Dhofar throughout *The Land of Incense*, see especially 61–97.

Jeffery Rose and Yamandu Hilbert, “New prehistoric sites in the southern Rub’ al-Khali desert, Oman” published on the website of *Antiquity* (Durham: Durham University) in August 2014, reveals indications that human settlement on the edges of the Empty Quarter (north of the Lehi path but close enough to be of interest) may be more extensive than previously recognized. See <http://www.academia.edu/7964937/> *New prehistoric sites in the southern Rub al-Khali desert Oman*

One of the few attempts to synthesize the data resulting from numerous studies and excavations in Oman over recent decades is Serge Cleuziou and Maurizio Tosi, *In the Shadow of the Ancestors: The Prehistoric Foundations of the Early Arabian Civilization in Oman* (Muscat: Ministry of Information & Culture, 2007), especially chapter 11 which deals with Dhofar.

45. Two images of the Kharfot inscriptions were published in Ali Mahash al-Shahri’s Arabic-only book, *Kayfibtidina wa-kayfirtiqina bil-hadara al-insaniyya min shibh al-jazira al-‘arabiyya: Zufar, kitabatuba wa-nuqshuha al-qadima* (How human civilization commenced and progressed in the Arabian Peninsula: Dhofar, Ancient

Inscriptions and Engravings) (Dubai: privately published, 1993), 249. The same work displays a range of “ship” graffiti from various parts of Dhofar, 185-192.

Ali Ahmed Mahash Al-Shahri & Geraldine M. H. King, *The Dhofar Epigraphic Project: A Description of the Inscriptions Recorded in 1991 and 1992* (Oxford: Khalili Research Centre and Faculty of Oriental Studies, University of Oxford, ca. 1993). Reports are available at <http://krc2.orient.ox.ac.uk/aalc/index.php/en/dhofar-epigraphic-project>

Also relevant are the findings in Majeed Khan, *Wusum: The Tribal Symbols of Saudi Arabia* (Riyadh: Ministry of Education, 2000) discussing a phenomenon that also extended to Yemen and Oman. In the opinion of Dr Khan, tribal symbols may be present at Kharfot (email to author, November 5, 2011). An earlier assessment of the text by A. F. L. Beeston of Oxford describes the lower text as not being in any known pre-Islamic script (letter to the author, January 1, 1992).

46. *Insights* 5 (September 1993).
47. Noel B. Reynolds, “By Objective Measures: Old Wine into New Bottles” in *Echoes and Evidences of the Book of Mormon*, 128.
48. See “Book of Mormon: First Book of Nephi,” in Daniel Ludlow, ed. *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* (New York: Macmillan, 1992), vol. 1, 145. Both the text and the image describe Kharfot’s location as the “southern coast of the Arabian Peninsula,” whereas the “eastern” coast of the peninsula would be more accurate. The *Encyclopedia* is now available online at http://eom.byu.edu/index.php/Encyclopedia_of_Mormonism. The Kharfot image was also used in the selection from the *Encyclopedia* published as *To All the World: The Book of Mormon Articles from the Encyclopedia of Mormonism* (Provo: FARMS, 2000), 40. In *In the Footsteps of Lehi* was the only work dealing with Old World Book of Mormon geography cited in *To All the World*, (41, 101).
49. Welch, ed. *Re-Exploring the Book of Mormon*, 52. See also John W. Welch and J. Gregory Welch, *Charting the Book of Mormon: Visual Aids for Personal Study and Teaching* (Provo: FARMS, 1999). Chart 148 reproduces the author’s 12 scriptural criteria for Nephi’s Bountiful.
50. See, for example, *Book of Mormon: Seminary Student Study Guide* (Salt Lake City: Church Education System, 2000 and 2004), 28. More recently, the 2010 *Book of Mormon Student Manual* (Salt Lake City: Seminaries and Institutes of Religion Curriculum, 2009): 37-38, 410 reprinted the altar image and the 2001 ENSIGN feature about its discovery, plus the scriptural criteria for Nephi’s Bountiful extracted from *In the Footsteps of Lehi*.

51. *ENSIGN* magazine (January 2000), 18-24. See also Daniel C. Peterson “A Scholar Looks at Evidences for the Book of Mormon, on the “Book of Mormon Lecture Series” (tape) released by FARMS in 1994. See also his “A Scholarly Look at Evidence of the Book of Mormon” at www.bookofmormononline.org/evidence.html.

For a balanced apologetic review of the Old World evidences lending credibility to Nephi’s account see Michael R. Ash, *Of Faith and Reason: 80 Evidences Supporting the Prophet Joseph Smith* (Springville, UT: Cedar Fort, 2008), 51-100. John-Charles Duffy’s “Mapping Book of Mormon Historicity Debates-Part 1” in *Sunstone* 151 (Salt Lake City: The Sunstone Education Foundation, October 2008), 48 primarily notes Kharfot and Nahom as the Old World geographical correspondences claimed by apologists for the Book of Mormon.

52. Keith Terry, *Into the Light* (American Fork, UT: Covenant, 2000, 2004), chapter 2 (“Wadi Sayq”) incorporates elements of the author’s early fieldwork in Dhofar.
53. Grant Hardy, ed. *The Book of Mormon: A Reader’s Edition*, 687. Also see Grant Hardy, *Understanding the Book of Mormon: A Reader’s Guide* (New York City: Oxford University Press, 2010).
54. *Glimpses of Lehi’s Jerusalem*, 77. Other books often now depict Kharfot as Bountiful; see, for example, Brant A. Gardner, *Second Witness: Analytical & Contextual Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, 6 vols. (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2007) vol. 1: 296; Thomas R. Valletta, gen. ed. *The Book of Mormon for Latter-day Saint Families* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1999), 49 and Randal S. Chase, *Making Precious Things Plain: Book of Mormon Study Guide, Part 1. I Nephi to Mosiah* (Washington, UT: Plain & Precious Publishing, 2013), 2nd Ed. with a front cover image of Kharfot.

Scot F. and Maurine J. Proctor, *Light from the Dust: A Photographic Exploration into the Ancient World of the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1993) is based on their 1992 visit to Kharfot. It was reviewed by Fred W. Nelson in *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* 6/2 (1994), 146-149. See also: Maurine & Scot Proctor, “Where Did Nephi Build the Ship?” in *This People* 14/3 (Salt Lake City: Utah Alliance Publishing, Fall 1993), 40-53.

55. David A. Edwards, “Was Lehi HERE?” appeared in the January 2008 issues of the *New Era* magazine, 10-13 and the *Liahona* magazine, 14-17.
56. See *Sub-regional Land Use Plans for the Southern Region* (Muscat: WS Atkins International, March 1990), A10.1-A10.8, A11.1-A11.2.
57. Examples of media coverage of Khor Kharfot and Wadi Sayq can be accessed as “Dhofar coastline should be given reserve status, says British society” at <http://www.muscatdaily.com/Archive/Oman/Dhofar-coastline-should-be-given-reserve-status-says-British-society-3ki6> dated November 4, 2014; “Wadi Sayq in Southern west of Oman an important spot for Biodiversity,” at <http://www.timesofoman.com/News/%20Article-16978.aspx> dated June 3, 2013; “Wadi Sayq is the most verdant and biodiverse terrestrial environment in Oman,” in article titled “OCE calls for immediate protection of Wadi Sayq in Oman,” at <http://www.muscatdaily.com/Archive/Oman/OCE-calls-for-immediate-protection-of-Wadi-Sayq-in-Oman-2c87> dated June 16, 2013 and “Mormons at Khor Kharfot,” at www.pinaki.ch/world/oman/kharfot/kharfot.htm dated October, 2007.

58. Potter and Wellington, *Lehi in the Wilderness*. See especially the green-tinted photographs of the beach at Khor Rori on p.131 and an inland wadi (Dharbat) on p. 132 attempting to illustrate Nephi’s “Bountiful.” Other misrepresentations and factual errors throughout the book, especially when discussing Nahom and Bountiful, are too numerous to list here.

On January 18, 2006, the LDS daily e-magazine *Meridian Magazine*, published an article by the author, “Finding Nephi’s “Bountiful” in the Real World” as a counterpoint to George Potter and Richard Wellington’s “Discovering Nephi’s Harbor at Bountiful,” published October 11, 2005. <http://ldsmag.com/ldsmag/bookofmormon/080117nephi.html>. See also the review by Jeff Lindsay: <http://mormonity.blogspot.com.au/2006/06/warren-aston-on-superiority-of-khor.html>.