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When Lehi's Party Arrived in the Land, Did They Find Others There?

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Abstract: Several puzzles about the history of the Nephites and Lamanites are linked to the question of whether they found others already living in their promised land. It seems important enough to call for serious examination of the text of the Book of Mormon for all possible evidence. Let us first look at what the Nephite writers say about their own group. Then we will see what we can learn about other groups described or mentioned in the record. In each case we will not only look for direct data on population size, ethnicity, language and culture but also will draw plausible inferences about those matters.

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Population growth among the Nephites

Two questions about Nephite population size are of major concern. First, how fast did the Nephite group grow as a result of the natural fertility and mortality of the original party? We need to examine whether the numbers attributed to them at various points in their history can be accounted for in terms of natural increase by the Nephite portion of Lehi's group. If the numbers cannot be explained by that means, then recourse to "others" is required to account for the apparent excess. The second question concerns the relative size of the Lamanites and other groups compared with the Nephites.

An analysis has already been published of the age and gender of the personnel in Lehi's party.[1] Nephite demographic history obviously begins with that information. My reading of the text puts about eleven adults and thirteen children in Nephi's group when they split with the faction of Laman and Lemuel. However, the adults included only three couples. None of the unmarried persons, including Nephi's brothers Jacob and Joseph and, probably, their sisters, would have had marriage partners available until nieces or nephews came of age, so for some interval the group's reproduction rate would have been even

lower than those numbers seem to suggest. The Lamanite faction I estimate to have included four couples with the likelihood that the oldest grandchildren of Ishmael were just coming into the age of reproduction.[2] Within a few years the Lamanites should have had on the order of half again as many persons as the Nephites, and that size advantage should have continued thereafter.

Within a few years Nephi reports that his people "began to prosper exceedingly, and to multiply in the land" (2 Nephi 5:13). When about fifteen years had passed, he says that Jacob and Joseph had been made priests and teachers "over the land of my people" (2 Nephi 5:26, 28). After another ten years, they "had already had wars and contentions" with the Lamanites (2 Nephi 5:34). After the Nephites had existed as an entity for about forty years (see Jacob 1:1), their men began "desiring many wives and concubines" (Jacob 1:15). How many descendants of the original party would there have been by that time?

We can safely suppose that adaptation to foods, climate, disease, and natural hazards would have posed some problems, although we cannot quantify those effects. Let us at least start to bracket the possible growth in numbers by setting an upper limit that is at the edge of absurdity. Assume a birth rate twice as high as in today's "less developed countries," a rate perhaps not even attainable by any population. Let us also suppose no deaths at all! Under those conditions, if the initial Nephite group was comprised of 24 persons, as I calculate generously, by the time of Jacob 2, they would have reached a population of 330, of whom perhaps 70 would be adult males and the same number adult females. Of course the unreality of that number means we must work downward. Using a more reasonable figure for the birth rate and factoring in deaths, we see that the actual number of adults would be unlikely to exceed half of what we first calculated—say, 35 males and 35 females. Even that is far too large to satisfy experts on the history of population growth.[3] With such limited numbers as these, the group's cultural preference for "many wives and concubines" would be puzzling. The fact that the plural marriage preference for the early Nephites is reported as a

cultural fact seems to call for a larger population of females. Male casualties in battles involving such tiny numbers could hardly have been very many. The only alternative explanation for a female surplus would have been the incorporation of "other" people.

The account of Sherem's encounter with Jacob reiterates the question. "Some [*ten more?*] years had passed away," and Jacob was now verging on "old" (compare Jacob 7:1, 20-26). At that time "there came a man among the people of Nephi whose name was Sherem" (Jacob 1:1). Upon first meeting Jacob, he said, "Brother Jacob, I have sought much opportunity that I might speak unto you; for I have heard...that thou goest about much, preaching" (Jacob 7:6). Now, the population of adult males descended from the original group could not have exceeded 50 at that time. This would have been only enough to populate one modest-sized village. Thus Sherem's is a strange statement. Jacob, as head priest and religious teacher, would routinely have been around the Nephite temple in the cultural center at least on all holy days (see Jacob 2:2). How then could Sherem never have seen him, and why would he have had to seek "much opportunity" to speak to him in such a tiny settlement? And where would Jacob have had to go on the preaching travels Sherem refers to, if only such a tiny group were involved? Moreover, from where was it that Sherem "came...among the people of Nephi" (Jacob 1:1)? The text and context of this incident would make little sense if the Nephite population had resulted only from natural demographic increase.

The reports of intergroup fighting in these early generations also seem to refer to larger forces than growth by births alone would have allowed. At the 25-year mark of their history, Nephi already reported that they had had "wars" with the Lamanites (see 2 Nephi 5:34), yet the male descendants of the original Nephites could not reasonably have numbered more than a score by the time these "wars" are mentioned. Later, in Jacob's old age, the "wars" mentioned in Jacob 7:26 would have been fought with a maximum of 50 on his side and not dramatically more for the attackers. Either the expression "war" was being used loosely at this point in the account

or else the population springing from the original Lehites had already been augmented by "others," it appears to me.

Cultural adaptation and "others"

The point about "war" opens up the larger issue of cultural learning and adaptation in the new land by both Nephites and Lamanites. A pair of telling passages in the book of Mosiah lets us know that some "native" New World people or other had to have provided at least one direct, crucial cultural input to the immigrantsat some point in time. Not long after 200 B.C., Zeniffite King Limhi reminded his people in the land of Nephi that "we at this time do pay tribute to the king of the Lamanites, to the amount of one half of our corn, and our barley, and even all our grain of every kind" (Mosiah 7:22). Note that Limhi mentions "corn" first in the list of tribute crops. In Mosiah 9:14 it is the only crop mentioned at all: "Lamanites began to...take off...the corn of their fields."

Now, "corn" is clearly maize, the native American plant that was the mainstay of the diet of many native American peoples for thousands of years. There is no possibility that Lehi's party brought this key American crop with them or that they discovered it wild upon their arrival. Maize is so totally domesticated a plant that it will not reproduce without human care. In other words, the Zeniffites or any other of Lehi's descendants could only be growing corn/maize because people already familiar with the complex of techniques for its successful cultivation had passed on the knowledge, and the seed, to the newcomers. Notice too that these passages in Mosiah indicate that corn had become the grain of preference among the Lamanites, and perhaps among the Zeniffites. That is, they had apparently integrated it into their system of taste preferences and nutrition as a primary food, for which cooks and diners in turn would have had familiar recipes, utensils, and so on. This situation reminds us of how crucial the natives of Massachusetts were in helping the Puritan settlers in the 1600s survive in the unfamiliar environment they found upon

landing. The traditional American Thanksgiving cuisine of turkey, pumpkin and corn dishes—all native to the New World—is an unconscious tribute to the gift of survival conferred by the Amerindians by sharing those local foods with the confused and hungry Europeans. Did an equivalent cultural exchange and unacknowledged thanks-giving process take place for Lehi's descendants in the *Book of Mormon* land of first inheritance or land of Nephi?

Since it is certain that "others" passed on knowledge about and a taste for corn to the Nephites and Lamanites, it becomes likely that other cultural features also came from them. The keeping of "flocks," for example (Mosiah 9:14; compare Enos 1:21), was not a pattern which Lehi's folks are said to have brought with them. No animals are mentioned in Nephi's Old World record (it is purely speculation that they utilized camels or any other animals in their trek from Jerusalem to Bountiful). Even if they started out with animals, these would not have survived the party's famine-plagued journey through western Arabia (note, for example, 1 Nephi 16:18-32). Moreover, no hint is given that any were taken aboard Nephi's boat (in specific contrast to the Jaredite case—see Ether 6:4). So how would they have obtained native American fowls or other animals to keep in "flocks," or, more importantly, how would they have discovered techniques for successfully caring for and utilizing them? Discovery or invention of a major cultural feature like the domestication of animals is rare enough in human history that it is highly unlikely that these newcomers could simply have pulled themselves up culturally "by their bootstraps" in this way in a generation or two.

We will see below that significant, specific cultural features of obvious Jaredite origin appeared later among the Nephites without any explanation of how their transmission was accomplished down through time. It is a safe presumption, however, that some groups existing at the time when the Jaredite armies referred to in Ether 15 were destroyed simply refused to participate in the suicidal madness of Coriantumr and Shiz. They would have ensured their own survival

by staying home and minding their meek business in this or that corner of the land. Such minor peoples might hardly even have noted the distant slaughter of the Jaredite dynasts, so absorbed would they have been in their local affairs. The likelihood is that more than a few such groups continued past the time of the "final destruction" of the Jaredite armies at the hill Ramah, and some could well have been living in the land southward as Nephi and Laman built up their small colonies.

Lehi's final prophecy to his children foreshadowed this happening. He said,

> It is wisdom that this land should be kept as yet from the knowledge of other nations; for behold, many nations would overrun the land, that there would be no place for an inheritance. Wherefore, I, Lehi, have obtained a promise, that inasmuch as those whom the Lord God shall bring out of the land of Jerusalem shall keep his commandments, they shall prosper upon the face of this land; and they shall be kept from all other nations, that they may possess this land unto themselves. And if it so be that they shall keep his commandments they shall be blessed upon the face of this land, and there shall be none to molest them, nor to take away the land of their inheritance.... But behold, when the time cometh that they shall dwindle in unbelief, after they have received so great blessings from the hand of the Lord...I say, if the day shall come that they will reject the Holy One of Israel, the true Messiah, their Redeemer and their God, behold, the judgments of him that is just shall rest upon them. Yea, he will bring other nations unto them, and he will give unto them power, and he will take away from them the lands of their possessions, and he will cause them to be scattered and smitten. Yea, as one generation passeth to another there shall be bloodsheds, and great visitations among them. (2 Nephi 1:8-12)

How much time can we suppose elapsed between the time when Lehi's descendants "dwindle[d] in unbelief" and when the Lord

brought "other nations unto them"? How distant were those "other nations" at the time Lehi spoke? Latter-day Saints generally have supposed that the "other nations" were the Gentile (Christian) nations of Europe who began to reach the New World only 500 years ago. To believe so requires limited imagination.

As for the Lamanites, they dwindled in unbelief within a few years. Alma said that "the Lamanites have been cut off from his presence, from the beginning of their transgressions in the land" (Alma 9:14). How then could Lehi's prophecy about "other nations" being brought in have been kept long in abeyance after that? Furthermore, the early Nephites generally did the same thing within a few centuries. Their wickedness and apostasy culminated in the escape of Mosiah and his group from the land of Nephi to the land of Zarahemla (see Omni 1:13-14). And if the Lord somehow did not at those times bring in "other nations," then surely he would have done so after Cumorah, 1100 years prior to Columbus. Even if there were no massive armed invasions of strange groups to be reported, we need not be surprised if relatively small groups of strange peoples who were neither so numerous nor so organized as to be rivals for control of the land could have been scattered or infiltrated among both Nephites and Lamanites without their constituting the "other nations" in the threatening sense of Lehi's prophecy. Thus in the terms of Lehi's prophecy, "others" could and probably even should have been close at hand and available for the Lord to use as instruments against the straying covenant peoples any time after the arrival of Nephi's boat.

Archaeology, linguistics and related areas of study have established beyond doubt that a variety of peoples inhabited virtually every place in the Western Hemisphere a long time ago (with the possible exception of limited regions which may have been more or less unpopulated for the period of a few generations at certain times). The presence of over 1500 different languages belonging to dozens of major groupings which were found in the Americas when the Europeans arrived can be explained only by supposing that speakers

of the ancestral tongues had been in America for thousands of years. The notion that "the Indians" constituted a single ethnic entity is a totally outdated one which neither scholars nor lay people can justifiably believe nowadays. Abundant facts are contrary to the idea. The most that is possible is that in some limited territory in a part of America Lehi's people and those who came with Mulek had their chance to establish their own niches where they could control their own fate. But they were not given thousands of years of isolation to play with. (The Latter-day Saint pioneers in Deseret were allowed only a single generation, from 1847 until the railroad came in 1869, to do the same. After that, competing economic, social, political, and ideological systems directly challenged them and nearly swallowed them up.)

It seems unavoidable that other peoples were in the land, somewhere, when Nephi's boat landed on the shore of the "west sea," and quite certainly some of them were survivors from the Jaredite people, as indicated in the book of Ether.

Internal variety among the Nephites

We are not left only to supposition and inference in this matter. There are statements in the Nephite record that positively inform us that "others" were on the scene and further passages that hint at the same thing. One of these statements occurs during the visit by Alma and his seven companions to the Zoramites. "Now the Zoramites were dissenters from the Nephites" (Alma 31:8). As Alma prayed about this group, he said, "O Lord, their souls are precious, and many of them are our brethren" (Alma 31:35). We may wonder about those whom they considered not their "brethren." Apparently he was speaking of those who were neither Nephites, Lamanites, nor "Mulekites." People in all those three categories are referred to in the text by Nephites as "brethren" (see, for example, Mosiah 1:5 and 7:2, 13 and Alma 24:7-8).

Another statement indicates that even the Jaredites were counted as "brethren." In Alma 46:22, captain Moroni has his

followers "covenant with our God, that we shall be destroyed, even as our brethren in the land northward, if we shall fall into transgression." Unquestionably, the reference is to the Jaredites. The only reason apparent to me why the term "brethren" would be applied by Nephites to Jaredites is because the former recognized that some of the people living with them were descended from the Jaredites. Interestingly, Anthony W. Ivins, who later became a counselor in the First Presidency of the Church, speculated ninety years ago that Coriantumr, the final Jaredite king, survived among the people of Zarahemla long enough to sire descendants.[4] (Incidentally, in Hebrew the name Moroni means "one from Moron," which was the Jaredite capital.)

An odd bit of behavior involving the younger Alma on his teaching tour seems to alert us to the presence of "others" at the city of Ammonihah. At that time this was a rather remote part of the land of Zarahemla in the direction of the west sea and the narrow neck of land. At first discouraged at the hostile reception he received, Alma departed, only to be ordered back by an angel (see Alma 8:14-17). When he returned he asked food of a stranger. This proved to be Amulek, whose odd reply was, "I am a Nephite" (Alma 8:20). Why would he say that? Wasn't it obvious? Clearly Amulek had recognized Alma as a Nephite, either by his speech, his appearance, or perhaps the way he had referred to God when he opened the conversation. But to what other social or ethnic category might Amulek have belonged? His abrupt statement makes sense only if most of the people of the place were not Nephites and also if Amulek's characteristics did not make it already apparent to Alma that he was a Nephite.

The incompleteness of our picture of social and population history is further shown in the story of the entry of Ammon's party to Zeniffite King Limhi's territory. The Nephite explorers stumbled upon the king outside the walls of his beleaguered city, Lehi-Nephi, and were rudely seized and thrown into prison. Only after two days did they get a chance to identify themselves and explain their presence. We might have supposed that their cultural status as Nephites and

strangers, if not their protestations (was there a language problem?) would have alerted Limhi and his guards as to their identity—Nephites from Zarahemla. Had the initial encounter gone as we might have thought, Ammon's belated explanation (see Mosiah 7:13) and Limhi's surprise when Ammon finally got through to him (see Mosiah 7:14) would both have been short-circuited. Why were Ammon and company not recognized immediately as Nephites? Was their costume and tongue or accent so much different than what Limhi's people expected of a Nephite that this put them off? Ammon was a "descendant of Zarahemla" (Mosiah 7:13), a point that he emphasized in his introduction to the king. Does this mean that he somehow looked different than a "typical" Nephite? Or had the Zeniffites had encounters with other non-Nephite types in their area which might have prompted Limhi's cautious reception? And what personal relationship had Ammon to the Zeniffites, after all? As a person descended from Zarahemla, that is, a "Mulekite," why did he refer to Zeniff's presumably Nephite party as "our brethren" and show them so much concern that he would lead this arduous expedition to find out their fate? The social, political, ethnic, and language relationships involved in this business are not straightforward, to say the least.

An analysis of the terminology applied to peoples in the *Book of Mormon* could reveal useful information on this subject. This is not the place to do that fully, but the approach can be sketched and some of the results anticipated. References to the key people of the record vary: (1) "Nephite(s)" or "the Nephites" occurs 339 times; (2) "people of the Nephites," 18 times; (3) "people of Nephi," four times; (4) "children of Nephi," twice, and (5) "descendants of Nephi," twice. Usage of the second and third expressions gives us something to ponder about the composition of the people referred to.

The meaning of the first expression is made clear early by Jacob when he says, "those who are friendly to Nephi I shall call Nephites." Then he continues the definition in an interesting way: "...or the people of Nephi, according to the reigns of the kings" (Jacob 1:14). A

few lines earlier Jacob had reported that when Nephi anticipated his own death, he had designated "a [successor] king and a ruler over his people...according to the reigns of the kings....And whoso should reign in his stead were called by the people, second Nephi, third Nephi, and so forth, according to the reigns of the kings; and thus they were called by the people, let them be of whatever [personal] name they would" (Jacob 1:9, 11). Jacob here makes clear that his definition of "Nephites, or the people of Nephi" hinges on political allegiance to a king, a king who always bore the title "Nephi." This definition does not depend at all on whether "Nephites" were or were not literal descendants from Nephi, nor whether they had Sam, Jacob, Joseph, or Zoram, the founding fathers of the group, among their ancestors. In fact Jacob's terminology may refer to the original father Nephi only indirectly. What he says in verse 11, where the term "Nephites" is first used, is that those classified under that term were simply all who were ruled by the existing monarch, the current "Nephi." No reason is evident to me to believe that in the 338 usages after Jacob begins the practice that "Nephite(s)" means anything else. It is essentially a sociopolitical, not an ethnic or linguistic, label.

Cases where the text reports that political allegiance changed are consistent with this notion. Thus the children who had been fathered, then abandoned, by the renegade priests of Noah chose to "be numbered among those who were called Nephites" (Mosiah 25:12). That is, when they came under the sovereignty of the current head of the Nephite government, they both gave their allegiance to him and changed their group label to "Nephites." In a parallel case earlier, "all the people of Zarahemla were numbered with the Nephites, and this because the kingdom had been conferred upon none but those who were descendants of Nephi" (Mosiah 25:13). Conversely, when Amlici and his followers rebelled against Nephite rule and "did consecrate Amlici to be their king," they took a unique group name to mark the political rebellion, "being called Amlicites" (Alma 2:9). Meanwhile "the remainder—those loyal to Alma, the continuing official ruler—were [still] called Nephites" (Mosiah 25:11). Again, when the Zoramites

transferred allegiance from the Nephite government to the Lamanite side, they "became Lamanites" (Alma 43:4, 6). We see, then, that the Nephites constituted those governed by the ruling "Nephi," who was always a direct descendant of the original Nephi. But the label does not of itself convey information about the ethnic, linguistic, or physical characteristics or origin of those called Nephites.

It is true that the name "Nephites" sometimes connotes those who shared culture, religion, and ethnicity or biology.[5] But every rule-of-thumb we construct that treats the Nephites as a descent unit ends up violated by details in the text. Variety shows through the common label, culturally (e.g., Mosiah 7:15; Alma 8:11-12), religiously (e.g., Mosiah 26:4-5 and 27:1; Alma 8:11), linguistically (e.g., Omni 1:17-18), and biologically (e.g., Alma 3:17, note the statement concerning Nephi's seed "and whomsoever shall be called thy seed"; Alma 55:4). "Nephite" should then be read as the generic name designating the nation (see Alma 9:20) ideally unified in a political structure headed by one direct descendant of Nephi at a time.[6]

Even more indicative of social and cultural variation among the Nephites is the usage by their historians of the expression "people of the Nephites." It connotes that there existed a social stratum called "the Nephites" while another category was a "people" who were "of," that is, subordinate to, those "Nephites," even while they all were under the same central government and within the same broad society. Limhi was ready to accept such a second-class status for his people, the Zeniffites, and assumed that the dependent category still existed as it apparently had when his grandfather had left Zarahemla (see Mosiah 7:15). The Amulonites operated a similar system in the land of Helam, where they held Alma's group in effective serfdom (see Mosiah 23:36-39 and 24:8-15). (At the same time the privileges of the Amulonites themselves were at the sufferance of the Lamanite king, as shown in Mosiah 23:39; power in Lamanite society was also heavily stratified.) Generally, similar stratification is evident in the account of the Zoramites where the powerful segment succeeded in expelling those of the deprived poorer element who did not toe the line (see

Alma 32:2-5; 35:3-7). The dominance of a powerful Nephite establishment over subordinate groups is shown dramatically in Mormon 2:4. There we read that Nephite armies under Mormon "did take possession of the city" of Angola, obviously against the resistance of the local inhabitants who were only nominal "Nephites." Hence, some were more Nephite than others, in a sense. A socially complex society is also reflected in Alma's expression, "all [God's] people who are called the people of Nephi" (Alma 9:19). This subordination and potential variety within the society seems plainer in the expression "the people of the Nephites" than in the more usual "Nephites." If we look closely, then, it seems that we can detect in the "nation" centered at Zarahemla an ability to incorporate social and ethnic variety greater than the title "Nephites" may suggest on surface reading.

Also of interest is a statement by the judges in Zarahemla to $Nephi_2$ when he prophesied the destruction of the Nephites because of wickedness. At Helaman 8:6 they reply, "we are powerful, and our cities great, therefore our enemies can have no power over us." The surprising thing is that nominally the Nephites and Lamanites were at this time were reported to be in an unprecedented condition of peace (see Helaman 6:34-37). So who were the "enemies" that those Gadianton-linked judges had in mind? Could they have been non-Lamanites (rival secret groups?), some of whose descendants in the final period of Nephite history constituted a third, non-Lamanite force (see Mormon 2:10, 27)?

The People of Zarahemla

The people of Zarahemla keep turning up when we consider possible "others." Characterizing them adequately is difficult because of the brevity of the Nephite-kept record, which is, of course, our only source about them. In Chapter 5 I present a rather comprehensive body of data and inference about them.[7] But my special concern now is the question of unity or variety in the composition of this element within Nephite society.

How uniform a group was their ancestral immigrating party? It is very likely that non-Jews were in the crew of the vessel that brought Zedekiah's son Mulek to the New World (see Omni 1:15-16). A purely Israelite crew recruited in the Palestine homeland would have been possible during some periods, but at the time Mulek's party left, the only Mediterranean ports of the kingdom of Judah were in Babylonian hands. Most likely the crew of the ship (there could have been more than one, of course) were "Phoenician," itself a historical category that was by no means homogeneous. Significant cultural, linguistic and biological variety could have been introduced into American *Book of Mormon* populations through such a mixed crew, about which, unfortunately, the text tells us nothing.

Our cryptic record tells of only one segment, those descendants from that shipload who ended up centuries after the landing under one Zarahemla. When Mosiah, the leader of the Nephites who had come from the land of Nephi, reached Zarahemla's city, the "Mulekite" ruler is not reported to have stood in the way of Mosiah's becoming king over the combined people. He put up a claim to only distant royal descent himself, but in his own land he was apparently not called a king. The name "the people of Zarahemla" carries their political standing no farther back than this living man. The fact that no ancestral name was applied to their city except that of the current leader, Zarahemla, indicates that they had no long history as a political entity. Probably they had arrived in the area of the city of Zarahemla not long before Mosiah found them, or at least the place had been insignificant enough that no one earlier than Zarahemla had named it. (Later Nephite custom named settlements after "him who first possessed them"; Alma 8:7.) They or their ancestors had come "up" the river to that spot from the lowland area near the east sea where they had earlier lived (see Alma 22:30-31). Furthermore, the area they now inhabited was small. When King Benjamin later called the assembly where he named his son as his successor, the call reached the entire area concerned in a single day (see Mosiah 1:10, 18).

Zarahemla's group could only have been one part of those descended from Mulek's party. No single ethnic label is applied in the record to everybody from the original ship, one hint of their diversity or disunity. Had all descendants of the immigrant party remained together as a single society, they would probably have been referred to by a single name, something like "Mulekites." (Latter-day Saints use that term as equivalent to the people of Zarahemla although it never occurs in the text; I usually put it in quotation marks to make clear that it is not an ancient term.) The statement that there had been "many wars and serious contentions" among those descendants underlines the lack of a unified history for them which is evident from the lack of a single name.

Another statement in the record impinges on this matter. When Mosiah 25:2 speaks of the subjects ruled by Mosiah, it contrasts two categories of the population. The first is, of course, "the children of Nephi...who were descendants of Nephi," that is, apparently, those who had arrived in the land of Zarahemla guided by the first King Mosiah. The second category is itself composite: "the people of Zarahemla, who was a descendant of Mulek, *and those who came with him* into the wilderness" (Omni 1:13-14). Two readings of this statement make equal sense. If the comma after "Mulek" was inserted correctly (initially by the printing crew, who did most of the punctuation for the first English edition), then the meaning would be that the "Mulekites" consisted of people whose ancestors included both Mulek and others, "those who came with him." But an alternative reading would be possible if the comma after "Mulek" should be omitted; in that case, Zarahemla himself would be represented as descended from both Mulek and others of Mulek's party. I take the former meaning and suppose that other groups than Zarahemla's coexisted with them (though apparently not at the capital, the city of Zarahemla). This may be part of the reason the man Zarahemla is nowhere called king—because he had political authority only over one of those groups springing from the Mulek party and that one very localized. Consequently a lesser title—something like "chief"—would

have fitted him better. But the Nephite kings proceeded to extend their rule over a greater area. At least by the day of $Mosiah_2$, the borders of the greater land of Zarahemla had been greatly expanded compared with Benjamin's time.[8] I consider it likely that the expansion of their domain over the territory between the city of Zarahemla and the original settlement spot of the "Mulekites," probably the city of Mulek located near the east coast, came to incorporate additional settlements of "those who came with him into the wilderness" but who had had no political connection with chief Zarahemla.[9]

More evidence that the people of Zarahemla were not a unified group who followed a single cultural tradition can be seen in Ammon's encounter with Limhi. The Zeniffite king reported to Ammon that not long before, he had sent an exploring party to locate Zarahemla, but, it turned out, they reached the Jaredite final battleground instead. At the point when Limhi told about that expedition, Ammon was oddly silent on one related point. Since he was himself "a descendant of Zarahemla" (Mosiah 7:13), we might have anticipated that he would recall Coriantumr, the final Jaredite king as described for us in Omni 1:20-22. Why did Ammon not remember that chief Zarahemla's ancestors had this dramatic tradition of an earlier people, the Jaredites, who occupied the land of Desolation and who became extinct except for this wounded alien ruler who lived among the Jewish newcomers for nine months? Surely he would immediately have related the twenty-four gold plates and the corroded artifacts to the tradition to which Limhi referred. Instead, Ammon seems as ignorant of Coriantumr as Limhi was. This suggests that different segments of the "Mulekite" population did not all share the same traditions.

Further reason to see variety among the "Mulekites" is provided by the Amlicites (see Alma 2). In their rebellion against being ruled by the Nephites, they mustered a large rebel force, about the same size as the loyal Nephite army. They "came" from some distinct settlement locality of their own (surely from downriver, it turns out) to challenge Alma's army.[10] There can be little question, it seems to me, that they

constituted a numerous population with their own history and cultural features whom the intruding Nephite elite ruled only with difficulty. These Amlicites may have been ethnically categorized together with "the people of Zarahemla," although residing at a distance from the city of Zarahemla and so never headed by the chief whom Mosiah had encountered and co-opted. The Amlicites, like Ammon and the Zeniffites, seem not to have traced any connection with Mulek but set themselves apart only under their current leader's name, Amlici. Perhaps they were a local group or set of groups derived in part from Jaredite ancestry or perhaps from ancestors other than Mulek who arrived with his party.

The "king-men" of later days may have been composed of the same societal elements but without a leader equivalent to Amlici to confer on them a (his) distinctive name. The king-men, too, inhabited a distinct region, for when Moroni "commanded that his army should go against those king-men," they were "hewn down" and compelled to fly the "title of liberty" standard "in their cities" (Alma 51:17-20). This language confirms that they, like the Amlicites, had a base territory of their own and that it was a significant distance from the city of Zarahemla. Again, quite surely, it lay downriver.

Mulek's party likely settled first at "the city of Mulek," which was on the east coast very near the city Bountiful. During some period between the first landing of the Mulek party and Zarahemla's day, the descendants of the immigrants became "exceedingly numerous" —enough to engage in "many wars and serious contentions, and had fallen by the sword from time to time" (Omni 1:17). The departure of Zarahemla's faction upriver was plausibly a consequence of those wars. From the thumbnail sketch of their history in Omni we cannot tell much, but their becoming "exceedingly numerous" under such difficult pioneer circumstances sounds as unlikely on the grounds of natural increase alone as when the same expression was applied to the early Lamanites (see below). It is likely that they too incorporated "others" into their structure, probably seizing control, or trying to seize control, over relatively disorganized Jaredite remnants they

encountered. Perhaps the wars in which they became involved stemmed initially from the militarized chaos they may have found reverberating among those remnants following the "final" battle between the armies of Shiz and Coriantumr.[11]

Evidence from language

What Mosiah's record tells us about the language used by the people of Zarahemla deserves attention in this connection. "Their language had become corrupted" (Omni 1:17), the Nephite account says. Certain historical linguists have done a great deal of work on rates of change of languages, written and unwritten, and in both civilized and simpler societies.[12] What they have learned is that "basic vocabulary" changes at a more or less constant rate among all groups. In the course of the three or four centuries since the ancestors of Zarahemla and of $Mosiah_1$ shared the same Hebrew tongue in Jerusalem, how different could the two dialects have become, based on what linguists know? They should have been about ninety percent similar, so their separate versions of Hebrew would have remained intelligible to each other. But the text at Omni 1:18 says that they could not communicate until Mosiah "caused that they should be taught in his language." There are only two linguistically sound explanations why this difference should be. Either, (1) Zarahemla's people had adopted a tongue other than Hebrew (since we do not know the composition of the crew nor of the elite passengers who came with Mulek, but one possibility could be that Zarahemla's group spoke a non-Hebrew language from the Mediterranean); or, (2) more likely, one, or both, peoples had adopted non-Hebrew languages learned from some "other" peoples after arrival in America. The non-literate people of Zarahemla are more likely to have made a change than the Nephites, yet both could have done so. The text does not clarify the point. Considering that the "Mulekites" were present in the land in time to encounter Coriantumr, probably some unmentioned Jaredite survivor groups were also discovered by them and were the source for

linguistic change among the immigrants. If Mulek arrived with only a tiny party, they would have been a minority in the midst of those with whom they associated and so would have become subject to losing their original speech to the larger host group even if they came to rule over the locals.[13]

Although the scripture does not tell us much about the languages used among the peoples it reports, the topic is significant if we attempt to make connection with languages known from modern scholarly sources. In whatever region in America we place *Book of Mormon* lands, we find that numerous tongues were being spoken when Columbus arrived. Probably on the order of 200 existed in Mesoamerica alone. As modern languages have been analyzed, comparisons made and histories reconstructed, it has become clear that the ancient linguistic scene was also complex. The differences between those languages and even their family groupings are so great that no plausible linguistic history can be formulated which relies on *Book of Mormon*-reported voyagers as a sole original source tongue. The mere presence of Hebrew speech in Mesoamerica has yet to be established to the satisfaction of linguistic scholars, although there is significant preliminary indication. As with the diverse cultural or archaeological record, that from linguistics cannot accommodate the picture that the *Book of Mormon* gives us of its peoples without supposing that "others" were on the scene when Lehi's group came ashore.

The lingering Jaredites

There is conclusive evidence in the *Book of Mormon* text that Jaredite language affected the people of Zarahemla, the Nephites and the Lamanites. Robert F. Smith has pointed out that the term *sheum*, applied by a Nephite historian to a crop for which there was no Nephite (or English) equivalent (see Mosiah 9:9), "is a precise match for Akkadian (i.e. Babylonian) *še'um*, which means 'barley' (Old Assyrian, 'wheat'), the most popular ancient Mesopotamian cereal

name."[14] Its phonetic form appropriately fits the time period when the Jaredites departed from the Old World. The plant called *sheum* was being grown among the Zeniffites in the land of Nephi. We have already seen that the "corn" emphasized among the Zeniffites had to have passed down from pre-Lehite people. Still another of their crops, *neas*, bears an untranslated plant name and is mentioned along with corn and *sheum*, so it must also be of non-Nephite origin. The two names and three crops may plausibly be of Jaredite origin and likely came down to the Nephites and Lamanites via the people of Zarahemla, if not through some more exotic intermediary population.

There is also evidence from personal names that influence from the Jaredites reached the Nephites. Nibley identifies some of these and notes, "Five out of the six whose names [in the Nephite record] are definitely Jaredite [Morianton, Coriantumr, Korihor, Nehor, Noah, and Shiblon] betray strong anti-Nephite leanings."[15] [We should add to the list two more, Gadianton and Kishumen.] Their anti-Nephite bias may well reflect a viewpoint held by some among the people of Zarahemla or other groups of related origin that one of them, not any descendant of Nephi, ought by right to be king. Nibley also observes that terms in the Nephite system of money and grain measures described in Alma 11 "bear *Jaredite* names," obvious examples being *shiblon* and *shiblum*.[16]

Can we tell how these foreign words came into use among the Nephites? One possibility is that Coriantumr learned enough of the language of the "Mulekites" in the nine final months of his life which he spent among them to pass on a number of words. Another possibility is that the terms came from Mosiah's translation of Ether's plates (see Mosiah 28:11-13, 17). But Alma 11:4 makes clear that the names of weights and measures were in use among the Nephites long before Mosiah had read Ether's record. And the crop plants themselves, and especially the methods of cultivating them, must have come through real people, not through the pages of any book. Moreover we would not expect that a decrepit Jaredite king whose mind was on the history of his ancestors would have known about or

bothered with such mundane matters as seeds and the names of weight units. The people who passed on workaday items like those would have been commoners. And if they had time and opportunity to transmit agricultural and commercial complexes, surely they would have communicated other cultural features as well, probably including cultic ("idolatrous") items.

The idea that part of the Jaredite population lived beyond the battle at the hill Ramah to influence their successors, the people of Zarahemla and Lehi's descendants, is by no means new. Generations ago both B. H. Roberts and J. M. Sjodahl, for example, supposed that significant Jaredite remnants survived.[17]

So far four lines of evidence of Jaredite influence on their "Mulekite" and Nephite successors have been mentioned: the Coriantumr encounter; Jaredite personal names among the later peoples; three crops plus the names of two of them; and the names of certain Nephite weights and measures. A fifth type of evidence is the nature and form of secret societies.

The Nephite secret combination pattern is obviously very similar to what had been present among the Jaredites. Was there a historical connection? It is true that Alma instructed his son Helaman not to make known to their people any contents of Ether's record that might give them operating procedures for duplicating the secret groups (see Alma 37:27-29). A later writer says that it was the devil who "put into the heart" of Gadianton certain information of that sort (see Helaman 6:26). Yet an efficient alternative explanation of how the later secret groups came to look so much like those of the Jaredites is direct transmission of the tradition through survivors of the Jaredites to the people of Zarahemla and thus to Gadianton. This process probably would have been unknown to Alma or other elite Nephite writers, who must have had little to do directly with the mass of "Mulekite" folk. Support for the idea comes from a statement by Giddianhi, one-time "governor" of the Gadianton organization. Their ways, he claimed, "are of ancient date and they have been handed down unto us" (3 Nephi 3:9).

Where the Jaredites lived gives us another clue that more of them than Coriantumr alone must have interacted with the later people of Zarahemla or Nephites. It is commonplace for students of the geography of *Book of Mormon* events to suppose that the Jaredites dwelt only in the land northward. True, at one point in time centuries before their destruction, during a period of expansion, the Jaredite King Lib constructed "a great city by the narrow neck of land" (Ether 10:20). At that time it was said that "they did preserve the land southward for a wilderness, to get game" (verse 21), but it is unlikely such a pattern of exclusive reserve could continue. The fact is that it makes no sense to build a "great city" adjacent to pure wilderness. Rather, we can safely suppose that, in addition to whatever limited area was kept as a royal game preserve, routine settlers existed southward from the new city and that they provided a support population for it. At the least there would have been peoples further toward the south with whom the city would trade whether or not they were counted as Lib's subjects. As population grew over the nearly thousand years of Jaredite history after Lib's day, more local settlements in parts of the land southward could have developed due to normal population growth and spread. Not all of those peoples would have shown up at the final slaughter at Ramah. Likely some of the survivors in the land southward became mixed with descendants of Mulek's group, thus accounting for part of their "exceedingly numerous" force and, of course, the presence of corn, *sheum* and *neas*.

But aside from the likely presence of Jaredite descendants incorporated into Zarahemla's group, entirely separate peoples could also have resided within interaction range. Archaeological, art, and linguistic materials make clear that ethnic variety is an old phenomenon everywhere in tropical America where the *Book of Mormon* groups might have been located (mainline archaeologists who have not carefully examined the literature on this topic continue generally to ignore that variety). Even Joseph Smith recognized such a possibility. He once "quoted with approval from the pulpit reports of

certain Toltec legends which would make it appear that those people had come [to Mexico] originally from the Near East in the time of Moses."[18] And why not, Nibley continued? "There is not a word in the *Book of Mormon* to prevent the coming to this hemisphere of any number of people from any part of the world at any time, provided only that they come with the direction of the Lord; and even this requirement must not be too strictly interpreted," considering the condition of the "Mulekites" after their arrival.[19]

A particularly interesting case of such external evidence involves a scene on a monument located at an archaeological site that I consider to be the prime candidate for the city of Mulek. As explained elsewhere,[20] the site of La Venta in southern Mexico qualifies remarkably well as the city of Mulek. It was one of the great centers of Olmec civilization, whose distribution and dates remind us of Jaredite society. Stela 3 at La Venta is a basalt slab fourteen feet high and weighing fifty tons.[21] It is thought to date to about 600 B.C., or a little later, at or just after the late Olmec (Jaredite?) inhabitants abandoned the site. Carved on the stone is a scene in which a person of obviouly high social status, whose facial features look like those shown in some earlier Olmec art, confronts a prominent man who appears to a number of (non-Mormon) art historians like a Jew. This scene has been interpreted by archaeologists as a formal encounter between leaders of different ethnic groups. For instance, the late expert on Mesoamerican art, Tatiana Proskouriakoff, considered that Stela 3 shows "two racially distinct groups of people" and that "the group of the [Jewish-looking] bearded stranger ultimately gained ascendancy." She concluded, thus, that "the culture of La Venta [thereafter] contained a strong foreign component."[22] Latter-day Saints may wonder whether Mulek or some other person in his party might even be the Jew represented on Stela 3, considering the date and the location at a site very suitable to have been the "city of Mulek." At the least we see that ethnic and cultural variety existed in Mesoamerica where and when we would expect evidence of Mulek's group to show up.[23]

Why the Nephite record does not comment on "others"

Why, given the points we have been examining, didn't Nephite historians mention "other" people more explicitly in their record? Several reasons may be suggested. First, note that the record does clearly mention the people of Zarahemla and the descendants of others who arrived with Mulek and even tells us that they outnumbered the Nephites by descent (see Mosiah 25:1). Yet these writers remain uninterested in the "Mulekites" as a group, not even offering a name for them in their entirety. The entire body of information on them would hardly occupy a single page in our scripture.

This lack of concern has to do with the fact that the focus of the record is the Nephites. To the Nephite record keepers, all other groups were insignificant, except as they challenged Nephite rulership. Apparently the "Mulekites" never did so as a group unified by their origin. Probably no such challenge occurred because they never saw themselves as a single group.

A comparison might be made to the descendants of the early American colonizing ship, the *Mayflower*. There is minor prestige in being a descendant of someone on that ship, but there has never been a *Mayflower* movement in our country's politics. Similarly, it appears that no powerful origin account or belief system united those on the ship that brought Mulek (as there was for Nephites and Lamanites). Instead they only constituted a residual category of interest to us in historical retrospect. When there was challenge to Nephite control, it is said to have come from "dissenters," or "Amlicites," or "king-men," some or all of whom might have been of "Mulekite" descent, but that fact was evidently incidental. No doubt a majority of the "Mulekites" went right on peacefully accepting domination by Nephite overlords, as Mosiah 25:13 makes clear.

What view of the Lamanites did the Nephites have that sheds light on the question of "others"? We may see a clarifying parallel to the Nephite-Lamanite relationship in how Mormons viewed "the

Indians" in western America during the nineteenth century. Pioneer historical materials mention "Indians" about the same proportion of the time as the Nephite record mentions the "Mulekites," that is, rarely. This was not because the natives were considered a mystery. On the contrary, Latter-day Saint pioneers had an explanation for "the Indians" which they considered adequate—they were thought to be generic "Lamanites." With a few exceptions at a local level, no more detailed labelling or description was ever considered needed. Overall, "Indians"/"Lamanites" were of only occasional, theoretical concern, as long as they did not make trouble. When they were a problem, the attention they received was, again, normally local. Periodic attempts to convert the Indians rarely had much practical effect, and this positive concern for them tended to be overwhelmed by the "practical" aim to put the natives in their (dominated) place.

Wouldn't the Nephites have dealt with their "Lamanites" about like the Latter-day Saints with theirs? (Notice that the mixed message—hope for converting the benighted ones but tough military measures, too—familiar in early Utah history, was also found in Enos 1:14, 20 and 24.) Thus Nephites in a particular area might have noted differences between one group or subtribe of "Lamanites" and another, while people who talked about the situation only from what they heard in the capital city would have generalized, with little interest in details. For example, it is only in the detailed account of Ammon's missionary travels that we learn that Lamoni and his people were not simply "Lamanites" in general but tribally distinct Ishmaelites inhabiting a region of their own (see Alma 17:19, 21). At the level of concern of the keepers of the overall Nephite account, nevertheless, one "Lamanite" must have seemed pretty much equivalent to any other "Lamanite," as Jacob 1:14 assumes. The Nephites' generic category of "Lamanite" could have lumped together a variety of groups differing in culture, language and physical appearance without any useful purpose being served, in Nephite eyes, by distinguishing among them. (Of course the original records may have gone into more detail, but all we have is Mormon's edited

version of those, plus the small plates of Nephi.)

A final reason why the scripture lacks more explicit mention of "others" may be that the writers did not want to waste space on their plates telling of things they considered obvious or insignificant. For example, they nowhere tell us that the Nephites made and used pottery. Any ancient historian would be considered eccentric if he had written, "And some of our women also made pottery." To anyone of his time it would seem absurd to say so because "everybody knows that." The obvious is rarely recorded in historical documents because it seems pointless to do so. "The people of Zarahemla," "the Lamanites," "the Amalekites" and the like get mentioned in the *Book of Mormon*, not because of who they were but because of particular things they did in relation to the Nephites. They were historically significant actors in some ways at certain moments from a Nephite point of view. But neither Mormon nor any other Nephite writer would waste time and precious space on the plates by adding pointlessly, "Incidentally, there were some other bunches of people around too."

"Others" among the Lamanites

We have already noted that the initial Lamanite faction had an edge in numbers when the Nephites' first split from them. We have also seen that the numbers of Nephites implied by statements and events in their early history was greater than natural births could have accounted for. Growth in population of the Lamanites is still harder to explain.

Jarom 1:5-6 tells us that not long after 400 B.C. the Nephites had "waxed strong in the land," yet the Lamanites "were exceeding more numerous than were...the Nephites." Earlier, Enos 1:20 had characterized the Lamanites as wild, ferocious, blood-thirsty hunters, eating raw meat and wandering in the wilderness mostly unclothed. Jarom echoes that picture (see Jarom 1:6). I suggest that we should discount this dark portrait of the Lamanites on account of its clear measure of ethnic prejudice and its lack of first-hand observation on

the part of the Nephite record keepers.[24] But regardless of qualifications, we are left with the fact that the Lamanites, who are said to have been supported by a hunting economy, greatly outnumbered the Nephites, who were cultivators.

This situation is so contrary to the record of human history that it cannot be accepted at face value.[25] Typically, hunting peoples do not capture enough food energy in the form of game, plus non-cultivated plant foods they gather, to feed as large or as dense a population as farmers can. Almost invariably, settled agriculturalists successfully support a population a number of times greater. It would be incredible for Lamanites living only under the economic regime reported by Enos to have supported the superior population he credits to them. How can we explain their numbers?

Only one explanation is plausible. The early Lamanites had to have included, or to have dominated, other people who lived by cultivation. Their crops would have been essential to support the growth in overall "Lamanite" population. Such a situation is not uncommon in history; predatory hunter/warrior groups often enough have come to control passive agriculturalists off whose production they feed via taxation or tribute. Given the personal aggressiveness of Laman and Lemuel, it would be no surprise if they had immediately begun seizing power over localized populations of "other" farmers if they encountered any. After all, that is what the Lamanites later did to the Zeniffites, taking a "tax" of up to half their production (see Mosiah 7 and 9). But this scenario works only if a settled, non-Lehite population already existed in the land of promise when Lehi came.

The text goes on to tell us that by the first century B.C. Lamanite expansion had spread "through the wilderness on the west, in the land of Nephi; yea, and also on the west of the land of Zarahemla, in the borders by the seashore, and on the west in the land of Nephi, in the place of their fathers' first inheritance, and thus bordering along by the seashore" (Alma 22:28). Note that a phrase in this verse supports the picture of a Lamanite warrior element coexisting with settled people: "the more idle part of the Lamanites lived in the wilderness,

and dwelt in tents." Hence only part of the Lamanite population were hunters, while others were settled, presumably farming, people. The latter group would have been of relatively little concern to the Nephites and thus would not be further mentioned by them because it was the wild types who spearheaded the attacks on the Nephites.

Confirmation of the pattern of dominance of subject groups comes from the mention of cities and other evidences of a civilized way of life among the Lamanites. The brief Nephite record does not bother to tell how the transition from the early nomadic Lamanite pattern to settled life occurred, but the text assures us that change they did, at least some portions of the Lamanite population did. By the time the sons of Mosiah reached the land of Nephi to preach, about 90 B.C., "the Lamanites and the Amalekites and the people of Amulon had built a great city, which was called Jerusalem" (Alma, 21:2). However, the Amalekites and Amulonites are pictured as exploiters of others, not as basic builders of advanced culture. They could not have flourished had there not been an infrastructure of agricultural producers to support them. Other cities, too, are mentioned among the Lamanites—Nephi, Lemuel and Shimnilom by name, plus others unnamed (see Alma 23:4, 11-12).[26]

The Nephites kept on reporting the daunting scale of Lamanite military manpower (see Alma 2:24, 28; 49:6; 51:11; Helaman 1:19). This implies a base population from which the Lamanites could keep drawing an almost inexhaustible supply of sword fodder.[27] Such a large population is even more difficult to account for by natural increase of the original Laman-Lemuel faction than in the case of Nephi's group, for the eventual Lamanite absolute numbers are disproportionately high. None of this demographic picture makes sense unless "others" had become part of the Lamanite economy and polity.

Beyond warfare, other unexpected developments among the Lamanites also demand explanation. Comparative study of ancient societies tells us that their relatively complex system of rulership, where a great king dominated subordinate kings whom he had

commissioned, as reported in Alma 20-22, would be unlikely except among a fairly populous farming people. Also, note that a "palace" was used by the Lamanite great king (see Alma 22:2; perhaps the same structure Noah had earlier built as reported in Mosiah 11:9), but no such building is indicated for the Nephites. The institution of kingship was obviously highly developed among the Lamanites. Moreover, the logistics of Lamanite military campaigns, which they carried on at a great distance from home territory (see, for example, Alma 50:11-32), calls for considerable technological and sociocultural sophistication as well as a large noncombatant population. It is true that dissenters from among the Nephites provided certain knowledge to the Lamanites (compare Alma 47:36), but local human and natural resources on a large scale and a fairly long tradition of locally adaptive technology would have been required in order to bring the ambitions of the dissenters to realization. As we saw in the case of the crops passed down from earlier times, it is quite unthinkable that all this cultural apparatus was simply invented by the reportedly backward Lamanites within the span of a few centuries. Some, perhaps most, of the required cultural background had to derive from pre-Lehite peoples.

As we saw above, Lehi's prophecy in 2 Nephi 2 called for "other nations" to be near at hand and influential upon the Lamanites after their rebellion against Nephi and the Lord became obvious. The point is recalled here in connection with our discussion of the growth in Lamanite numbers.

Despite the brevity of the text about Lamanite society there are specific statements and situations that alert us to the presence of "others" among them. Two key cases involve those identified as the Amulonites and the Amalekites.

The Amulonites originated when the fugitive priests of Noah captured 24 Lamanite women as substitute wives (see Mosiah 20:4-5, 18, 23). From that small beginning, within fifty or sixty years their numbers rose to where they "were as numerous, nearly, as were the Nephites" (Alma 43:14). Since the Nephites commanded tens of

thousands of soldiers at the time, the Amulonites would have had almost the same number. Using a common figure of one soldier for each five of the total population, this would put their entire group at 100,000 or more. But by natural increase the 24 priests and their wives could not have produced even a hundredth of that total in the time indicated. Moreover they had had their own demographic difficulties, for we learn from Alma 25:4 that at one point in time "almost all the seed of Amulon and his brethren, who were the priests of Noah," had been "slain by the hands of the Nephites." So who were left to constitute this large people?

The only possible explanation for their dramatic growth in numbers is that they gained control over and incorporated "other" people. (These were not Lamanites *per se,* it appears from Alma 23:14 and 43:13.) We see how this was done through the political pattern sketched in Alma 25:5. Amulonite survivors of their wars with the Nephites "having fled into the east wilderness...usurped the power and authority over the Lamanites [*in Nephite terms*]" dwelling in that area. They had already had a lesson in usurpation when they got control over Alma and his people in the land of Helam. "The king of the Lamanites had granted unto Amulon that he should be a king and a ruler over his [*own Amulonite*] people, who were in the land of Helam," as well as over subject Alma and company (Mosiah 23:39). In the eyes of the rapacious priests and those who followed and modelled after them, political and economic exploitation of subject populations must have seemed a much superior way to "earn" a good living than the humdrum labor they had had to resort to in their original land, where they "had begun to till the ground" (Mosiah 23:31). We cannot say definitely what the origins of the subjects were who ended up under Amulonite control, but their startling numbers indicate that Lehi's descendants alone cannot account for them.

More mysterious are the Amalekites. They are first mentioned at Alma 21:1-8 where a tiny window on their culture and location in a part of the land of Nephi is opened for us. The time was approximately 90 B.C., but they were already powerful, being mentioned on a par with the

Amulonites. Nothing is said about when or under what circumstances they originated. Alma 21:8 has an Amalekite speaker contrast "thy [Aaron's, and thus Mosiah's] fathers" from "our [Amalekite] fathers." This seems to set their ancestry apart from that of the core Nephites in Zarahemla, but neither were they from the Lamanite side, for Alma 43:13 calls them dissenters from the Nephites.

The Amalekite questioner further implies that his forebears included men who spoke prophetically. Could they have been of Mulek's group, or of the Jaredites, or of still another people? At least the presence of the Amalekites assures us that the *Book of Mormon* text as we now have it does not include all the information it might have about peoples in the land of Nephi lumped together by the Nephite writers as "Lamanites."

Alma 24:29 raises the possibility of still another group being present. It says that among those converted by the Nephite missionaries, "there were none who were [1] Amalekites or [2] Amulonites or [3] who were of the order of Nehor, but they [the converts] were actual descendants of Laman and Lemuel." This phrasing leaves unclear whether those "of the order of Nehor" were merely Amalekites or Amulonites who followed the Nehorite persuasion, or whether, as seems equally likely, the Nehorites constituted a group of their own. Nehor was, after all, a Jaredite personal name; that "order" may have been particularly oriented to Jaredite survivors.

The expression "Lamanitish servants," applied to certain of King Lamoni's servants (Alma 17:26), invites our consideration in this connection. Why not merely "Lamanite servants?" What is the significance of the "-ish" suffix? The English dictionary sense that is most applicable would be "somewhat, approximate." How might those servants have been only "somewhat" Lamanite?

The enigma arises again in a statement in Alma 3:7 referring to "Ishmaelitish women." We are told there that "the Lord God set a mark upon...Laman and Lemuel, and also the sons of Ishmael, and Ishmaelitish women." Of course the wives of Nephi, Sam and Zoram

were all Ishmaelite women (see 1 Nephi 16:7). Does "Ishmaelitish women" mean something else here? If so, what, in terms of ethnicity and descent?

In at least two other places in the text I see possible evidence of "others." Mosiah 24:7 reports the Lamanites' practicing "all manner of wickedness and plunder, *except it were among their own brethren.*" Now, given this verse's context, those plundered do not appear to have been Nephites. Who is referred to? Possibly the statement means that the Lamanites considered it acceptable to plunder any community other than those involving immediate relatives or neighbors, but such a limited sense of "their own brethren" is without precedent in the text. Rather it seems to me that this expression tells us that certain portions of the Lamanites classified other segments of the population in their lands as being of different origin and thus subject to less protection. That is, Mosiah 24:7 could mean that Lamanites were plundering "Lamanites" not of that bloodline, and vice versa. Amulonites and Amalekites could have fallen into the target category as well as the Zeniffites, who certainly were "plundered" (see Mosiah 9:14). Yet it seems to me that plunderable "others," of non-Lehite stock, may have been at odds with "the [real] Lamanites" and thus have come into conflict with them (compare Mormon 8:8). That could explain Helaman 5:21, where there is mention of "an army of the Lamanites," whose existence in their homeland is strange since no war against the Nephites was going on or threatened at that time.

When we consider the obvious question of what language was used among the Lamanites, we learn nothing useful about "others." No indication is given of the use of translators or of problems in communication resulting from language difference. When Lamanites and Nephites are described as talking or writing to each other, nothing is said or hinted about what tongue they used. Their dialects that had diverged separately from the Hebrew which Nephi and Laman shared back in Jerusalem, if still spoken centuries later, might have been similar enough to permit everyday communication (although conversations about conceptual topics like religion would fare worse).

Note, however, that "the language of Nephi" which Mosiah 24:4 and 6 report as beginning to be taught by Nephite dissenters "among all the people of the Lamanites" was a writing system, not a spoken tongue as such, which verse 6 makes clear. Whether speakers of "other" languages were present or involved we simply cannot say on the basis of the brief record.

The dark skin attributed to the Lamanites has been interpreted by some readers of the *Book of Mormon* as indicating that Laman, Lemuel and those of Ishmael's family had mixed with "others" bearing darker pigmentation. The problem with that view is that the first mention of it is by Nephi himself (2 Nephi 5:21) shortly after the initial split in Lehi's group. The abruptness of the appearance of this "mark" upon the Lamanites cannot be reconciled with genetic mixing with a resident population for that would have required at least a generation to become evident in skin coloring. Again, near the time of Christ those Lamanites "who had united with the Nephites" had the curse "taken from them, and their skin became white like unto the Nephites" (3 Nephi 2:15). The idea that those changes had a genetic basis is not sustainable. However, it is indeed possible that "others" who, we have seen, must have been nearby, were more heavily pigmented than the Lehites, and they may have mixed with the Lamanite faction. If that were the case, it might have appeared to a Nephite observer, from the outside, that statistically "the Lamanites" had become darker. But we cannot confirm this possibility from statements in the record we currently possess.

"Others" among the Jaredites?

The major focus of this paper, as well as of the *Book of Mormon*, is the Nephites. A brief look at the Jaredite record is nevertheless worthwhile for what it seems to tell us about demographic processes comparable to those we have discovered in the Nephite record. Moroni's summary of Ether's Jaredite history is so concise that it is difficult to say much about their population history in relation to

Jared's original party, yet a few points stand out. It appears that for this earlier people, too, we must look to "other" groups to account plausibly for the indicated trends and numbers.

Figuring the demographic growth of Jared's party requires that we establish how many there were initially. Ether 6:16 indicates that the founding generation consisted of 24 males. The brother of Jared sired 22 sons and daughters, while Jared had twelve (see Ether 6:20). We can be confident that they had multiple wives. Estimating on the basis of these figures, the original party reasonably could have numbered on the order of 80 adults.[28]

Not many decades later, when Jared's grandsons, Corihor and Kib, were vigorous political leaders, we read of a "city" in a land, "Nehor," not previously mentioned (see Ether 7:9). This is the earliest "city" in the entire *Book of Mormon* record, yet no city is ever mentioned in the land of Moron, the capital "where the king [in Jared's line] dwelt" (Ether 7:5). Even if half the descendants from those on the eight barges had inexplicably settled in Nehor, the highest number we can imagine for them at this early date would be, say, a hundred people in the "city" and its land. That number could not have made much of a "city." Then one generation later, "the people [as a whole] had become exceeding numerous" (Ether 7:11). The scale of population suggested by these statements calls for "other" groups to have been incorporated under the Jaredite rulers.

Continued extraordinary population dynamics followed. In the next generation war resulted in destruction of "all the people of the kingdom...save it were thirty souls, and they who fled with the house of Omer" (Ether 9:12). Yet two kings later we read of the building of "many mighty cities" (Ether 9:23). Before long, drought caused the death of the king Heth "and all his household" except Shez (Ether 10:1-2). Quickly they again built up "many cities...and the people began again to spread over all the face of the land" (Ether 10:4). Centuries later, two million "mighty men, and also their wives and their children" (Ether 15:2) were slain while further warring armies and civilian supporters yet remained.

I find it not credible that these roller-coaster numbers could result strictly from the demographics of an original party of 80 adults. As with the groups reported in the Nephites' own record, a simpler and more compelling explanation is that groups not descended from the immigrant party were involved. If so, "the Jaredites" would have consisted of a combination of groups with cultures and languages beyond those that originated from the settlers on the first barges. But the picture is left unclear because Ether, a direct descendant of Jared, gives us only his line's history rather than an account of all the inhabitants of the land (consider, for example, Ether 10:30-31).[29] Furthermore, we have access only to Moroni's summary covering Ether's necessarily short history of thousands of years.

When all the considerations we have reviewed are weighed, I find it inescapable that there were substantial populations in the "promised land" throughout the period of the Nephite record, and very probably in the Jaredite era also. The status and origin of these peoples is never made clear because the writers never set out to do any such thing; they had other purposes. Yet we cannot understand the demographic or cultural history of Lehi's literal descendants without taking into account those other groups, too.

Hereafter, readers will not be justified in saying that the record fails to mention "others" but only that we readers have hitherto failed to observe what is said and implied about such people in the *Book of Mormon*. This is one more instance in which we see that much remains in that ancient record which we should try to elucidate by diligent analysis.

Notes To Chapter 4

[1] John L. Sorenson, "The Composition of Lehi's Family," printed as Chapter 1 in this volume, originally in John M. Lundquist and Stephen D. Ricks, editors, *By Study and Also by Faith: Essays in Honor of Hugh W. Nibley*, 2 volumes, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1990, 2:174-96.

[2] The numbers are in question particularly because we are not told how many years elapsed between the party's arrival in Bountiful and their splitting apart in the land of first inheritance in America. Before his death Lehi said of his son Jacob, "thou hast beheld in thy youth his glory" (2 Nephi 2:4). The probable Hebrew expression translated to English as "youth" indicates an age between ten or twelve at the low end ranging into the twenties. Given the fact that Lehi was already "aged" aboard ship, during which time Jacob was still a child needing to be "nourished" (1 Nephi 18:19), it seems unuely that Lehi's statement to Jacob in 2 Nephi 2 would have been many years later. Supposing two years aboard ship and two at the original landing site—they planted and harvested at least one crop—then Jacob could plausibly have been about twelve in Lehi's reference to his "youth."

[3] Compare, for example, George Cowgill, "On Causes and Consequences of Ancient and Modern Population Changes," *American Anthropologist* 77 (1975), pages 505-25: "Surges implying rates of natural increase of from 3 to 7 per 1000 per year over regions up to some tens of thousands of square kilometers, sustained over two or three centuries...have not been uncommon during the past few thousand years, but they are interspersed with periods of very slow growth or decline. Overall regional trends spanning a millennium or more show net population gains that are rarely more than what would have resulted from a steady rate of increase of 1 or 2 per 1000 per year.... It seems that rates of natural increase greater than about 6 or 7 per 1000 per year have occurred only very briefly and locally." At a rate of natural increase (births minus deaths) of a phenomenal 7 per 1000 population, the original 24 in the Nephite group would have doubled to 48 in 100 years, long after Jacob's death. Using the same rate, by the time of Jacob's encounter with Sherem the total number of adult Nephite males would not have exceeded ten—all of whom would have been relatives and all of whom would have known each other intimately. Of course Cowgill's numbers could be wrong, but where are the historical cases for colonizing groups under similar conditions that might contradict his findings? Without such cases we are left to pluck numbers out of the air.

[4] Anthony W. Ivins, "Are the Jaredites an Extinct People?" *Improvement Era* 6 (November 1902), pages 43-44; compare Omni 1:21.

[5] *An Ancient American Setting for the Book of Mormon*, page 54.

[6] The position of chief judge no doubt continued many of the key political functions of the former kings and perhaps in some form even the regal title "Nephi." Note that the chief judge was said to "reign" (Alma 7:2), and as head of state he personally led the Nephite armies (compare Alma 2:16 with Words of Mormon 1:13). Some of the trappings of the monarchy likely also continued under the system of judges, considering the reference to "thrones" (reflected in Alma 60:7, 11, and 21, and likely Helaman 6:19). Consider also the telling title applied in Alma 60:24 to the chief judge: "the great head of our government."

[7] John L. Sorenson, "The 'Mulekites,'" originally published in *BYU Studies* 30 (1990), pages 6-22.

[8] The argument and citations are in the section called "The Expansion of Zarahemla," in my *An Ancient American Setting*, pages 190-97.

[9] The Nephites had "taken possession of all the northern parts of the land...even until they came to the land which they called Bountiful" and then had "inhabited" that area as a strategic measure (see Alma 22:29, 33). But some remnants of the "Mulekites," though not of "the people of Zarahemla," must already have lived there, for that would be the general area where they encountered the wounded Jaredite ruler, Coriantumr. See Chapter 5, pages 117-120. The city Bountiful, like the cities of Mulek, Gid and Omner, was apparently in existence before the Nephites cleared out the Lamnanite squatters in that section of wilderness and fortified the zone (see Alma 50:13-15). They founded garrison cities which the text names, but Bountiful, Mulek, Gid and Omner, the cities nearest to the land northward, were evidently already in place, for their founding is not mentioned. Instead "the land Bountiful" was already a fact in Nephite geography (Alma 50:11).

[10] *An Ancient American Setting*, pages 196-97, and *The Geography of Book of Mormon Events: A Source Book*, Provo: FARMS, 1990, page 245.

[11] As I pointed out in "The 'Mulekites,'" (Chapter 5 page 112) it is likely that there would not have been women aboard for most or all of the crew. For those men to reproduce, as is implied in the expression "exceeding numerous" in Omni, they would have had to find and take "native" or "other" women.

[12] See, initially, Morris Swadesh, "Linguistics as an Instrument of Prehistory," *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* 15 (1959), pages 20-35; Dell Hymes, "Lexicostatistics So Far," *Current Anthropology* 1 (1960), pages 3-44, and also 5 (1964), pages 324-26. For later critiques and modifications, consult "lexicostatistics" and "glottochronology" in the index to John L. Sorenson and Martin H. Raish, *Pre-Columbian Contact with the Americas across the Oceans: An Annotated Bibliography*, revised edition, vol. 2, Provo: Research Press, 1996.

[13] Historical cases are numerous, but the most obvious may be the Manchu rulers over China, who became completely Sinicized, and the Nahuatl-speaking "Toltecs" who invaded highland Guatemala as reported in the *Popol Vuh*. See Robert M. Carmack, "Toltec Influence on the Postclassic Culture History of Highland Guatemala," in *Archaeological Studies in Middle America*, Tulane University Middle American Research Institute Publication 26, 1970, pages 49-92.

[14] Robert F. Smith, "Some 'Neologisms' from the Mormon Canon" in *Conference on the Language of the Mormons*, May 31, 1973, Brigham Young University Language Research Center, 1973, pages 64-68; and personal communication.

[15] Hugh Nibley, *Lehi in the Desert*, page 245. The name Kishkumen should be added to Nibley's list. One wonders what considerations led Alma the younger to give two, and perhaps all three, of his sons Jaredite names: Shiblon and Corianton are unquestionably so, and Helaman could be. Perhaps they had been born and received their names during Alma's "idolatrous" phase (see Mosiah 27:8). I suppose that the idolatrous cult in which he was involved was old, ultimately Jaredite-derived, and common in Nephite society, in the broad sense, thanks to transmission through elements among the people of Zarahemla.

[16] Nibley, *Collected Works*, volume 5, page 246.

[17] B. H. Roberts, *New Witnesses for God*, 3 volumes, Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1909, 3:137-38; J. M. Sjodahl, *An Introduction to the Study of the Book of Mormon*, Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1927, pages 77-78.

[18] Nibley, volume 5 in *The Collected Works of Hugh Nibley*, page 250-51; compare Joseph Fielding Smith, editor, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1938, page 267.

[19] Nibley, *Collected Works*, volume 5, page 251.

[20] See my article "The 'Mulekites,'" page 12, reprinted here as Chapter 5 (see page 114) as well as *An Ancient American Setting*, pages 18-19.

[21] It is best viewed in an artist's reconstruction of the scene on the presently damaged stone pictured in Michael D. Coe, *America's First Civilization*, New York: American Heritage, 1968, pages 58-59.

[22] Tatiana Proskouriakoff, "Olmec and Maya Art: Problems of Their Stylistic Relation," in Elizabeth P. Benson, editor, *Dumbarton Oaks Conference on the Olmec, October 28th and 29th, 1967*, Washington: Dumbarton Oaks, 1968, page 121.

[23] For additional relevant material, see Constance Irwin, *Fair Gods and Stone Faces*, New York: St. Martin's, 1963; Alejandro von Wuthenau, *Unexpected Faces in Ancient America, 1500 B.C.-A.D. 1500*, New York: Crown, 1975; and L. Gonzalez Calderón, *Cabecitas Olmecas*, Coatzacoalcos, México, privately printed, 1977.

[24] See my *An Ancient American Setting*, pages 90-91. The prejudice is clearly seen in Mosiah 9:1-2, Alma 26:23-25, and Helaman 14:10.

[25] See, for example, C. Daryll Forde, *Habitat, Economy and Society: A Geographical*

Introduction to Ethnology, 8th edition, London: Methuen, 1968.

[26] Nibley's picture of Jaredite nomads running around North America while also building cities (see Nibley's *Lehi in the Desert,* pages 225 and 419-20) may be cited against the picture here presented. But it is based on a selective and incomplete reading of the book of Ether and has no factual basis in history, tradition, or archaeology anywhere in the pre-Columbian New World; compare Bruce W. Warren's review of Hugh Nibley's *The World of the Jaredites,* in *University Archaeological Society Newsletter* 27 (June 1955), pages 1-6. In fact, Nibley grants that his paradigmatic "heroic city" of the nomads or Central Asia depended on settled populations of farmers (Nibley, *Lehi in the Desert,* page 226).

[27] *An Ancient American Setting,* pages 193-94.

[28] That comes out to only three men (founders) per "barge," which says something about how small the vessels were. Of course some of their sons might also have been physically adult while not fitting into the social classification of the generational peers and thus qualifying as full "friends" of Jared and his brother.

[29] *An Ancient American Setting,* pages 52-53.