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Abstract: *For decades, several Latter-day Saint scholars have maintained that there is a convergence between the location of Nahom in the Book of Mormon and the Nihm region of Yemen. To establish whether there really is such a convergence, I set out to reexamine where the narrative details of 1 Nephi 16:33–17:1 best fit within the Arabian Peninsula, independent of where the Nihm region or tribe is located. I then review the historical geography of the Nihm tribe, identifying its earliest known borders and academic interpretations of their location in antiquity. My investigation brings in data on ancient Yemen and Arabia that has not been previously considered in discussions about Nahom or Lehi's journey more generally, and leads to some surprising conclusions. Nonetheless, after establishing both where we should expect to find Nahom and the most likely location of ancient Nihm independent of one another, the two locations are compared and found to substantially overlap, suggesting that the "Nahom convergence" is real. With the convergent relationship established, I then explore four possible scenarios for Lehi's stop at Nahom, the burial of Ishmael, and the party's journey eastward toward Bountiful based on the new data presented in this paper.*

In his seminal work *Lehi in the Desert*, originally published serially in the 1950 *Improvement Era*, Hugh Nibley pointed out a subtle detail in the wording of 1 Nephi 16:34: "Note that this is not '*a* place which *we* called Nahom,' but *the* place which *was* so called."[1] In the mid-1970s, Lynn and Hope Hilton also noticed this detail, and reasoned that Nahom "was almost certainly a settled place, because Nephi says it already 'was called Nahom,' while every other campsite … was named by [Lehi's

family] themselves," leading them to ask: "Called Nahom by whom?"[2] As a place name known to others on the Arabian Peninsula, Nahom could possibly be found in other historical sources. Sure enough, a year after the Hiltons published their exploration of Lehi's trail in the *Ensign*,[3] archaeologist Ross T. Christensen identified the name *Nehhm* on an old eighteenth century map of Yemen prepared by German explorer and cartographer Carsten Niebuhr and suggested it might be "the place which was called Nahom" (1 Nephi 16:34).[4] In a short note published in the *Ensign*, Christensen recommended three steps be taken for further research,[5] and in the intervening decades, each of his recommended avenues of inquiry have borne significant fruit.[6]

The first was "to invite semiticists to give their opinions as to whether Nahom and Nehhm are probable phonetic equivalents."[7] Starting with Warren Aston in the 1980s, researchers learned that *Nehhm* was a variant spelling of the name Nihm, a regional and tribal name still attested today in Yemen, and spelled a variety of different ways, including Naham, Nahim, Nahm, Neham, Nehem, etc., with only the consonants N-H-M consistent.[8] Such inconsistencies are a hallmark of attempts to transcribe Arabian names into the Latin alphabet,[9] and a total of seventeen different variants of this name are attested.[10] In most ancient Semitic languages, however, vowels go unwritten, and thus only the consonantal spelling NHM would have been on the plates.[11] Thus, after considering possible linguistic factors, Semiticist Stephen D. Ricks — who literally wrote the dictionary on one of the major languages spoken anciently in Yemen — concluded: "Nahom as the realization of the southwest Arabian proper name *nhm* is eminently plausible."[12]

The next step recommended by Christensen was to "search for the name on [additional] maps … even going back to medieval and ancient ones, if any can be found."[13] Several additional maps from the eighteenth and early nineteenth century attesting to this name, usually spelled *Nehem*, as well as several more contemporary government maps, where the spelling is frequently *Naham* or *Nahm*, have since been identified by Aston and others.[14]

For his final suggestion, Christensen wrote, "Still another step — when the political situation allows — would be archaeological fieldwork."[15] Yemen opened to archaeological fieldwork in the 1980s, and various excavations have been conducted by scholars from around the world since that time. As first noticed by S. Kent Brown, such fieldwork has recovered Ancient South Arabian inscriptions mentioning "Nihmites" (*nhmyn*) which confirm that the name went back to

Lehi's day.[16] Fieldwork also uncovered extensive burial grounds in the surrounding area.[17]

Christensen also noted, "Nehhm is only a little south of the route drawn by the Hiltons."[18] Subsequent researchers identified ancient trade routes leading further south into Yemen and then swinging in a more easterly direction, consistent with Nephi's directional statements (1 Nephi 16:13, 33; 17:1).[19] It has also been confirmed that the only plausible candidates for Bountiful are located nearly due east of the Nihm region.[20]

As all these discoveries emerged, it generated a consensus among Latter-day Saint scholars and researchers identifying Nahom with the Nihm region of Yemen, with some coming to regard the complex relationship of all these interlocking details as a "convergence."[21] For example, Brant A. Gardner concluded, "This combination of a named location in the right place at the right time provides a less-than-coincidental *convergence* between the text and the appropriate real world setting."[22]

Defining and Reexamining the Convergence

When discussing the relationship between archaeological discoveries and written sources, archaeologist William G. Dever explained that "convergences" are "points at which the two lines of evidence, when pursued independently and as objectively as possible, appear to point in the same direction and can be projected eventually to meet."[23] Therefore, if there really is a convergent relationship between Nahom and Nihm, it will be confirmed by *independent* examinations of both (1) where Nahom *should* be located, based on where the narrative details of 1 Nephi 16:33–17:1 best fit within Arabia; and (2) the historical geography of the Nihm tribe, seeking to understand its earliest known location and ancient boundaries, as best as can be determined from historical, archaeological, and scholarly sources. Only after the likely location(s) of both Nahom and Nihm have been *independently* assessed can they be compared — if they overlap, then it is fair to say that there is indeed a convergent relationship between the two, and "whenever the two sources or 'witnesses' happen to converge in their testimony," according to Dever, "a historical 'datum' (or given) may be said to have been established beyond reasonable doubt."[24]

In order to properly reexamine the "Nahom convergence" afresh, it will be necessary to revisit the details of Lehi's journey as a whole, *without* assuming or taking for granted interpretations of the text that may be influenced by the presumed location of Nahom in Yemen.

The past interpretations offered by Latter-day Saint scholars and researchers will not be ignored, of course, but emphasis will be placed on those interpretations that can be traced back to before the potential identification of Nahom with Nihm in 1977 or that can otherwise be shown to be formulated independently of any presumed association of Nahom and Nihm. These interpretations will then be considered against the data on ancient Arabia as reported by mainstream, non-Latter-day Saint scholars who are naturally uninfluenced by the details of the Book of Mormon narrative.

There will be four steps to this reexamination process: First, as mentioned, it will be necessary to look at Lehi's journey as a whole — specifically looking at the details of Lehi's route and the directions followed to get to and leave from Nahom, and then establishing where in Arabia such travel directions lead based on historically documented routes. This alone will considerably narrow the geographic window wherein Nahom should be found.

Second, the main detail in the text about Nahom is that it was the place where Ishmael was buried. Although we cannot determine with certainty that this was at a formal burial site, for various reasons (discussed below) it seems likely that Ishmael's family would have preferred a more formal burial if such were available and accessible to them. As such, it is worth looking at the geographic distribution of burial sites and known necropolises within or near the region established by Lehi's travel directions.

Third, 1 Nephi 16:33–39 will be reviewed for additional details that can potentially shed light on the location of Nahom, and these will be considered in the context of what is known about the general vicinity to which Lehi's travel directions lead. All these factors combined may not necessarily pinpoint a single, specific spot, but they do provide a relatively clear view of the general locality wherein Nahom *must* be found.

Fourth, the historical geography of the Nihm region will then be independently considered based on scholarly interpretation of primary sources from Arabia. This location will be subsequently compared against the location established for Nahom, to determine if there is any overlap that thereby confirms a convergence. Then, in light of all the evidence reviewed throughout this paper, four potential scenarios will be considered for the specific location of Lehi's basecamp established in 1 Nephi 16:33, the burial of Ishmael, and the subsequent turn eastward.

Lehi's Route and the Frankincense Trail

To get to Nahom, Lehi first led his family from Jerusalem to "the borders near the shore of the Red Sea," and then traveled another three days before establishing a camp in a valley near the coastline (1 Nephi 2:5–8).[25] When they resumed their journey, they went in "nearly a south-southeast direction," a bearing they generally maintained for the duration of "many days" until stopping just before Ishmael's death (1 Nephi 16:13–17, 33–34). After Ishmael's burial at Nahom, when the family resumed their journey, they "did travel nearly eastward from that time forth," until arriving at a verdant coastal region they called "Bountiful" (1 Nephi 17:1–6).

Of course, determining every step and stop of Lehi's route through Arabia with exacting precision is impossible to do, but this is to be expected from an ancient travel account — especially one written as a generalized summary decades after the fact (see 2 Nephi 5:28–34). As Daniel T. Potts has noted, when studying travel through Arabia in antiquity, "there are many well-known, *logical* routes, the existence of which can be demonstrated through time," yet "it [is] nearly impossible to determine exactly which route was taken in an historical case, unless the itinerary is specified, and even then, the toponyms mentioned may no longer be identifiable."[26] In the specific historical case of Lehi's journey, Nephi only provides a sparse and incomplete itinerary — mentioning only four camps (out of what must have been dozens) prior to the burial of Ishmael at Nahom, and afterwards only mentioning the final destination of their overland journey (see 1 Nephi 2:5–10; 16:6, 12–14, 17, 33–34; 17:5–6). Such sparse references to named locations is not uncommon in ancient Arabian travel accounts, and typically makes it difficult to determine the exact route followed in any given case.[27] This difficulty is further compounded in Lehi's case by the fact that, apart from Nahom, all the toponyms in Lehi's itinerary are given to their various camps by Lehi or his family and are thus unidentifiable via outside historical records:[28]

- "And it came to pass that *he called the name* of the river Laman" (1 Nephi 2:8)
- "my father dwelt in a tent in the valley *which he called* Lemuel" (1 Nephi 16:6)
- "and *we did call the name* of the place Shazer" (1 Nephi 16:13)
- "Ishmael died and was buried in the place *which was called Nahom*" (1 Nephi 16:34)

- "And we did come to the land *which we called Bountiful*" (1 Nephi 17:5)
- "And we beheld the sea, *which we called Irreantum*" (1 Nephi 17:5)
- "And *we called the place Bountiful* because of its much fruit" (1 Nephi 17:6)

Despite this limitation, the first two camps can be identified with a reasonably high degree of confidence, thanks to Nephi's specific statements on the number of days traveled to reach each destination. First, nearly all researchers agree that the Valley of Lemuel (see 1 Nephi 2:5–10) is located in Wadi Tayyib al-Ism, approximately 74 miles of travel south of Aqaba.[29] Similarly, there is a general consensus identifying the next camp, called Shazer (see 1 Nephi 16:12–14), with Wadi Agharr (also known as Wadi Sharma), which lies approximately 70 miles of travel southeast of Wadi Tayyib al-Ism.[30] Whether or not these exact identifications are correct, however, the specification of exactly seven days total for the trek from Aqaba to Shazer (1 Nephi 2:5; 16:13) guarantees that Lehi's location by this point in his journey could not have been too far from the general vicinity of Wadi Agharr.[31]

From here, Nephi only specifies that the party traveled "many days" before reaching the next, unnamed camp mentioned in his account, and then they continued on once again for "many days" before arriving at another unnamed location, after which they buried Ishmael at Nahom (1 Nephi 16:15–17, 33–34). Unsurprisingly, this indefinite itinerary makes "it nearly impossible to determine exactly which route was taken"[32] from Shazer to Nahom, just as is the case with many other accounts of trans-Arabian travel. Despite this inability to pin down Lehi's *exact* route, Latter-day Saint researchers have long recognized that the fabled "incense road" or "frankincense trail" demonstrates the existence of well-known, logical routes that mirror the general course taken by Lehi and his family as outlined in 1 Nephi.

The Frankincense Trail in the Early First Millennium BC

The main course of the Frankincense Trail transported incense from Dhofar and Hadramawt westward through the South Arabian "caravan kingdoms," and then north-to-northwest through western Arabia (see Map 1).[33] In 1957, Hugh Nibley was the first to point out that this route mirrored Lehi's trail, at least in its general course: "For many centuries the richest trade route in the world was that which ran along the eastern shore of the Red Sea for almost the entire length of the Arabian peninsula.

Map 1. The Main Overland Routes of the Frankincense Trail.

This is the route that Lehi took when he escaped from Jerusalem."[34] Nearly 20 years later, when the Hiltons were commissioned to retrace Lehi's steps, they used the Frankincense Trail as their template, arguing that Lehi's family would have stuck to this well-known route with access to water and other key resources.[35] Since then, most researchers have agreed that Lehi likely followed this major trade route for at least parts — and perhaps even the majority — of his journey, with George Potter and Richard Wellington developing the most comprehensive argument for placing Lehi on the Frankincense Trail.[36]

The most detailed information on the incense trade and the roads it used comes from Greco-Roman and other classical era sources that post-date Lehi's time by hundreds of years.[37] Nonetheless, numerous sources confirm that this trade was well underway in Lehi's day.[38] The origins of the South Arabian incense trade with Mesopotamia and the Levant began sometime between the thirteenth and the eighth centuries BC.[39] Assyrian records attest to trade and other interactions with Sabaeans by the mid-eighth century BC, with some indications suggesting such trade was already in place by the early ninth century BC.[40] More recently, an inscription discovered in Jerusalem, potentially referring to incense and written in Ancient South Arabian, dates to the tenth century BC.[41] If this is accurate, it brings the evidence to within King Solomon's era, giving historical credence to his reported visit from the Queen of Sheba (1 Kings 10:1–13) and suggesting that Israel was already involved in trade

with South Arabia by the beginning of the first millennium BC.[42] Various additional biblical texts and archaeological finds clearly establish contact between Judah and South Arabia by the seventh (and likely the eighth) century BC.[43]

While the most detailed information is from later periods, a generalized outline of the main trade routes can be recovered from early-to-mid first millennium BC sources that are closer to Lehi's time. One recently discovered bronze inscription written in Sabaic, dated by many scholars to ca. 600–550 BC, narrates the military and commercial travels of a man named Ṣabaḥuhumu (*ṣbḥhmw*) from Nashq (*ns²qyn*), one of the Wadi Jawf city-states.[44] Under the auspices of the Sabaeans, Ṣabaḥuhumu "traded and led a caravan to Dedan and Gaza and the towns of Judah."[45] Not only does this confirm that there was contact between Judah and Saba at this time, it also indicates that the south-to-north trade route linking them began in the Wadi Jawf (Nashq) and passed through Dedan.[46] As Alessandra Avanzini concluded, in the early first millennium BC, "Saba' must have controlled … a commercial path along the Red Sea towards Palestine and the Mediterranean."[47] A fifth century BC Minaic wall inscription from Barāqish, another city-state in the Jawf, talks about caravaneers traveling "on the route between Maʿīn and Rajma."[48] Rajma (*rgmtm*) refers to Najran, another major stop along the north-south trade route, and according to Avanzini, this text indicated that the Minaeans had wrested control of the "caravan route along the Ḥijāz" from the Sabaeans by the end of the fifth century BC.[49]

Thus, in the early-to-mid first millennium BC the south-to-north route of the incense trade evidently began in the Wadi Jawf, passed through Najran and Dedan, and then continued on to places in Judah and along the Mediterranean coast — the same basic route documented in greater detail in later times.[50] Biblical texts also link Dedan, Sheba (Saba), and Raamah (Rajma/Najran) in a way that suggests Israelites of the seventh–sixth centuries BC had a clear knowledge of this important trade route (see Genesis 10:6; Ezekiel 27:21–22).[51]

Inscriptional evidence also indicates that the Wadi Jawf was the nexus of the north-south trail and the roads bringing incense from the east during the early first millennium BC. Key evidence comes from the city of Haram, located in the Jawf, where an early seventh century BC inscription was found which invokes the god of Najran (*ʿṯtr ḏ-rgmt*).[52] This most likely means that Haram and Najran had commercial ties,[53] linking Haram to the northward trade route discussed above. Two other inscriptions from Haram, also dated to the early seventh century BC,

identify leaders of Haramite trading outposts established in areas to the east of the Jawf — the "chief of ʿArarāt" (*kbr ʿrrt*), identified as al-Asaḥil, northwest of Marib, and the "chief of the Ḥaḍramawt" (*kbr ḥḍrmwt*), the easternmost tribal kingdom of South Arabia.[54]

Thus, Haram was evidently the turning point within a trading network that expanded northward and eastward from the Jawf, going from Hadramawt in the east, to ʿArarāt, and then Haram, from whence it turned north toward Najran. While this does not allow us to reconstruct the *exact* route eastward used by the Haramite traders, as with the north-to-south trail discussed above, this is generally consistent with the east-to-west roads used in the incense trade, as documented in later sources (see Map 2).[55]

This overall consistency hardly comes as a surprise, given the "geographical determinism" that dictated travel in the ancient Near East, and Arabia in particular. As Barry J. Beitzel explains it, "there were certain largely unchanging physiographic and/or hydrologic factors which determined … that routes followed by caravans, migrants, or armies remained relatively unaltered throughout extended periods of time."[56] Because of this, according to Michael C. Astour, "It is thus possible, when at least some of the transit points can be located on the map, to restore the

Map 2. Main Trade Routes in South Arabia.

entire route by using the data of physical geography and of more-detailed itineraries from a later age."[57] Speaking specifically of South Arabia, Richard L. Bowen noted "that the country is geographically rugged and climatic conditions have not changed much in several thousand years," and thus the same "routes have probably been in use for millennia."[58] Potts similarly observed, "The basic topography and hydrology of Arabia has not changed significantly in the last two to three thousand years," and thus later travel reports — ranging from early Islamic pilgrimage roads to accounts of travel by camel in early modern times — "provide invaluable information on non-motorized travel possibilities in Arabia … in all periods" when properly "intergrat[ed] … with more ancient historical accounts."[59]

With this in mind, we can plausibly use the later reconstructions of the Frankincense Trail — and the local road networks it intersected with — to flesh out the basic overall route that can be confirmed by early-to-mid first millennium BC sources. Even if some specific routes did not come into *common* use until later periods, the general stability of the terrain, hydrology, and climate over time suggest most were *possible* to use by earlier travelers, and likely were used at least occasionally by some prior to the time when they were more widely documented.

Lehi's Connecting Route to the Frankincense Trail

The Frankincense Trail provides a well-known, logical route which existed in the early first millennium BC that broadly mirrors Lehi's route, and most Latter-day Saint scholars (beginning with Hugh Nibley in 1957) agree that Lehi likely followed this trail for at least part of his journey. To get to the main route of the incense road from the area of Wadi Agharr/Sharma (the likely location of Shazer), sooner or later Lehi would have needed to take a connecting pass through the Hijaz or Asir mountains. Once again, there are a number of logical, historically documented routes that Lehi potentially could have taken.[60]

Perhaps the most direct option would be to follow Wadi Sharma itself, which Aston notes "provides a pathway further into the interior of Arabia."[61] If the Roman port Leuke Kome was located at Wadi Ainounah, as many scholars believe, then there may have been a route going straight through Wadi Sharma and onto Tabuk — a stop along the main incense road — at least during the Roman period.[62] However, such a path — nearly due east for approximately 85 miles — does not fit well with the directions provided by Nephi for this part of his journey.[63]

A more likely route is the early Islamic pilgrimage road that went from the Gulf of Aqaba to Medina, passing right through Wadi Agharr and continuing to al-Ula (the location of ancient Dedan), where it merged with the main incense trail.[64] Nigel Groom suggests that this route was used as a secondary trail in the incense trade, based on references from Greco-Roman sources and archaeological evidence near Aqaba dated to the sixth century BC.[65] Connecting to the fertile areas of the Hijaz mountains in a generally southeastward direction, this trail fits well with Nephi's account, as Potter and Wellington have argued.[66]

Alternatively, Lehi's party could have gone down the coastline another 150 miles to al-Wajh, passing through oases such as Wadi al-Muweileh and Wadi al-Aznam.[67] From al-Wajh, they could go southeast to the mouth of Wadi Hamd — a broad, fertile valley that provides natural passage into the mountains southeastward to Medina.[68] In pre-Islamic times, Medina was known as Yathrib and is attested as a stop along the main trade route in Babylonian sources from the sixth century BC.[69] If Leuke Kome was alternatively located in al-Wajh (or the nearby Ras Karkuma), as favored by some scholars, then Wadi Hamd was almost certainly used as the main route connecting the port to the caravan trails inland.[70] Thus, taking this generally south-southeastward route from Wadi Agharr to Medina would also be largely consistent with Nephi's account.

Several additional wadi networks also provide passage through the northern Hijaz, and other passes exist further to the south, such as the routes linking Mecca to the Frankincense Trail.[71] Further south still is the road leading southeastward from al-Qunfudah to Najran that the Hiltons proposed as part of Lehi's route.[72] No doubt several more possible passes could be proposed. It is impossible to determine with certainty which route was followed, but three clues suggest that they went into the mountains soon after departing from Shazer: (1) the Red Sea and its "borders" quickly drop from the narrative; (2) they were hunting and "slaying food by the way," and (3) traversing through "fertile parts of the wilderness" (1 Nephi 16:14–17). All these details are consistent with moving away from the coast and crossing the northern Hijaz, where there is greater fertility and hunting grounds in the mountains and the inland plateau than along the coast.[73]

In any case, all of these demonstrate the existence of well-known, logical routes that generally maintain a south-to-southeastward course and could have been taken by Lehi to cross the mountains and merge onto the main route of the Frankincense Trail somewhere between

Dedan and Najran. From there, they naturally would have continued on, "following the same direction" further south-southeast into Arabia, "traveling nearly the same course as in the beginning" until Ishmael's passing (1 Nephi 16:14, 33–34).

Lehi's "Nearly Eastward" Trek: Possible Turning Points

After Ishmael's burial at Nahom, Lehi's party turned "nearly eastward from that time forth" (1 Nephi 17:1). Using the known points where ancient trade routes turned to a generally east-west directional bearing provides a limited number of places where Lehi and his family could have turned "nearly eastward" for the final leg of their journey. This, in turn, puts constraints on where Nahom *must* be located, independent of any historical or inscriptional evidence for where a tribe or toponym with an NHM name might be found. As the Hiltons reasoned in 1976, "the locale of Nahom would be in the area where the frankincense trail is known to have turned eastward. Thus, we determined that a study of the communities in this area might uncover a possible Nahom."[74]

Historically, there are three main routes known to connect the Jawf region of Yemen to the Hadramawt in the east (see Map 2). The southernmost route — which most scholars presume was the primary road used by the incense caravans — departed from the Wadi Jawf at Barāqish (known anciently as Yathill) southward for roughly 10–15 miles before bending eastward toward Marib. It was then possible to cut northeastward to Ruwayk (see Map 1, following Loreto), thereby merging with the route coming directly out of the Jawf (discussed below).[75] The main trail, however, took a more circuitous route eastward from Marib, as it skirted the edges of the mountains first in a southeastward, then a northeastward direction, "leading one through settlements in an eastward arc from Marib to Shabwah."[76] Despite the fact that it was the least direct route eastward, the main trail had the greatest access to water, food, and other resources, and hence S. Kent Brown argued that Lehi most likely stuck to this road, reasoning that "it was more prudent for them to follow the [main] incense trail as long as they could."[77]

More directly eastward was the route that departed out of the Wadi Jawf and cut across the desert along a narrow gravel corridor in a generally east-southeast direction toward Shabwa.[78] Because this route lacked regular access to water, most scholars presume that it was a rarely used short-cut followed mainly by lightly loaded caravans and smaller groups (such as Lehi's family would have been).[79] A. F. L. Beeston, however, believed it was actually the primary route of the incense trade.[80]

Also according to Beeston, the armies of Saba and Hadramawt — and on one occasion, he argued, the Romans — used this corridor to launch military campaigns against one another, traveling directly east-west between the Jawf and the wells of al-ʿAbr.[81] Thus, Ṣabaḥuhumu probably followed this route when he marched "with the army of Sabaʾ into the land of Ḥadramawt,"[82] indicating the likely use of this eastward road close to Lehi's day.[83] Both Warren Aston and co-authors George Potter and Richard Wellington independently proposed variations on Lehi's trail which incorporate routes running through this eastward corridor.[84]

The final east-west route bypassed the Wadi Jawf altogether, skirting along the southern edge of the Empty Quarter to the well of Mushayniqah and then to al-ʿAbr and on to Shabwa or elsewhere within Wadi Hadramawt. Like the route through the Jawf, this trail is generally presumed to have been used by smaller, lightly loaded caravans due to its difficulty and limited access to water and other resources. Nonetheless, inscriptional graffiti attests to its use in antiquity.[85] Before Nahom was thought to correlate with the Nihm region, the Hiltons suggested that this was the route the Lehites followed, stating, "The shorter but more difficult part of the frankincense trail that Lehi and his party took in turning eastward skirted the very fringe of the largest sand desert on earth."[86]

While the exact itineraries of each eastward route could vary depending on different factors and circumstances, these represent the *only* three junctures where well-known ancient routes go in a primarily east-west direction across the Arabian Peninsula. While there were routes north of Najran that led across to the eastern side of the peninsula — namely the road to Gerrha, and the North Arabian trails to Mesopotamia — these all run in a decisively *northeastward* direction (see Map 1).[87] It is hard to imagine a southbound traveler along the incense trail from Palestine switching over onto any of these northeast-trending trails and describing their new course as "nearly eastward."[88]

Truly, as Brown previously observed, it is only "after passing south of Najran … [that] both the main trail and several shortcuts turned eastward" and this "is the only place along the incense trail where traffic ran east-west."[89] Unsurprisingly, considering the "geographical determinism" already discussed, there are environmental factors that dictate this course, as Aston noted:

> Only recently has satellite-assisted mapping enabled us to appreciate that after traveling southward into Arabia, as the Lehites did, people are prevented from easterly travel by the

shifting, waterless dunes of the vast Empty Quarter, as much
today as in the past. However, a narrow band of flat plateaus
… marking the southern end of the Empty Quarter, presents
the first opportunity for travel in an easterly direction.[90]

Furthermore, the text does not *merely* require that it be possible to
turn eastward but that Lehi and his family be able to *continue* eastward
to a fertile coastal location that fits Nephi's description of Bountiful
(1 Nephi 17:5–6). Since the 1950s, scholars have generally agreed that
the only place along the entire southeastern coast of Arabia that matches
Nephi's description is the Dhofar region in southern Oman.[91] The
exact east-west relationship of Nahom and Bountiful depends to some
extent on which specific turning point is used and where in Dhofar Lehi
specifically camped (as discussed below), but generally speaking Dhofar
is basically eastward from the Wadi Jawf and its surrounding region.
Thus, for our purposes, it is sufficient to note that each of these eastward
routes converge around either al-ʿAbr or Shabwa, and from there various
overland routes could be followed further eastward to Dhofar.[92]

For all practical purposes, Lehi's turn eastward must have taken place
within this limited range — approximately 60-miles in length, north to
south — positioned around the Wadi Jawf, regardless of whether or not
a place or tribe called NHM could be documented within or near that
zone.

Ishmael's Burial within Ancient Yemen's Funerary Landscape

Nephi's succinct statement, "And it came to pass that Ishmael died and
was buried in the place which was called Nahom" (1 Nephi 16:34) can
be interpreted in two ways: (1) that Ishmael *both* died *and* was buried at
Nahom, or (2) that Ishmael died while they were camped at an unnamed
location (see v. 33) and was then taken to Nahom for burial. Aston has
argued it this way:

> It is important to note that Nephi does not state that Ishmael
> *died* at Nahom, but that he was buried there. While it remains
> possible, it is unlikely that Ishmael conveniently died right at
> a place of burial. Despite the need in a hot climate to bury the
> deceased quickly, Ishmael's body may have been carried by
> the Lehite group for some distance, perhaps for days, in order
> to provide him a proper burial.[93]

It must be understood that burial of the dead was of grave importance
in the biblical world, and lack of proper burial was considered a disgrace.[94]

In the Bible, according to Elizabeth Bloch-Smith, "interment was accorded to all who served Yahweh; sinners were cursed with denial of burial or exhumation."[95]

For an Israelite, burial preferably occurred in the land of Israel in a family tomb where one's ancestors were buried. As Rachel S. Hallote explains, "A person who was gathered to his ancestors and buried in a family tomb would not be lost [or forgotten]. … Burial in a family tomb associated an individual with the greatness of his ancestors who were also buried there."[96] The patriarchs Jacob and Joseph insisted they were not to be permanently interred in Egypt but that their remains were to be taken back to the land of Israel and buried with their fathers (Genesis 47:29–31; 49:29–33; cf. 50:24–26). Some Jews of the diaspora returned to Judea to inter the remains of their deceased loved ones — as attested to by sarcophagi of Yemeni Jews from the third century AD found in the Jezreel Valley.[97] Martin Gilbert explains, "Yemeni Jews made great efforts to return to Judaea when burying their dead, sometimes embarking on a journey across the deserts of Arabia that would take at least sixty days by caravan."[98] This puts a new perspective on the daughters of Ishmael's bitter lament that Lehi "had brought them out of the land of Jerusalem, saying: Our father is dead" (1 Nephi 16:35). This was not merely a yearning for the comforts of home, but a desire to bury their father in their homeland with his ancestors. No matter how "desirous to return again to Jerusalem" they may have been (1 Nephi 16:36), however, this was not a viable option for the families of Lehi and Ishmael.

Absent the opportunity to bury Ishmael in their homeland, it is certainly possible that he was simply buried along the roadside near where he died, as was apparently done on other occasions (see, e.g., Genesis 25:8; 35:18–20; Numbers 20:1).[99] Yet for several reasons, this would have been considered suboptimal. Formal burial grounds could include a ceremonial center or shrine (cf. the "house of mourning," *byt mrzḥ*, in Jeremiah 16:5) that could be used for the proper performance of funerary rites.[100] It would also have the added benefit of ensuring the grave is occasionally visited by others, something that was believed to actually benefit and provide care for the deceased in the afterlife.[101] Ishmael's family no doubt lamented that they must bury their father in a strange land to which they will never be able to return to commemorate and care for him, but if he was buried near other tombs, then at least others may visit and commemorate him as an "adopted ancestor,"[102] a possibility that could have brought some comfort to the grieving travelers.

Ultimately, according to Bloch-Smith, "Proper burial required interment in a *qeber* (Gen. 23.4; Exod. 14.11; Isa. 22.16) or *qeburâh* (Genesis 35.20; Deuteronomy 34.6; Isa. 14.20), 'a burial place'."[103] John A. Tvedtnes pointed out that the Hebrew word typically meaning "place" (*mqwm*) is at times used to mean the grave, tombs, or the "destination of the dead."[104] Thus, when Nephi says Ishmael "was buried in the *place* which was called Nahom" (1 Nephi 16:34), he may be conveying the fact that this was a place with a formal mortuary complex — a "destination of the dead" of sorts. As early as 1950, Hugh Nibley proposed that Nahom was not simply where Ishmael *happened* to die, but rather was "a desert burial ground," noting that "though Bedouins sometimes bury the dead where they die, many carry the remains great distances to bury them."[105] Therefore, the location of appropriate burial grounds is another consideration for the location of Nahom that can be assessed *independent* of the historical or geographic evidence regarding the Nihm tribal territory.

Turret Tomb Necropolises

To this day, the desert landscape of northern Yemen is dotted with extensive, ancient burial grounds. As Jean-François Breton has noted, "tombs have been found in fairly dense concentrations throughout the [Yemeni] countryside."[106] Aston has long drawn attention to the large ancient necropolises at Ruwayk and Jidran,[107] where thousands of above-ground cairns, or "turret tombs," stretch across the outlying desert east of the Wadi Jawf.[108] Alternatively, when Brown visited Yemen to film the documentary *Journey of Faith*, Yemeni archaeologist Abdu Othman Ghaleb took him to an ancient cemetery "with thousands of burials at the eastern end of Wadi Nihm where it turns north and runs toward Wadi Jawf."[109] In addition to these, there are several other places of burial within or near the "eastward turn zone" defined above.

According to Alessandro de Maigret, there are also "huge necropolises" of circular cairns "in the mountains on the borders of the Jawf valley."[110] Starting west of Barāqish, on the slopes of Jebal Yām, these tombs "continue almost uninterruptedly as far as Jabal Silyām," as documented by Angela Luppino.[111] Turret tombs were also found to the north, on Jebal al-Lawd, which lies on the northeastern edge of the Wadi Jawf.[112] Further south, turret tombs were found near the village of Milḥ.[113] Italian archaeologists have documented and mapped the distribution of these and other turret tomb necropolises that are spread across the Yemeni landscape (see Map 3).[114]
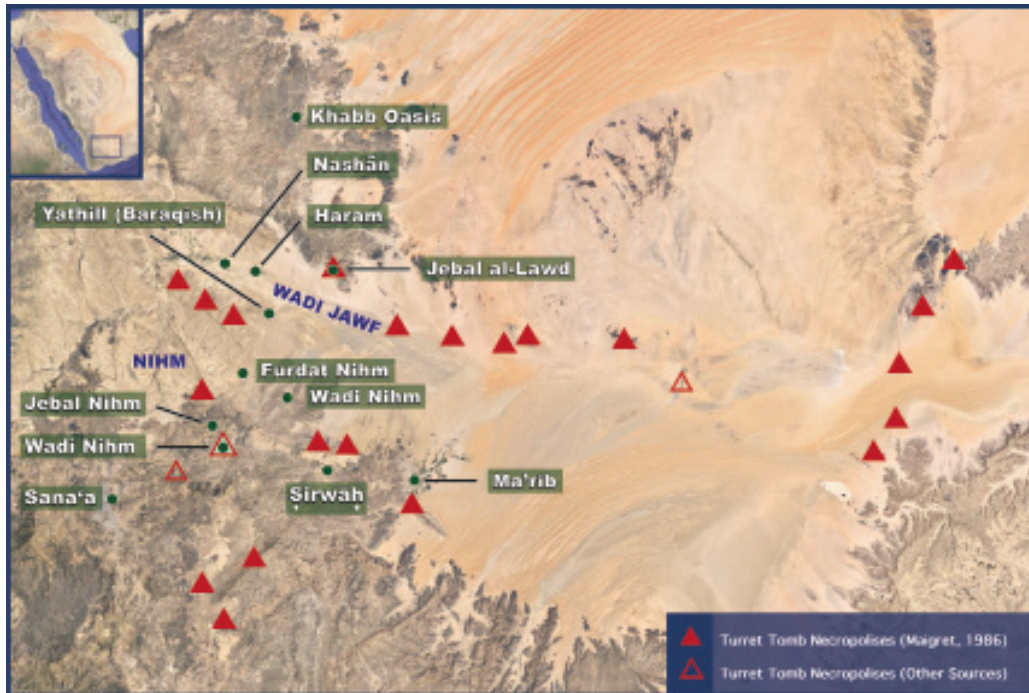
Map 3. Turret Tomb Necropolises in Northern Yemen.

Based on current evidence, most of these turret tombs were built in the early 3rd millennium BC,[115] but many were either built or reused in the first millennium BC and even into the early centuries AD.[116] Human remains recovered in the cairns just north of Ṣirwāḥ, for example, were radiocarbon dated to between the eighth century BC to the first century AD, and the tombs along the southern edge of the Jawf are also believed to have been in use during this same time-period.[117]

Since these tombs are typically found in isolated regions of the desert, far away from any major ancient settlements, they are generally believed to have served remote "outsider" populations, such as nomads, foreigners, and travelers connected with the caravan trade.[118] They may have been connected to the "Arabs," which were a distinct ethnic group in antiquity that lived on the periphery of South Arabian society (more on this below).[119] Imported items from as far away as Iran recovered from some of these tombs "seems to point to a certain 'internationality' of the people who buried their dead in these towers," and other evidence indicates "the deceased had to be preserved during long journeys before reaching the designated tomb."[120]

Thus, these burial grounds with turret tombs were in active use when Lehi's family would have arrived in South Arabia, and in some cases may have been used by long-distance, foreign/international travelers.

## The Eastward Trails and the Distribution of Turret Tombs

One of the major reasons why these tombs are thought to be connected to transient populations is because, according to de Maigret, "their particular distributive pattern seems to suggest that there was a link between these structures and the ancient trade routes."[121] Burkhard Vogt further explained, "Since these [tombs] align with trade routes it has been proposed that they represent people who were also in charge of the caravan trade in frankincense, aromatics and other commodities."[122] In fact, archaeologists have "found traces of the ancient roads, which are otherwise unrecognisable" by "following the lines of the turret tombs."[123] Thus, according de Maigret, "the turret tombs … can be used as precious indicators in a reconstruction of the ancient itineraries."[124]

Potentially reconstructing Lehi's ancient itinerary from Nahom using a trail of tombs certainly feels *apropos*, since his stay in this region involved the burial of the dead. Interestingly, the most striking correlation between tombs and trail is the "continuum of funerary complexes" that stretches out in a "nearly eastward" direction, from "the Jawf, [to] Jabal Jidran, Jabal Ruwaik, ath-Thanīyah, [and] al-ʿAbr," continuing into the Hadramawt "until east of Tarīm."[125] According to Breton, this chain of burial complexes corresponds with the eastward caravan trail: "A map of these sites shows how they run along the principal routes eastward from ʿIrma to Shabwa to Barâqish to upper Jawf …. There is a clear connection between the geographical distribution of these burial sites and the caravans that followed these routes."[126] This is dramatically confirmed when the geographic distribution of the tombs is overlaid onto the map of eastward trails (see Map 4).

This convergent relationship between burial of the dead and eastward travel in ancient Yemen is certainly interesting when compared with Nephi's account of burying Ishmael at Nahom and then turning "nearly eastward" (1 Nephi 16:34; 17:1). This is consistent with Nahom being somewhere in or near the general vicinity of the Wadi Jawf, as concluded from the evidence of the known eastward turning points.

Carved Face Funerary Stelae

Further indication that this was an appropriate region for travelers to bury or commemorate their dead comes from the large corpus of about 640 funerary stelae recovered from the Wadi Jawf region.[127] These mortuary stelae are generally made out of sand- or limestone, are rectangular in shape, and have facial features carved (often crudely) into them with the name of the deceased individual usually inscribed
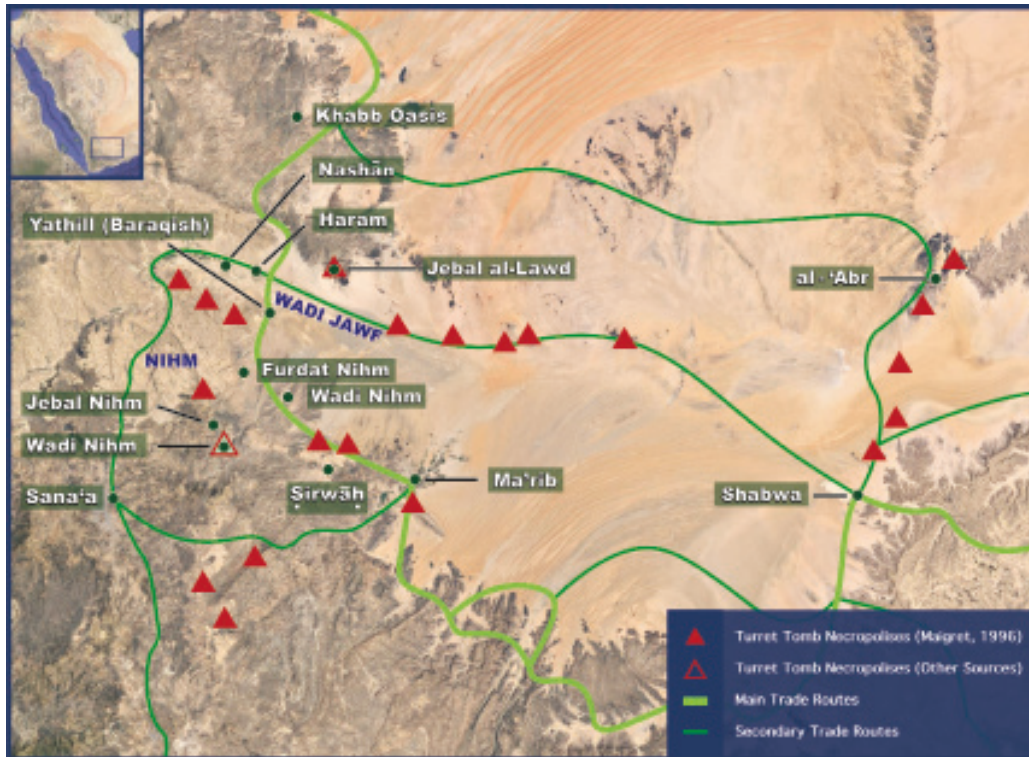
Map 4. South Arabian Trade Routes with Turret Tombs.

beneath the face.[128] The exact origins of the population these monuments represent is still a subject of some debate, but scholars generally agree that the use of cheap materials and low-quality craftsmanship indicate that these were people with little means or limited access to resources.[129] Most also agree that at least some of the individuals commemorated by these stelae were foreigners, travelers, or otherwise outsiders among the Jawf population.[130]

Christian Robin and Sabina Antonini have each suggested that these stelae attest to the presence of ethnic "Arabs" from the mountains north of Wadi Jawf living among Jawf populations in the early first millennium bc.[131] Several other scholars have noted ties with North Arabian cultures.[132] Some evidence even suggests that some of these stelae represent people who came from beyond the Arabian cultural sphere. For instance, according to Mounir Arbach and Jérémie Schiettecatte, one represented a woman of Babylonian origin.[133] A study of the onomastics of those stelae found *in situ* at Barāqish found links to Northwest Semitic and Akkadian, in addition to ties with North Arabian names.[134] Thus, some of the people memorialized by these stelae may have been from far off places in North Arabia, Mesopotamia, and the Levant.

Overall, this evidence suggests that these stelae represented a combination of both locals and foreigners who were involved in long distance travel; not necessarily wealthy merchants and traders, but "the caravaneers themselves … the people who materially transported the merchandise up and down the Peninsula, on behalf of princes, priests or traders who lived in the cities," perhaps including ethnic "Arabs" who lived on the northern fringes of South Arabian society.[135] This is all the more likely in light of evidence from the archaeological context at Barāqish suggesting that some of these stelae were used as cenotaphs — monuments commemorating persons who died and were buried somewhere else.[136] If this is correct, then it would imply that the Jawf was a central location where some who traveled long distances on the caravan trails commemorated their dead, even if they had died somewhere else and their bodies could not be brought for burial.

This large corpus of funerary stelae thus provides further evidence that the region around the Jawf was an appropriate place for travelers such as Lehi and his family to bury, or at least memorialize, their deceased companion, Ishmael (1 Nephi 16:34). In fact, one of these funerary monuments (Figure 1), dated to around the sixth century BC, is inscribed with the South Arabian form of the name "Ishmael" ($ys^1m^{c^3}l$).[137] Based on the broader context drawn from the overall corpus of carved face stelae, it is possible this Ishmael was a foreigner who traveled along the caravan trails and had ties to the Arab tribes north of the Jawf. This could fit, in very broad strokes at least, with the general profile of Ishmael in the Book of Mormon, but it is impossible to come to even a tentative conclusion as to whether he is the "Ishmael" of this stela.[138] Nonetheless, given its dating and overall context, this possibility should not be ruled out.

Other Textual Clues in 1 Nephi 16:33–39

The clearest and strongest indication of Nahom's location is the directional shift "nearly eastward," and the second most significant clue is its use as a place of burial. Yet other details in the narrative of 1 Nephi 16:33–39 also need to be taken into consideration when trying to determine the setting for these events. Unfortunately, this terse account does not yield as much clear information as one might hope; nonetheless, probing the full narrative may provide hints or clues that can help further triangulate where we should be looking.

First, Nephi says that after an extended journey of "many days" they once again established camp so they could "tarry for the space of a time"

Figure 1. Carved face funerary stela with the name YS¹M ʿʾL (Ishmael) on it. (Used with permission of Mounir Arbach.)

(1 Nephi 16:33). The next thing reported in the text is Ishmael's death and burial at Nahom (v. 34). As already noted, it is possible the family carried Ishmael's body to an appropriate burial ground, and so it is unclear whether they were already at Nahom or if this is a separate location unnamed in the narrative. Yet in ancient Israel, according to R. Dennis Cole, "People were buried as soon as possible after death."[139] Roland de Vaux explained that the exact "interval which elapsed between death and burial" is not known with certainty, but "the delay was probably very short … it is probable that, as a general rule, burial took place on the day of death."[140] Extenuating circumstances — such as passing away in a remote area far from any proper places of burial — may have justified postponing the burial by a day or two, but Ishmael's family was still undoubtedly eager to bury their deceased patriarch with as little delay as possible. Thus, they were almost certainly *near* Nahom, if not already within its boundaries, by the time they stopped and set up camp.

In order for Lehi's group to "tarry for the space of a time," there had to be access to needed resources — at the very least water, and perhaps food and other provisions as well. Warren Aston reasons, "This wording makes it certain that they were in a place where they could rest and obtain food," and speculates that they harvested crops and their women gave birth during this period of respite.[141] He thus suggests that they had already arrived in the fertile and populated Wadi Jawf by this point.[142]

On the other hand, upon their father's passing, the daughters of Ishmael lamented "we have suffered much affliction in the wilderness, hunger, thirst, and fatigue" (1 Nephi 16:35). Laman and Lemuel also complain of Nephi's deceiving them by "cunning arts," and leading them in "some strange wilderness" with the intent to make himself "a king and a ruler over us" (1 Nephi 16:38). From a narratological perspective, these complaints appear to allude back to their previous camp, where Nephi's bow broke, the family suffered from hunger and fatigue, and Nephi made himself a new bow — a symbol of kingship in the ancient Near East — and used the Liahona to guide him to where he should obtain food (1 Nephi 16:17–32).[143] Yet some researchers have also suggested that these complaints may reflect the experiences of the family on their journey between the broken bow camp and Nahom.[144]

There is generally little fertility in the vast desert-mountain region between Najran and the Jawf. Travelers have little choice but to skirt along the edge of the rocky hills on the west and the sand dunes of the Empty Quarter on the east, or try their luck in the winding maze of twisting wadis still used as camel trails in fairly recent times.[145] Nineteenth century Jewish-French explorer and Semitist Joseph Halévy got lost and "wandered, hungry and thirsty" in this region after being abandoned by his local guides.[146] The stretch between Bishah and Najran, where the broken bow camp was most likely located, is equally unforgiving.[147] With few opportunities to rest and restock on food and water supplies, Lehi's family well could have "suffered much hunger, thirst, and fatigue" during this challenging stretch of their journey, and the large sand dunes of the Empty Quarter would have been a new — and perhaps "strange" — kind of wilderness to the people in Lehi's party.

Even after arriving at Nahom, the daughters of Ishmael evidently still feared that they would "perish in the wilderness with hunger" and it was only through the Lord's blessing that they obtained "food that we did not perish" (1 Nephi 16:35, 39). If they were in a populated, fertile area (such as the Wadi Jawf), it is possible they had to wait for a crop harvest or that they lacked provisions to trade for food, and so perishing

for want of food remained a concern.[148] In the midst of the daughters' grieving over the loss of their father, it is also likely that other risks and fears became magnified. As Aston reasoned, "in the bitterness of their grief they saw only the prospect of more hardship and hunger in the future under Lehi's leadership" and "they knew their present stop was only temporary and not their final destination."[149] Thus, Aston concludes, "Concern over the immediate lack of food, and fear that only more of the same lay ahead, seems to be at the heart of their complaint."[150] In addition, their complaint could reflect exaggerated frustration that their limited food resources prevented them from hosting a *marzeaḥ* — a feast that was a customary part of Judahite mourning rituals of their time, and intended to "comfort" (*nḥm*) and provide "consolation" (*tnḥmt*) to the bereaved (see Jeremiah 16:5–9).[151]

In contrast, Potter and Wellington argue that the party's risk of perishing at Nahom was real, and thus it could not have been a populated, fertile place. Instead, they argue that Ishmael's health forced Lehi's family to stop for an extended period in a less-than-ideal location, where they had access to water but not food or other needed resources.[152] Thus, Potter and Wellington argued that the events of 1 Nephi 16:33–39 occurred *before* Lehi and his family reached the Wadi Jawf, "most probably somewhere in the 50 miles north of jabal al-Lawdh … and south of wadi Khabb."[153]

These contrasting interpretations of 1 Nephi 16:33–39 yield slightly different conclusions about the location of Nahom, both of which fall within the boundaries of the eastward turn zone within which Nahom must be located. In either case, the implication from the text is that the journey prior to their arrival at Nahom passed through a barren, waterless region which forced the group to endure greater hardships. This is consistent with the region south of Najran, which Lehi's family would have had to pass through to reach the area where trails branch out eastward. Furthermore, whether one assumes they must have reached a fertile, populated area to set up camp or were forced to stop in the midst of the barren desert, either interpretation can be accommodated for within the boundaries established by other criteria for Nahom's location.

The Historical Geography of Nihm and the Location of Nahom

Thus far, we have assessed all the available details about Nahom provided in the text — except the toponym itself — and found that they all converge together around what might be called "the greater Jawf area," extending

north and south from the Wadi Jawf. No other region is known to fit with *all* the relevant details in Nephi's text, and thus Nahom most logically should be situated within this general vicinity — regardless of whether or not an NHM toponym can be documented in this region anciently. Furthermore, a place called NHM located *outside* of this region would not likely be Nephi's Nahom, regardless of the similarity in names.

It is within this context that I would like to finally turn our attention to the Nihm region of Yemen and consider whether it falls within the bounds independently established for the location of Nahom. In order to do so, however, we cannot simply rely on the modern borders of Nihm (see Map 5a). While there has been a great deal of stability in the historical geography of this region over time, the tribal geography has experienced periods of change and fluctuation. Thus, we must consider the Nihm tribe's historical geography, and seek to establish its earliest known borders — only then can we compare its location against Nephi's record to determine if it fits the criteria outlined for Nahom.

Modern Nihm

In modern times, Nihm has been the name of an administrative district within the Republic of Yemen (since 1990) and was part of the bureaucratic apparatus of the Yemen Arab Republic before then (see Map 5a).[154] This modern administrative system was overlaid on a pre-existing tribal structure that goes back centuries, with some aspects even going back millennia. Anthropologist Marieke Brandt explains, "In the 20th century, these tribal territories became the basis of the administrative divisions of northern Yemen; the borders of most of today's districts (sg. *mudīriyyah*) and municipalities (sg. ʿ*uzlah*) are congruent with the boundaries of the tribes and tribal sections that inhabit them."[155] Thus, several of the districts and municipalities are identical with the pre-existing tribal territories and bear the tribe's name.[156]

The tribal boundaries, however, are not as rigid as those of the official districts, and sometimes a tribe's territory expands beyond that of its eponymous district.[157] Christian Robin's mapping of the modern Nihm's tribal territory is significantly more expansive than the present-day district, encompassing roughly five thousand square kilometers (see Map 5b).[158] Earlier sources suggest they had approximately the same boundaries throughout much of the twentieth century. For instance, in 1947 Egyptian archaeologist Ahmed Fakhry identified Wadi Hirran as the westernmost border of "the land of the bedouins of Nahm," which

Map 5a. The historical geography of Nihm, present-day district.

matches the boundaries outlined by Robin nearly forty years later.[159] In 1936, British explorer Harry St. John Philby described "Bilad Nahm" ("the country/land of Nahm") as a region to the west of Wadi Raghwan, suggesting a similar eastern border as that sketched out fifty years later by Robin.[160] Various maps from the mid-eighteenth and nineteenth century plotting the name *Nehem* or *Nehhm* do not allow us to reconstruct the

Map 5b. The historical geography of Nihm, 20th century tribal territory.

exact borders of the tribal region but illustrate that it was in the same approximate location more than 250 years ago.[161]

Nihm in the Early Islamic Period

As noted, aspects of the tribal structure of northern Yemen go centuries, and even millennia, back in time. According to Robert Wilson, "Over the past ten centuries there is little or no evidence of any major tribal

movements in this part of Yemen, and the overwhelming impression is one of minimal change, even if tribal alliances have from time to time altered or developed."[162] Wilson noted that in the writings of Abu Muhammad al-Hasan al-Hamdani, the great Arab scholar of the tenth century (ca. 893–945 AD), many of "the tribes listed and the places which they occupied present few surprises to anyone familiar with the positions of the tribes of Bakīl today," including the Nihm.[163]

This isn't to say that there have been *no* changes and fluctuations in tribal boundaries over the last millennium. Wilson himself documented a number of differences between the tribal boundaries of present-day Yemen and those of the tenth century.[164] Christian Robin found both continuity and change in the geography of the Nihm tribe in Hamdani's writings, noting that they did indeed occupy a similar, though smaller, territory as the present-day tribe on the south side of the Wadi Jawf and also held territory that "extended north of Jawf between the jabal al-Lawdh and the wādī Khabb" (see Map 5c).[165] Interestingly, as mentioned earlier, this northern region is *exactly* where Potter and Wellington concluded Nahom must be located based on the textual evidence from the Book of Mormon — without any awareness of the geographical details in Hamdani's writings.[166]

Earlier Islamic sources indicate that the Nihm were one of the "Arab" tribes within the Hamdan confederation that converted to Islam around the year 630 AD, and a letter from Muhammed himself survives mentioning the Nihm among the Hamdan tribes.[167] This does not allow us to confirm their exact borders in these earlier centuries, but Hamdan is the collection of tribes — split into two main sub-tribal groups, Hashid and Bakil — occupying the region north of Sanaʿa going back into antiquity.[168] The inclusion of the Nihm among these tribes when they converted to Islam thus indicates that already by the seventh (and likely the sixth) century AD, they were established in the same general area documented in later sources.[169]

NHM in Pre-Islamic Inscriptions

The continuity and longevity of the Yemeni tribes does not begin with the Islamic era, but extends deep into the pre-Islamic past. As R. B. Serjeant noted, "It is remarkable that tribes today are so generally to be found in the regions they occupied before Islam, though some movement has certainly taken place in the intervening centuries."[170] In recent years, Robin has emphasized that Yemen's "tribal territorial distribution … is regularly remodelled, with profound modifications in its general inner

Map 5c. The historical geography of Nihm, 10th century tribal territory.

workings."[171] Yet despite periodic upheavals, he still notes that there has been considerable stability over time:

> One of the unique aspects of Yemen is the stability of toponyms during the last 3000 years. Four times out of five, the name of a town, of a valley or of a mountain, recorded in ancient inscriptions, has survived to this day. Some twenty names of tribes also show a very exceptional longevity; this sometimes

happens in the same territory; in other cases one can observe a displacement from the desert to the mountains.[172]

Brandt observes that "the overwhelming impression is one of minimal change of tribal territories, even if tribal structures have altered or developed from time to time,"[173] adding that "in some cases, the continuity of tribal names and their related territories spans almost three millennia," citing Nihm as an example.[174]

Numerous pre-Islamic inscriptions referring to individuals as *nhmy(n)* or to a group called *nhmt(n)* have been found in Yemen (see Table 1).[175] It is possible, in light of the meaning of the root *nhm* in South Arabian languages,[176] that the *nhmy/nhmt* were originally a group of stonemasons who became known as the Nihm tribe.[177] Drawing on these inscriptions, various scholars have located the ancient NHM community within the same general region documented for the Nihm tribe in early Islamic sources. For instance, German-Austrian scholar Hermann von Wissmann studied the pre-Islamic inscriptions to reconstruct Yemen's ancient tribal geography, and concluded based on various inscriptions referring to *nhm*, *nhmyn*, and *nhmt* that in antiquity, that the Nihm occupied the same two regions outlined in Hamdani's writings (see Map 5c).[178] More recently, Peter Stein included NHM, located at present-day Nihm, on his map reconstructing the "geographic horizon" of South Arabian inscriptions carved on palm stalk texts, citing *nhmyn* in a tribal list found at Nashān (YM 11748).[179] Commenting on the altars well-known to Latter-day Saints (DAI Barʾān 1988–2, 1994/5–2, and 1996–1), Burkhard Vogt said the inscription's author, named Biʿathtar, "comes from the Nihm region, west of Mārib," thereby situating ancient Nihm in the same general region as the present-day.[180]

Table 1. NHM in Ancient South Arabian Inscriptions.

Sigla	Language	Text and Translation	Date
CIH 673	Sabaic	*[h]lkʾmr kbr nhmt bn ʾl[ḏr]ʾ … k[b]r nhmt* | [Ha]lakʾamar, chief of the Nihmites, son of ʾIlī[dhar]aʾ … ch[ie]f of the Nihmites	7th cent. BC
Haram 16, 17, and 19	Sabaic	*[ʿm]ʾns¹ bn k[lb]m kbr nh[mt]n* | [ʿAmmī]ʾanas son of Ka[l]bum, chief of the Nihmatān	7th cent. BC
DAI Barʾān 1988–2, 1994/5–2, and 1996–1	Sabaic	*bʿṭtr bn swdm bn nwʿm nhmyn* | Biʿathtar son of Sawdum, lineage of Nawʿum, the Nihmite	7th cent. BC

Sigla	Language	Text and Translation	Date
RES 5095	Sabaic	*[... w-bn-hw] rʾbm nhmynhn … w-hʿn w-bn-hw (ḥ)mʿṯt n[h]mynhn* | [... and his son] Riʾābum, the two Nihmites … and Haʿān and his son (Ḥa)mīʿathat, the two Ni[h]mites	Early Sabaic (8th–4th cent. BC); exact dating uncertain
Gl 1637	Sabaic	*[ʾ]zzm bn [...]bm nhmyn mydʿyn* | [ʿA]zizum, son of [...]BM, the Nihmite, the Mayadaʿite	5th–4th cent. BC
YM 11748	Sabaic	*ḏ-ns²n / bn ns²mr / nhmyn* | dhu-Nashān / banu Hashmar / Nihmite	ca. 1st–3rd cent. AD; exact dating uncertain
CIH 969	Sabaic	*ṣwr mṯwbm nhmyn* | Image of Muthawibum the Nihmite	3rd cent. AD
Ph. 160 n 20	South Arabian graffito	*mdd bn sʿdm nhmyn* | Madid, son of Saʿdum, the Nihmite	pre-Islamic; exact dating uncertain

As previously mentioned, early Islamic sources identify the Nihm as an "Arab" tribe, and Arabs were a separate ethnicity on the margins of South Arabian society in antiquity. Detailed analysis of pre-Islamic inscriptions indicates that the "land of the Arabs" (*ʾrḍ ʿrb*) in ancient South Arabia was the region to the north of the Jawf, extending up to Najran.[181] This is likely why Norbert Nebes believed that in Biʿathtar's (and thus, Lehi's) day, the Nihm tribe was "undoubtedly north of the Jawf," thus correlating it with the northern extension from Hamdani's time.[182] Others have similarly suggested that the Nihm originated as Arabs/Bedouins in the deserts to the north or northeast, and over the course of time migrated south/southwestward to their present day position.[183]

If the Nihm originated north of the Jawf, it could explain why an individual from Haram bore the title *kbr nhmtn* in the early seventh century BC (Haram 16, 17, and 19), which some scholars have interpreted as referring to a tribal group called Nahmatan or Nihmatān — likely a variant of Nihm (cf. *kbr nhmt* in CIH 673).[184] As discussed earlier, Haram had trade connections with Najran at this time, and other inscriptions from Haram identify leaders of trading outposts with the title *kbr*.[185] As such, it's possible that the *kbr nhmtn* was the leader of a Haramite trading colony located to the north, at an intermediary point between Haram and Najran, within the *northern* Nihm region.[186] The large oasis at Wadi Khabb, near the juncture where the trails coming from the Jawf and Hadramawt converged, would be the most plausible location for

such an outpost, and according to von Wissmann a secondary caravan route through the mountains directly connected Najran to Haram, via the Khabb Oasis.[187] As noted, this was the northern limit of the Nihm in Hamdani's time, and von Wissmann argued that "the region of the oasis Ḥabb and the lowlands … in the far eastern semicircle around Ḥabb to the sandy desert are already called NHM in pre-Islamic times," citing the occurrence of *nhm* and *nhmyn* in ancient graffiti texts near Najran (Ph. 160 n 20).[188]

Even if the Nihm originated in the northern mountains/desert, however, it seems likely their presence to the south of Jawf began in pre-Islamic times, as indicated by von Wissmann, Stein, and Vogt. Some Arabs were known to be "living on or inside the borders" of mainstream South Arabian society, specifically to the south of Wadi Jawf, in pre-Islamic times,[189] and evidence from the carved face funerary stelae mentioned earlier indicates that this was so from very early on.[190] A burial monument belonging to a *nhmyn* appears to have come from the southern Nihm region (CIH 969).[191] References to *nhmyn* (or the dual *nhmynhn*) as "vassals" (*ʾdm*) and "servants" (*ʿbd*) to the elites at Ṣirwāḥ (RES 5095 and Gl 1637) also suggest that the Nihm already had a presence in their southern territory by the fifth–fourth century BC, and perhaps even earlier.[192] Jan Retsö carefully studied the pre-Islamic geography of the "Arabs" in South Arabian inscriptions, and like von Wissmann he identified branches of the Nihm on both the northern and southern sides of the Wadi Jawf, around the same areas occupied by the Nihm in Hamdani's writings (see Map 5c).[193]

Given historical fluctuations in tribal boundaries, it is unlikely the Nihm's borders in Lehi's day were *identical* to those of Hamdani's time. Yet the boundaries outlined by Hamdani are the earliest that can be established with some degree of certainty, and the general sentiment expressed by various scholars who studied the pre-Islamic NHM texts is that there was continuity or overlap with either the northern or southern locations (and possibly both) of Hamdani's Nihm going back to the early first millennium BC. Hamdani's borders thus provide a helpful reference point for the geographic range within which the Nihm were most likely located in Lehi's day, even if they did not occupy the entirety of both areas at that time.

The Earliest Nihm Borders and the Location of Nahom

Now that we have a better understanding of the Nihm's earliest known borders and a more comprehensive picture of their potential geographic

range, we are in a better position to consider how this may or may not fit with the location of Nahom, as established from the independent criteria in the Book of Mormon.

Remarkably, when the borders of Hamdani's Nihm are overlaid on a map with the eastward trade routes and turret tomb necropolises, it reveals significant overlap with the eastward turn zone previously defined (see Map 6). Indeed, the earliest known borders of Nihm essentially span the length, north to south, of the eastward turn zone. This means that *all* the potential eastward routes begin within or near Nihm's earliest known borders, which in turn virtually guarantees that whatever Nihm's specific location and boundaries were in Lehi's day, they would have been in close proximity to a trail eastward across the desert. It is also readily apparent that several of the known burial areas fall within the Nihm's earliest borders, with others in close proximity just outside those borders. In short, there is effectively a direct convergence between where the independent criteria triangulate the location of Nahom and the earliest known borders of the Nihm tribe.

According to Dever, as quoted earlier, when such a convergence occurs, "a historical 'datum' (or given) may be said to have been established beyond reasonable doubt." That datum, in this case, being that "the place which was called Nahom" was indeed the Nihm tribal area.[194] "To ignore or to deny the implications of such convergent testimony is irresponsible scholarship, since it impeaches the testimony of one witness without reasonable cause by suppressing other vital evidence."[195]

Beyond this general correlation, reconstructing a more complete picture of the relevant data now makes it possible to consider and evaluate specific scenarios for the burial of Ishmael and the eastward turn. Starting with the southernmost routes and moving northward, I will review four different possible scenarios (each with potential variations), all of which intersect to some degree with previous theories regarding Nahom and the eastward turn.

1. Wadi Nihm

In one scenario that has been proposed, Lehi and his family get lost along the twisting, confusing trails south of Najran and end up completely by-passing the fertile region in Wadi Jawf and eventually establish an encampment near the mouth of Wadi Nihm, where Ishmael dies.[196] From there, no more than a day's journey southwest through Wadi Nihm would have led the family to the extensive necropolis reported by S. Kent Brown, mentioned earlier.[197] Returning northeast to the mouth of Wadi Nihm, some researchers have suggested that the family then continued
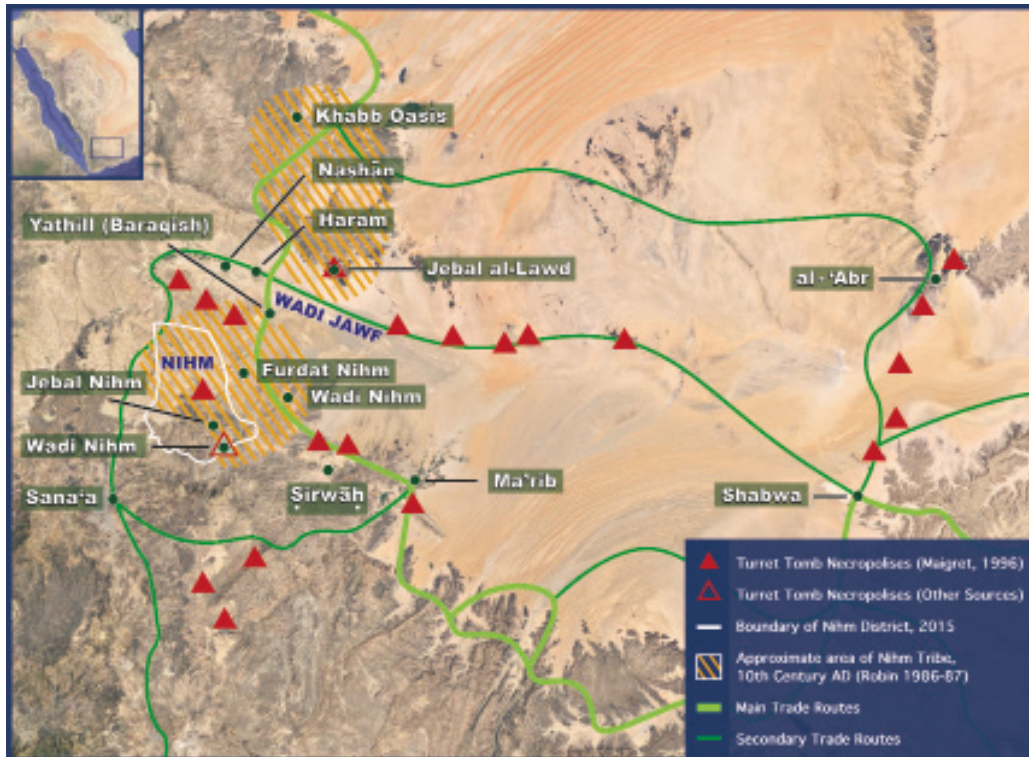
Map 6. Nihm's Earliest Known Borders with Turret Tombs and South Arabian Trade Routes.

in a northeast direction for about another day, where they would have then merged with the eastward trail going from the Jawf to Shabwa.[198]

The mouth of Wadi Nihm, however, is near the main trail leading to Marib, which was only about 35 miles to the east. If they had truly been at risk of starvation when they arrived at Nahom, and had completely by-passed the Wadi Jawf, then it seems more likely that they would have joined this main trail eastward so they could take advantage of the opportunity to restock on provisions at Marib before the longer, more arduous journey across the desert. They could then cut across the desert northeast from Marib (rather than from Wadi Nihm), merging with the trail extending east from the Jawf around the area of Ruwayk (see Map 1), or they could have followed the "eastward arc" of the main trail, as proposed by Brown.

2. Village of Milḥ

Another possibility, that to my knowledge has never been considered, is the necropolis just north of the village of Milḥ, located right in the heart of the modern-day Nihm. This possibility would require that the family continue southward from the Wadi Jawf, entering the northeast corner of Hamdani's southern Nihm region, before pulling off the trail

— perhaps due to an illness or tragedy befalling Ishmael. Depending on exactly where they pulled off the main trail, there are multiple wadi-trails they could have taken into the heart of the Nihm region to reach the necropolis just north of Milḥ. One option would have been to take Wadi Majzar southwest through Furdat Nihm and then cross over a mountain ridge, a journey which took Joseph Halévy and Hayyim Habshush about a day to make by camel (from the opposite direction, starting near Milḥ and going to Majzar).[199] If they pulled off the road further to the south, they would simply have to follow Wadi al-Atf into the generally east-west trending Wadi al-Fardah and then continue west about 14 miles (along a route roughly similar to the modern N5 highway) until reaching a broad, flat plain where the necropolis would be less than a mile to the south.

What makes this proposal attractive is that to return to the main road after burying Ishmael, Lehi's family would essentially just turn around and go back out along Wadi al-Fardah, in a "nearly eastward" direction, merging naturally with the main trail just as it bends eastward and continues on to Marib. Once at Marib, as mentioned previously, they could either continue along the main trail or cut northeast across the desert to merge with the trail that extends east from the Jawf.

3. Wadi Jawf

As previously noted, Warren Aston has long maintained that the Wadi Jawf was the base camp wherein the events of 1 Nephi 16:33–39 unfolded. For example, in 1994 Aston wrote: "Likely the Lehite encampment was in the Jawf valley and Ishmael was carried up into the hills for burial."[200] One of the strengths of this model is it potentially works with *either* the southern or the northern Nihm, as they could have buried Ishmael on the slopes of Jebal Yām and Jebal Silyām to the south, bordering the southern Nihm and the Jawf, or if we assume a northern Nihm, then Jebal al-Lawd is also a possibility.

Some may wonder why they would have taken Ishmael's body up to these remote burial areas rather than burying him near one of the Jawf city-states, but to date, no proper burial grounds have been found in association with those sites.[201] The one possible exception to this is the "necropolis" outside Barāqish, where some carved face funerary stelae were found, but these burials lacked any human remains, and (as mentioned earlier) may thus have been cenotaphs rather than proper graves.[202] All the other funerary stelae from the Jawf were looted from their original context, and no other graves have been found. Furthermore, if there were proper cemeteries with elaborate burial

monuments associated with those cities, as some scholars assume, then they may have been reserved for the cities' elites, not foreigners traveling from distant lands.

Since both the turret tombs in the outlying areas *and* some of the carved face stelae have been associated with foreigners, caravan traders, and Arabs, the pattern for such groups may have been to bury their dead in the outlying hills or desert in above-ground cairns along the trail, and then make a cenotaph — which were smaller, and thus presumably more affordable than a proper grave — at one of the Jawf cities using the roughly hewn carved face funerary stelae. If Lehi and his family followed this same pattern, they could have buried Ishmael in one of the tombs along the border of Jawf and Nihm, and then perhaps a member of the Nihm tribe with contacts in one of the cities, such as Haram, assisted them in getting a cenotaph made with a memorial stone similar to the "Ishmael Stela" previously mentioned.

After burying Ishmael, Lehi and his family could have then followed the eastward chain of burials marking the way out to either Shabwa or, if a more "nearly eastward" bearing is preferred, the wells of al-ʿAbr and beyond, as Aston has proposed.[203]

4. Khabb Oasis

In light of the northern extension of the Nihm's territory in Hamdani's time, and the possibility that the Nihm occupied at least part of this region in antiquity, it seems worthwhile revisiting Potter and Wellington's unpublished hypothesis that the events of 1 Nephi 16:33–39 unfolded within this region between Jebal al-Lawd and Wadi Khabb.[204] There are no doubt a number of possible scenarios that could be explored, but for the sake of space and simplicity, I wish to merely consider the possibility that the place where the family stopped to "tarry for the space of a time" (1 Nephi 16:33) was the Wadi Khabb, on the northern end of the earliest known Nihm borders.

The main route of the Frankincense Trail likely stopped at the well near the mouth of Wadi Khabb, known today as Bir al-Mahashima.[205] Here, the wadi appears every bit as dry and sandy as the rest of this stretch of the trail. If the family were forced to stop at this point due to concerns about Ishmael's health, they very well could have been concerned about "perish[ing] in the wilderness with hunger" (1 Nephi 16:35). Just around the hills, however, are several patches of fertility. Here, Philby found "quite the forest of tall acacias of the umbrella type" and chased a gazelle into the main wadi channel until coming to "an extensive tract of bushes and trees — Rak, Abal, acacias — at the edge of the hills," in which he

went "wandering about … in search of birds." Later, he met shepherds who graze their flocks in this area.[206] As one wanders into this wadi's winding mountain canyon and its tributaries, about twelve miles west of Bir al-Mahashima, one encounters an extensive oasis which sustains several towns and villages in modern times.[207] According to Habshush, in the nineteenth century grapes and dates grew well here, and the people had well-nourished flocks of sheep.[208]

While smaller and probably less fertile than Wadi Jawf was in antiquity, this would nonetheless be a more than suitable place for the family to "tarry for the space of a time" (1 Nephi 16:33). The barrenness in the immediate area around the well of Mahashima, near the mouth of the wadi and the edge of the desert, certainly could have left the family initially concerned about "perish[ing] in the wilderness with hunger," but the discovery of a nearby oasis and wildlife initially hidden behind the hills and sandy plain would have been seen as a great blessing from the Lord allowing them to obtain "food that we did not perish" (1 Nephi 16:35, 39).

Upon Ishmael's death, Nihmite tribesmen could have guided them down the backtrail to Haram, which modern accounts suggest only takes a couple of days.[209] Once in the Jawf, they could have taken Ishmael to Jebal al-Lawd or one of the other burial areas along its borders, as previously discussed. In this scenario, the Book of Mormon Ishmael would be a foreigner connected (if only loosely) to a northern Arab tribe (the Nihm) — the very profile hypothesized for the individual commemorated by the "Ishmael Stela." Perhaps, as previously suggested, the family's Nihmite guides used their contacts at Haram to assist the family in procuring a carved face stela as a burial monument. After the burial, the most likely scenario would be that the family stayed in the Wadi Jawf until ready to depart again, at which point they could have taken the eastward trail that leads out across the desert, as discussed above.

Alternatively, after burying Ishmael, the family may have returned to the Khabb Oasis, or perhaps they never went down to the Jawf at all, instead choosing to bury Ishmael closer to Wadi Khabb. No major necropolises have yet been found there, but a few scattered graves and funerary monuments have been found in the general area,[210] and Philby observed many circular, tomb-like cairns to the southeast between Khabb and the Jawf, which seemed to be marking an ancient caravan trail.[211] It is also possible that Ishmael's family preferred to bury him quickly, and so accepted the necessity of giving him an isolated burial away from any

formal burial grounds. If this were so, then the most likely route "nearly eastward" would be the trail branching off near Bir al-Mahashima and going eastward along the edge of the Empty Quarter — the trail the Hiltons originally proposed Lehi had followed.[212] At the time, they did not know about the Nihm tribe, let alone the evidence indicating they could have been located near this turning point in antiquity. In light of this new evidence, I suggest that it is worth once again considering this route as a possibility.

Bountiful: "Nearly Eastward" from Nahom

What particularly makes Khabb and the nearby eastward trail an attractive option for Lehi's eastward turning point is just how very "nearly eastward" it is from the primary candidates for Nephi's Bountiful.[213] Bir al-Mahashima, where the trail to al-ʿAbr first splits off from the trail to the Jawf, is located at 16°46'0" N 45°05'0" E, and the Khabb Oasis is located to the west and slightly south, at 16°43'0" N 44°54'0" E. The coast at Khor Kharfot, the candidate for Bountiful preferred by most scholars,[214] is located at 16°43'48" N 53°20'12" E — almost exactly due east of the Khabb Oasis. Khor Rori, the only other candidate for Bountiful in current consideration, is at 17°02'22" N 54°25'50" E, less than a third of a degree off due east from Khabb. Either location reasonably qualifies as "nearly eastward."

Certainly, the directional relationship between Bountiful and the other possible locations for an eastward turn — such as Haram in the Jawf (16°09'35" N 44°45'51" E) or the heart of the southern Nihm region (15°45'06" N 44°34'29" E) — is reasonably close enough to true east so as not to be ruled out as "nearly eastward." Nonetheless, the tighter east-west relationship between the more northern Khabb Oasis suggests that it should not be easily ruled out or dismissed as the setting for the events Nephi says took place at Nahom.

Ultimately, each of the scenarios are, in my view at least, reasonably plausible and none can be definitively ruled out based on the presently available data. Nonetheless, the strongest convergence between the borders of the Nihm, burial of the dead, and eastward travel is in the Wadi Jawf and its immediate borders. Thus, the scenarios wherein the Lehites either established their base camp in the Jawf, or came down from Khabb to the Jawf for Ishmael's burial, strike me as the most likely at present. Even so, the other scenarios remain worthy of consideration and exploration.

To be clear, however, these different possibilities should *not* be mistaken as representing different "Nahoms."[215] As noted above,

Nahom is to be correlated with the Nihm tribal region, based on the strong convergence established earlier, and within which (based on the earliest known borders) all of the above proposals fall. Our analysis has been rather more granular in considering more specifically where, *within* Nahom/Nihm, Lehi's family camped, buried Ishmael, and set out on their journey eastward. In these specifics, there remains some uncertainty and room for discussion; in the general location of Nahom, however, there can be no reasonable dispute.

Conclusion

Having subjected all the facets of the "Nahom convergence" to independent reexamination, I believe the evidence bears out the identification of Nahom with the Nihm tribal region — indeed, the convergent relationship between Nahom and Nihm looks even tighter, more complex, and more strongly interlocking than previously suspected. Based on all the evidence reviewed in this paper, the "Nahom convergence" can be summarized as follows:

1. The name Nahom in the Book of Mormon was an established place name when Lehi and his family arrived in the area, not one simply given to the location by the group (1 Nephi 16:34). This means it is a name that could potentially be identified in other historical sources.

2. The journey to Nahom consists of traveling in "nearly a south-southeast direction" from the northern end of the "borders near the Red Sea" for multiple stints of "many days" (see 1 Nephi 16:13–17, 33). The journey from Nahom is "nearly eastward" until arriving at a coastal location with an abundance of fruits, honey, freshwater, timber, cliffs, mountains, and a harbor (see 1 Nephi 17–18). This is generally consistent with the historically known routes of the Frankincense Trail (Map 1), which can be reconstructed (at least in outline form) from sources close to Lehi's time. The only region where known ancient trails turn to a predominantly eastward direction is in the area around the Wadi Jawf (see Map 2), and researchers have found inlets consistent with nearly all of the features of Bountiful in the Dhofar region to east of the Jawf in southern Oman.

3. The main thing we know about Nahom is that it is the place where they buried Ishmael after he died (1 Nephi 16:34). Given the importance of proper burial in ancient Near

Eastern culture and religion, including that of the Israelites and Judahites, it is likely that they would have sought out a proper place of burial if one was available or nearby. Extensive burial areas with thousands of so-called "turret tombs" have been found in the regions surrounding the Wadi Jawf (see Map 3). Interestingly, these tombs are correlated with the eastward trail (see Map 4).

4. The narrative details in 1 Nephi 16:33–39 suggest that Nahom must have been a place with resources needed for survival (at a minimum, freshwater, but possibly food as well), but the stretch of their journey immediately preceding Ishmael's death and burial may have entailed greater difficulty and suffering from hunger, thirst, and fatigue. The region north of Wadi Jawf is largely a vast mountainous desert where others have gotten lost and suffered from hunger and thirst.

5. All of these details combined suggest that Nahom was somewhere within the general vicinity of the Wadi Jawf. Lehi's encampment mentioned in 1 Nephi 16:33 could have been in the Wadi Jawf itself or somewhere nearby, perhaps as far as Wadi Khabb (north of the Jawf by a couple-day journey).

6. The Nihm region of Yemen today is just south of the Wadi Jawf (see Map 5a). It is the home of the Nihm tribe (see Map 5b), who have lived in the area near the Jawf since before the rise of Islam. Sources from the early Islamic period indicate that their tribal territory also extended further to the north, up to Wadi Khabb in that period (see Map 5c). Various scholars link the Nihm to this same area in antiquity based on South Arabian inscriptions referring to *nhmyn* and *nhmt(n)* (see Table 1). This region directly overlaps with the most likely setting of the events in 1 Nephi 16:33–39 as established independently from the textual criteria in points 1–5 (see Map 6). Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that the Nihm (NHM) tribal region is the place called Nahom (NHM) in the Book of Mormon.

To illustrate what makes these findings so compelling, let us revisit something Ross T. Christensen said in his short note published in the August 1978 *Ensign*. He observed that "the discovery might confirm the general itinerary" the Hiltons had outlined, as "Nehhm is only a little south of the route drawn by the Hiltons."[216] In fact, when the route

proposed by the Hiltons is accurately documented and mapped, and the earliest borders of the Nihm tribe reconstructed, it actually already passes through the northern corner of the Nihm tribal area and continued in a generally eastward direction from there to Hadramawt and Dhofar.[217] This does not necessarily mean that the route proposed by the Hiltons is the most compelling proposal, but it serves to illustrate that even when interpreted without knowledge of the Nihm tribal region, the textual clues and on-the-ground reality of Arabia leads Lehi there anyway.

Indeed, the major textual interpretations of 1 Nephi 16:33–17:1 that established the guiding criteria for this study were all well in place *before* anyone had noticed that a place called NHM existed in Yemen. Already by 1950, Nibley had suggested that the name Nahom was not given by Lehi or his family, and the Hiltons further emphasized that this indicated that it was a settled place with a pre-existing name.[218] By 1957, Nibley had placed Lehi on the major trade route going down the western side of Arabia, and again the Hiltons built on this point, and even deduced that Nahom would be located near where the main trails turned east.[219] Nibley had also already reasoned that Nahom was (or at least included) an established desert burial ground to which Ishmael's body might be brought,[220] and both Nibley and the Hiltons had determined that Bountiful was located somewhere in Dhofar.[221] Thus, these key interpretations were clearly developed and established from the text, without any knowledge of the existence or whereabouts of the Nihm tribe.

Applying these interpretations using the more accurate information now accessible about ancient Arabia and Yemen — thanks to several post-1970s advances in scholarship and information access, along with additional ancient discoveries — inevitably leads to the "greater Jawf area," extending roughly from Wadi Khabb in the north to a little south of the Wadi Jawf.[222] It is within this region that Nahom *must* be located, regardless of whether there is or was a place or tribe with an NHM name in that area.

It is only within this context that the Nihm tribal territory becomes significant. The earliest documented Nihm borders correspond nearly *exactly* to the region wherein Nahom must be located, and scholarly commentary on the inscriptional evidence tends to place them somewhere within that region in antiquity. In short, there proves to be a strong convergence between eastward travel, burial of the dead, and the location of Nihm — a convergence that fits well with Nephi's report of the burial of Ishmael at a place called Nahom, followed by a

turn "nearly eastward" for the duration of their journey to Bountiful. Such a robust convergence deserves to be taken seriously. In the words of William G. Dever, "to ignore or to deny the implications of such convergent testimony is irresponsible scholarship,"[223] and to dispute such testimony "would require a more *likely* scenario, replete with new and superior independent witnesses."[224] Without a more compelling alternative explanation, "the case may be considered sufficiently established by all reasonable historical requirements."[225]

Neal Rappleye *is Director of Research at Scripture Central. He is involved in ongoing research on many facets of the Book of Mormon's historical context, including: ancient Jerusalem (especially around the 7th century bc), ancient Arabia, the ancient Near East more broadly, pre-Columbian*

Mesoamerica, and the 19th century witnesses to the discovery and translation of the Book of Mormon plates. He has published with BYU Studies, The Interpreter Foundation, Book of Mormon Central, Greg Kofford Books, and Covenant Communications.

Endnotes

1 Hugh Nibley, *The Collected Works of Hugh Nibley*, vol. 5, *Lehi in the Desert; The World of the Jaredites; There Were Jaredites*, ed. John W. Welch, Darrell L. Matthews, and Stephen R. Callister (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book; Provo, UT: FARMS, 1988), 79. Originally published in the *Improvement Era* 53, no. 6 (June 1950): 517.

2 Lynn M. Hilton and Hope A. Hilton, *In Search of Lehi's Trail* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976), 20, 27. This has become the dominant interpretation of 1 Nephi 16:34. For additional references, see Neal Rappleye and Stephen O. Smoot, "Book of Mormon Minimalists and the NHM Inscriptions: A Response to Dan Vogel," *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 8 (2014): 168n27, https://journal.interpreterfoundation.org/book-of-mormon-minimalists-and-the-nhm-inscriptions-a-response-to-dan-vogel/.

3 See Lynn M. Hilton and Hope A. Hilton, "In Search of Lehi's Trail, Part 1: The Preparation," *Ensign* 6, no. 9 (September 1976): 32–54; Lynn M. Hilton and Hope A. Hilton, "In Search of Lehi's Trail, Part 2: The Journey," *Ensign* 6, no. 10 (October 1976): 34–63.

4 Christensen first proposed this on October 8, 1977, at the twenty-sixth annual symposium of the Society for Early Historic Archaeology (S.E.H.A.), held at Brigham Young University. See Ruth R. Christensen, "Twenty-Sixth Annual Symposium Held," *Newsletter and Proceedings of the S.E.H.A.* 141, December 1977, 9. See also Society for Early Historic Archaeology, "Some Possible Identifications of Book-of-Mormon Sites," *Newsletter and Proceedings of the S.E.H.A.* 149, June 1982, 11.

5 Ross T. Christensen, "The Place Called Nahom," *Ensign* 8, no. 8 (August 1978): 73.

6 For a more complete summary of Latter-day Saint research on Nahom, see Warren P. Aston, "A History of NaHoM," *BYU Studies Quarterly* 51, no. 2 (2012): 78–98.

7 Christensen, "Place Called Nahom," 73.

8 See "Lehi's Trail and Nahom Revisited," *Insights: An Ancient Window* 6, no. 3 (1986): 2, reprinted with updates and revisions in *Reexploring the Book of Mormon*, ed. John W. Welch (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book; Provo, UT: FARMS, 1992), 47–52; Warren P. Aston and Michaela J. Aston, "The Search for Nahom and the End of Lehi's Trail in Southern Arabia" (Provo, UT: FARMS, 1989); Warren P. Aston and Michaela J. Aston, *The Place Which was Called Nahom: The Validation of an Ancient Reference to Southern Arabia* (Provo, UT: FARMS, 1991). On the different spellings, see notes 10 and 12 below.

9 "I have had no small difficulty in writing down these names; both from the diversity of dialects in the country, and from the indistinct pronunciation of those from whom I was obliged to ask them." Carsten Niebuhr, *Travels through Arabia and other Countries in the East*, trans. Robert Heron, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: Morisson and Son, 1792), 1:50 (spelling modernized). "During Lawrence's lifetime it was usual to render Arabic words into English by approximate phonetic spellings. As a result there were widely varying forms. … Even today there is no universally accepted method of transliteration from Arabic to Roman script." Jeremy Wilson, *Lawrence of Arabia: The Authorized Biography of T. E. Lawrence* (New York: Atheneum, 1990), xi. "The many differences of pronunciation in various parts of the Arabic-speaking world make it impossible to produce any simple transliteration system which also shows variations of pronunciation." Nigel Groom, *A Dictionary of Arabic Topography and Placenames: A Transliterated Arabic-English Dictionary with an Arabic Glossary of Topographical Words and Placenames* (Beirut, Lebanon: Librairie de Liban; London: Longman Group, 1983), 8. Biblical names also manifest similar difficulties, since "names of people and places were extremely susceptible to variant spellings and forms in ancient Hebrew and Greek," per Craig L. Blomberg, *The Historical Reliability of the New Testament: Countering the Challenges to Evangelical Christian Beliefs* (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2016), 74. This is especially so when that name is from a different language, as would be the case with Nephi writing the ancient South Arabian name NHM. In antiquity as much as today, foreigners often had difficulties spelling and pronouncing names, as can be seen in the way non-Hebrew names are rendered in the Bible. For several Assyrian examples, see A. R. Millard, "Assyrian

Royal Names in Biblical Hebrew," *Journal of Semitic Studies* 21, no. 1–2 (1976): 1–14.

10 Warren P. Aston, *Lehi and Sariah in Arabia: The Old World Setting of the Book of Mormon* (self-pub., Xlibris, 2015), 75–77, identifies the spellings (1) **Naham**, (2) **Nehem**, (3) **Nehhm**, and (4) **Nehm** attested on various maps (see also note 14 below), and (5) **Nahm**, (6) **Nihm**, and (7) **Nuhm** in translations of medieval Islamic sources. In addition, I have identified the following spellings in various sources: (8) **Nahem**: "Yemen Army Taking Major Leap in the Battlefield to Restore Sanaa," *Al Arabiya*, March 2, 2018; (9) **Nahim**: Ali Mahmood-Aden, "Yemeni Army Scores Crucial Gain Northeast of Rebel Held Sana'a," *The National*, March 2, 2018; (10) **Nahum**: "Yemen: Houthis Accused of Violating Ceasefire in Nahem," *Arab24 News*, April 13, 2016 (despite the spelling in the title, it uses Nahum in the body of the article); (11) **Neham**: "Dozens of Dead and Wounded in Neham," *Yamanyoon*, December 14, 2016; (12) **Nehim**: David D. Kirkpatrick, "Land Mines Block Saudi-Led Assault in Yemen, Killing Civilians," *New York Times*, February 17, 2019; (13) **Niham**: "Aggression Warplanes Hits Marib and Niham," *Yamanyoon*, May 23, 2017; (14) **Nihem**: "Yemeni Army Wages Air-Missile Joint Operation in Nihem Front," *Yemen Press Agency*, April 5, 2019; (15) **Nihim**: Jean-François Breton, *Arabia Felix from the Time of the Queen of Sheba: Eighth Century B.C. to First Century A.D.*, trans. Albert LaFarge (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1999), 160; (16) **Nihum**: UNICEF, *UNICEF Yemen Situation Report—Reporting Period: March 2012*, April 11, 2012; (17) **Nuhum**: "Yemeni Army is Inclined Towards Military Action After Ould Cheikh's Plan Fails," *Asharq Al-Awsat*, November 2, 2016. Lynn M. Hilton and Hope A. Hilton, *Discovering Lehi: New Evidence of Lehi and Nephi in Arabia* (Springville, UT: Cedar Fort, 1996), 124–26, include the variants (18) **Neahm** and (19) **Nehʾm**, but their sources for these spellings are not clear, so I have not included them in my total number of attested variants.

11 See Brant A. Gardner, *The Gift and Power: Translating the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2011), 157–63, for a discussion of the implications this would have on the spelling of Book of Mormon names (with specific discussion of Nahom), concluding "that transliteration was subject to alteration through the way an untrained English speaker might interpret the sound

conventions of the plate text as they were encoded in the plate script" (p. 163).

12 Stephen D. Ricks, "On Lehi's Trail: Nahom, Ishmael's Burial Place," *Journal of Book of Mormon and Other Restoration Scripture* 20, no. 1 (2011): 67. Stephen D. Ricks, *Lexicon of Inscriptional Qatabanian* (Rome: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1989) is still one of the main reference works on Qatabanian, one of the four major languages of ancient Yemen. Ricks' conclusion is supported by the fact that not only has the tribal-regional name *Nihm* been spelled a variety of different ways in modern sources (see note 10 above), but also the translation of the NHM name in South Arabian inscriptions has been translated differently in the past, with some scholars rendering it *Naham* (see Jamme, cited in note 192 below), *Nahim* (see van den Branden, cited in note 188 below), and *Nahm* (see Lambert, cited in note 191 below and Ryckmans, cited in note 192 below)—all fairly close to *Nahom*. While these are all older translations not typically used today, it should just as well be noted that the Book of Mormon, as a translation from 1829, is also an older translation and thus it should not surprise us that it does not always follow the transliteration conventions established by scholars some 150 years or so *after* it was published.

13 Christensen, "Place Called Nahom," 73.

14 See James Gee, "The Nahom Maps," *Journal of Book of Mormon and Restoration Scripture* 17, no. 1 (2008): 40–57; Aston, *Lehi and Sariah in Arabia*, 69, 75–76; Hilton and Hilton, *Discovering Lehi*, 124–26. For an examination of the claim that Joseph Smith could have used one of these maps to write about Arabia, including Nahom, see Jeff Lindsay, "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dream Map: Part 2 of 2," *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 19 (2016): 247–326, https://journal.interpreterfoundation.org/joseph-and-the-amazing-technicolor-dream-map-part-2-of-2/. See also Kyler Rasmussen, "Estimating the Evidence, Episode 7: On Three Consonants and a Turn," *Interpreter* (blog), August 18, 2021, https://interpreterfoundation.org/estimating-the-evidence-7/.

15 Christensen, "Place Called Nahom," 73.

16 S. Kent Brown, "'The Place that was Called Nahom': New Light from Ancient Yemen," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 8, no. 1 (1999): 66–68; Warren P. Aston, "Newly Found Altars from Nahom," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 10, no. 2 (2001): 56–61.

For references to some additional inscriptions referring to NHM, see Neal Rappleye, "Ishmael and Nahom in Ancient Inscriptions," (paper presented at the 2022 FAIR Conference, Provo, UT, August 3, 2022). Previous to this presentation, some of these were briefly mentioned by Aston, "History of NaHoM," 90–93; Aston, *Lehi and Sariah in Arabia*, 78–79.

17 Warren P. Aston and Michaela Knoth Aston, *In the Footsteps of Lehi: New Evidence for Lehi's Journey across Arabia to Bountiful* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1994), 19–20; Warren P. Aston, "Across Arabia with Lehi and Sariah: 'Truth Shall Spring out of the Earth,'" *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 15, no. 2 (2006): 15; Aston, "History of NaHoM," 83–84; Aston, *Lehi and Sariah in Arabia*, 72–73.

18 Christensen, "Place Called Nahom," 73.

19 Aston and Aston, *In the Footsteps of Lehi*, 22–23; S. Kent Brown, "New Light from Arabia on Lehi's Trail," in *Echoes and Evidences of the Book of Mormon*, ed. Donald W. Parry, Daniel C. Peterson, and John W. Welch (Provo, UT: FARMS, 2002), 89; S. Kent Brown, "New Light: Nahom and the Eastward Turn," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 12, no. 1 (2003): 111–12, 120.

20 The two leading candidates for Bountiful are Khor Kharfot (advocated for by Warren Aston) and Khor Rori (advocated for by George Potter). See Warren P. Aston, "The Arabian Bountiful Discovered? Evidence for Nephi's Bountiful," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 7, no. 1 (1997): 4–11, 70; George D. Potter, "Khor Rori: A Maritime Resources-Based Candidate for Nephi's Harbor," *Interpreter: A Journal of Latter-day Saint Faith and Scholarship* 51 (2022): 253–94, https://journal.interpreterfoundation.org/khor-rori-a-maritime-resources-based-candidate-for-nephis-harbor/. Among Latter-day Saint scholars who have expressed an opinion, most favor Khor Kharfot (see note 214 below).

21 Besides those already cited, see John M. Lundquist, "Biblical Seafaring and the Book of Mormon," in Raphael Patai, *The Children of Noah: Jewish Seafaring in Ancient Times* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998), 173; "Book of Mormon Linked to Site in Yemen," *Ensign* 31, no. 2 (February 2001): 79; Terryl L. Givens, *By the Hand of Mormon: The American Scripture that Launched a New World Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 120–21, 147; Terrance L. Szink, "Nahom,"

in *Book of Mormon Reference Companion*, ed. Dennis L. Largey (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2003), 580; Daniel C. Peterson, "Not So Easily Dismissed: Some Facts for Which Counterexplanations of the Book of Mormon Will Need to Account," *FARMS Review* 17, no. 2 (2005): xxvi; John W. Welch, "Joseph Smith and the Past," in *The Worlds of Joseph Smith: A Bicentennial Conference at the Library of Congress*, ed. John W. Welch (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 2006), 108; Michael R. Ash, *Of Faith and Reason: 80 Evidences Supporting the Prophet Joseph Smith* (Springville, UT: Cedar Fort, 2008), 62–63; Robert Boylan, "On Not Understanding the Book of Mormon," *FARMS Review* 22, no. 1 (2010): 182–85; John A. Tvedtnes, "Names of People: Book of Mormon," in *Encyclopedia of Hebrew Language and Linguistics*, 4 vols., ed. Geoffrey Khan (Boston: E. J. Brill, 2013), 2:787; Brant A. Gardner, *Traditions of the Fathers: The Book of Mormon as History* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2015), 105–108; Jeff Lindsay, "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dream Map: Part 1 of 2," *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 19 (2016): 202–207, https://journal.interpreterfoundation.org/joseph-and-the-amazing-technicolor-dream-map-part-1-of-2/.

22 Gardner, *Traditions of the Fathers*, 107–108, emphasis added.

23 William G. Dever, *Who Were the Early Israelites and Where Did They Come From?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2003), 227.

24 William G. Dever, *What Did the Biblical Writers Know and When Did They Know It? What Archaeology Can Tell Us about the Reality of Ancient Israel* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2001), 107.

25 Unless otherwise indicated, all quotations of the Book of Mormon follow the wording and punctuation of Royal Skousen, ed., *The Book of Mormon: The Earliest Text*, 2nd ed. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2022).

26 Daniel T. Potts, "Trans-Arabian Routes of the Pre-Islamic Period," in *The Arabs and Arabia on the Eve of Islam*, ed. F. E. Peters (New York: Routledge, 1999), 45.

27 Consider three illustrative examples: (1) the account of Ṣabaḥuhumu's commercial travels from South Arabia to Palestine and Egypt (see B-L Nashq, discussed below) only mentions a single Arabian toponym (Dedan); (2) Strabo's account of the

military campaign of Aelius Gallus (see *Geography* 16.4.22–24) gives only a couple of toponyms between the Nabataean port of Leuke Kome (itself a location of some debate, see notes 62 and 70 below) and Najran—the longest portion of the journey—and neither can be specifically identified; likewise none of the places north of Najran mentioned on the return journey can be located; (3) Esarhaddon's account of crossing the desert from Palestine to Egypt does not include a single toponym, but instead provides imaginative descriptions of the places they stopped, none of which can be identified without appeals to creative/speculative interpretations. See Karen Radner, "Esarhaddon's Expedition from Palestine to Egypt in 671 BCE: A Trek through Negev and Sinai," in *Fundstellen: Gesammelte Schriften zur Archäologie und Geschichte Altvorderasiens ad honorem Hartmut Kühne*, ed. Dominik Bonatz, Rainer M. Czichon, and F. Janoscha Kreppner (Wiesbaden, Germany: Harrassowitz, 2008), 305–14. In each case, the route taken can only be guessed at by drawing on the details of historically known routes documented in other sources.

28   Cf. Nibley, *Collected Works,* 5:75.

29   See George D. Potter, "A New Candidate in Arabia for the 'Valley of Lemuel,'" *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 8, no. 1 (1999): 54–63, 79; George Potter and Richard Wellington, *Lehi in the Wilderness: 81 New, Documented Evidences that Book of Mormon is a True History* (Springville, UT: Cedar Fort, 2003), 31–51; S. Kent Brown, "The Hunt for the Valley of Lemuel," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 16, no. 1 (2007): 64–73, 86–88; Peterson, "Not So Easily Dismissed," xxv–xxvi; Lindsay, "Dream Map: Part 1," 201–202, 207–10; Warren P. Aston, "Into Arabia: Lehi and Sariah's Escape from Jerusalem," *BYU Studies Quarterly* 58, no. 4 (2019): 110–25; Warren Aston, "Laman's River: An Update," *Book of Mormon Central* (blog), May 16, 2020, https://bookofmormoncentral.org/blog/lamans-river-an-update. It is noteworthy that Lynn Hilton later accepted Wadi Tayyib al-Ism as the most likely location, despite his original proposal of al-Bada in Wadi Ifal. Lynn M. Hilton, "In Search of Lehi's Trail—30 Years Later," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 15, no. 2 (2006): 5–6. Only Jeffrey Chadwick offers a dissenting view, but Chadwick himself has never explored the region, his alternative proposal is unpersuasive, and his objections have largely been answered by subsequent research (see Brown and Aston). Jeffrey R. Chadwick, "The Wrong Place for

Lehi's Trail and the Valley of Lemuel," *FARMS Review* 17, no. 2 (2005): 209–15.

30 See Potter and Wellington, *Lehi in the Wilderness*, 73–78; Lindsay, "Dream Map: Part 1," 210–16; Warren P. Aston, "Nephi's 'Shazer': The Fourth Arabian Pillar of the Book of Mormon," *Interpreter: A Journal of Latter-day Saint Faith and Scholarship* 39 (2020): 53–72, https://journal.interpreterfoundation.org/nephis-shazer-the-fourth-arabian-pillar-of-the-book-of-mormon/. Even Jeffrey Chadwick agreed that this identification is "remarkably plausible." Jeffrey R. Chadwick, "An Archaeologist's View," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 15, no. 2 (2006): 73.

31 Mohammed Maraqten estimates the daily distance traveled along the incense trail to be about 34 km (~21.13 miles) per day, which over seven days comes out to just under 148 miles—very close to the 144 total miles (~20.57 mile/day) required to travel from Aqaba to Wadi Tayyib al-Ism to Wadi Agharr. Mohammed Maraqten, "Dangerous Trade Routes: On the Plundering of Caravans in the Pre-Islamic Near East," *ARAM Periodical* 8 (1996): 228. Other estimates for daily travel distances vary, with Nigel Groom, *Frankincense and Myrrh: A Study of the Arabian Incense Trade* (Harlow, UK: Longman Group Limited; Beirut, Lebanon: Librairie de Liban, 1981), 211, suggesting averages between 20–25 miles per day, while Alessandro de Maigret estimates a higher average of 40–50 km (~25–31 miles) per day. Alessandro de Maigret, "The Frankincense Road from Najrān to Maʿān: A Hypothetical Itinerary," in *Profumi D'Arabia: Atti del Convegno*, ed. Alessandra Avanzini (Rome: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 1997), 325. For 30 miles a day as a "good average," see Nibley, *Collected Works,* 5:53–54. D. Kelly Ogden, "Answering the Lord's Call (1 Nephi 1–7)," in *Studies in Scripture*, vol. 7, *The Book of Mormon, Part 1—1 Nephi–Alma 29*, ed. Kent P. Jackson (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1987), 26: "An agreeable pace for a group on camels would be between twenty and thirty miles a day." Assuming a range of 20–30 miles per day would thereby allow for between 140–210 miles for a seven-day journey, but this upper bound seems aggressive for a group traveling with women and children (Ishmael's sons already have "families" in 1 Nephi 7:6) during the second leg from the Valley of Lemuel to Shazer. If we allow for the maximum of 30 miles a day before the addition of Ismael's family, and then assume the minimum of 20 miles a day thereafter, then the actual Shazer was no more than

170 miles from the Gulf of Aqaba, within about two dozen miles of the proposed location in Wadi Agharr. None of this makes a substantial difference to my argument.

32 Potts, "Trans-Arabian Routes," 45. For illustrative examples of other indefinite itineraries across Arabia or Sinai, see note 27 above, the first two of which are accounts about crossing approximately the same stretch of Arabia that Lehi would be traveling in for this part of his journey.

33 This map combines and adapts the main routes portrayed in three different sources: (1) Nigel Groom, "Trade, Incense and Perfume," in *Queen of Sheba: Treasures from Ancient Yemen*, ed. St John Simpson (London: British Museum Press, 2002), 89 fig. 29; (2) Romolo Loreto, "The Role of Adummatu among the Early Arabian Trade Routes at the Dawn of the Southern Arabian Cultures," in *South Arabian Long-Distance Trade in Antiquity: "Out of Arabia,"* ed. George Hatke and Ronald Ruzicka (Newcastle upon Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2021), 68 fig. 3–1; (3) Jérôme Rohmer et al., "The Thāj Archaeological Project: Results of the First Field Season," *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies* 48 (2018): 288, fig. 1.

34 Hugh Nibley, *The Collected Works of Hugh Nibley*, vol. 6, *An Approach to the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book; Provo, UT: FARMS, 1988), 63. Cf. Nibley, *Collected Works,* 5:49–51, 112.

35 See Hilton and Hilton, *Lehi's Trail*, 22–23, 27–44.

36 See Aston and Aston, *In the Footsteps of Lehi*, 4–5, 22, 30–32; Aston, *Lehi and Sariah in Arabia*, 14–16, 50–51; Brown, "New Light from Arabia," 83–85; Potter and Wellington, *Lehi in the Wilderness*, 53–72; Lindsay, "Dream Map: Part 1" 162–63, 205. In contrast, Robert F. Smith suggested that "Lehi hewed to the less-traveled lowland coastal route along the Tiḥama," and said "Lehi's trek down the Tiḥʾāma" was in "marginal caravan and nomad areas," but makes no substantive argument to support this contrary point of view. Robert F. Smith, "Book of Mormon Event Structure: The Ancient Near East," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 5, no. 2 (1996): 141n238, 145–46.

37 A. F. L. Beeston, "The Arabian Aromatics Trade in Antiquity," in *A. F. L. Beeston at the Arabian Seminar and Other Papers*, ed.

M. C. A. MacDonald and C. S. Phillips (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2005), 53. For a detailed review of the classical sources, see Groom, *Frankincense and Myrrh*, 55–95.

38 For detailed reviews of the evidence beyond what is discussed here, see Groom, *Frankincense and Myrrh*, 22–37; Jan Retsö, "The Domestication of the Camel and the Establishment of the Frankincense Road from South Arabia," *Orientalia Suecana* 40–41 (1990–1991): 28–59; Alessandra Avanzini, "From South to North in Ancient Arabia," in *The Archaeology of North Arabia: Oases and Landscapes: Proceedings of the International Congress Held at the University of Vienna, 5–8 December, 2013*, ed. Marta Luciani (Vienna: Austrian Academy of Sciences Press, 2016), 337–44; Loreto, "Role of Adummatu," 86–104.

39 See Michaël Jasmin, "The Emergence and First Development of the Arabian Trade Across the Wadi Arabah," in *Crossing the Rift: Resources, Settlements, Patterns, and Interactions in the Wadi Arabah*, ed. Piotr Bienkowski and Katharina Galor (Philadelphia: Oxbow Books, 2006), 143–50.

40 See Mario Liverani, "Early Caravan Trade between South-Arabia and Mesopotamia," *Yemen* 1 (1992): 111–15.

41 Daniel Vainstub, "Incense from Sheba for the Jerusalem Temple," *Jerusalem Journal of Archaeology* 4 (2023): 42–68.

42 On the historicity of the Queen of Sheba narrative, see Kenneth A. Kitchen, "Sheba and Arabia," in *The Age of Solomon: Scholarship at the Turn of the Millennium*, ed. Lowell K. Handy (New York: Brill, 1997), 126–53; André Lemaire, "La reine de Saba à Jérusalem: la tradition ancienne reconsidérée," in *Kein Land für sich allein: Studien zum Kulturkontakt in Kanaan, Israel/Palästina und Ebirnâri für Manfred Weippert zum 65 Geburstag*, ed. Ulrich Hübner and Ernst Axel Knauf (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2002), 43–55. It is worth noting that even if this event is not regarded as historical, Kitchen argues that the latest possible date of the story is ca. 690 BC—a point that scholars skeptical of the story's historicity tend to agree with. See, e.g., Retsö, "Domestication of the Camel," 39, 44–45, who completely dismisses the historicity of the account, yet comes to a similar conclusion, arguing that the narrative must pre-date 600 BC, and that the reign of Hezekiah (ca. 715–687 BC) is a likely setting for the narrative. Likewise, Israel Finkelstein and Neil Asher Silberman,

David and Solomon: In Search of the Bible's Sacred Kings and the Roots of Western Tradition (New York: Free Press, 2006), 152–53, 167–71, outright reject the historicity of the story but agree that it fits within the context of the early seventh century bc. Thus, either way this story provides evidence of contact between Judah and Saba by Lehi's day.

43 See Groom, *Frankincense and Myrrh*, 38–54; Retsö, "Domestication of the Camel," 31–46; Finkelstein and Silberman, *David and Solomon*, 167–71; Pieter Gert van der Veen, "Arabian Seals and Bullae along the Trade Routes of Judah and Edom," *Journal of Epigraphy and Rock Drawings* 3 (2009): 25–39; André Lemaire, "New Perspectives on the Trade between Judah and South Arabia," in *New Inscriptions and Seals Relating to the Biblical World*, ed. Meir Lubetski and Edith Lubetski (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2012), 93–110; Pieter Gert van der Veen and François Bron, "Arabian and Arabizing Epigraphic Finds from the Iron Age Southern Levant," in *Unearthing the Wilderness: Studies on the History and Archaeology of the Negev and Edom in the Iron Age*, ed. Juan Manuel Tebes (Walpole, MA: Peeters, 2014), 203–24. For previous Latter-day Saint discussions of this topic, see Nibley, *Collected Works*, 6:59–70; Smith, "Book of Mormon Event Structure," 141; S. Kent Brown, "Jerusalem Connections to Arabia in 600 B.C.," in *Glimpses of Lehi's Jerusalem*, ed. John W. Welch, David Rolph Seely, and Jo Ann H. Seely (Provo, UT: FARMS, 2004), 625–46.

44 See François Bron and André Lemaire, "Nouvelle inscription sabéenne et le commerce en Transeuphratene," *Transeuphratène* 38 (2009): 11–29; Christian Robin and Alessandro de Maigret, "Le royaume Sudarabique de Maʿîn: Nouvelles données grâce aux fouilles Italiennes de Barâqish (l'antique Yathill)," *Comptes Rendus de L'académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 153 (January–March 2009): 76–96. See also André Lemaire, "Chronologie Sabéenne et Minéenne et histoire du Proche-Orient," *Orientalia* 79, no. 3 (2010): 383–89; André Lemaire, "Solomon & Sheba, Inc.," *Biblical Archaeological Review* 36, no. 1 (January/February 2010): 54–59, 78; Lemaire, "New Perspectives," 94–101; Christian Julien Robin, "Before Ḥimyar: Epigraphic Evidence for the Kingdoms of South Arabia," in *Arabs and Empires before Islam*, ed. Greg Fisher (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 115; Alessandra Avanzini, *By Land and By Sea: A History of South Arabia before Islam*

Recounted from Inscriptions (Rome: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 2016), 139–46. Bron and Lemaire favor an earlier date, ca. 600 BC, while Stephanie Anthonioz (in Robin and de Maigret) argues for a date around 550 BC. Avanzini accepts a date generally within this time frame (ca. 600–550 BC), as do several other scholars. See, e.g., Loreto, "Role of Adummatu," 91; Jérôme Rohmer and Guillaume Charloux, "From Liḥyān to the Nabataeans: Dating the End of the Iron Age in North-west Arabia," *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies* 45 (2015): 302; Gunnar Sperveslage, "Intercultural Contacts between Egypt and the Arabian Peninsula at the Turn of the 2nd to the 1st Millennium BCE," in *Dynamics of Production in the Ancient Near East, 1300–500 BC*, ed. Juan Carlos Moreno García (Philadelphia: Oxbow Books, 2016), 305–307; Melody D. Knowles, "Israel and Judah in Iron Age II," in *Ancient Israel: From Abraham to the Roman Destruction of the Temple*, 4th ed., ed. John Merrill and Hershel Shanks (Washington, DC: Biblical Archaeology Society, 2021), 182–83, 184. Others have argued for later dates, between 400–350 BC. See Anne Multhoff, "Merchant and Marauder: The Adventures of a Sabaean Clansman," *Arabian Archaeology and Epigraphy* 30, no. 2 (2019): 239–62; Søren Lund Sørensen and Klaus Geus, "A Sabaean Eyewitness to the War of Euagoras against the Persians: Synchronising Greek and Ancient South Arabian Sources," *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 209 (2019): 196–204; Fokelien Kootstra, *The Writing Culture of Ancient Dadan: A Description and Quantitative Analysis of Linguistic Variation* (Boston: Brill, 2022), 42. Mounir Arbach, "La datation paléographique des inscriptions sudarabiques du Ier millénaire avant J.-C.: méthode et limites," *Arabian Epigraphic Notes* 3 (2017): 96, 105, accepted the mid-sixth century BC date, but then followed the later date. Mounir Arbach and Jérémie Schiettecatte, "La chronologie du royaume de Maʿīn (VIIIe–Ier s. av. J.-C.)," in *Arabian Antiquities: Studies Dedicated to Alexander Sedov on the Occasion of His Seventieth Birthday*, ed. I. V. Zaitsev (Moscow: Oriental Literature Publisher, 2020), 249. Even if this later date is accepted, this text would still pre-date surviving Classical sources by hundreds of years.

45 Corpus of South Arabian Inscriptions (object name B-L Nashq [Demirjian 1], http://dasi.cnr.it/index.php?id=dasi_prj_epi&prjId=1&recId=1292). Cf. the sources cited in note 44 above for slightly varying translations.

46 "Our inscription [B-L Nashq/Demirjian 1] cites events and peoples with whom the Sabaean caravans, leaving from Nashq, established a commercial contact." Avanzini, *By Land and By Sea*, 141.

47 Avanzini, "From South to North," 340.

48 See Corpus of South Arabian Inscriptions (object name M 247 [RES 3022; B-M 257], http://dasi.cnr.it/index.php?id=dasi_prj_epi&prjId=1&recId=2967). See also Rémy Audouin, Jean-François Breton, and Christian Robin, "Towns and Temples—The Emergence of South Arabian Civilization," in *Yemen: 3000 Years of Art and Civilisation in Arabia Felix*, ed. Werner Daum (Innsbruck, Germany: Pinguin-Verlag; Frankfurt: Umschau-Verlag, 1987), 63. Audouin, Breton, and Robin date this inscription to fourth–third centuries BC, but more recently scholars have favored an earlier date toward the end of the fifth (or perhaps beginning of the fourth) century BC. See Avanzini, "From South to North," 340; Avanzini, *By Land and By Sea*, 160; Lemaire, "Chronologie Sabéenne et Minéenne," 381–83; Sørensen and Geus, "Sabaean Eyewitness," 203; Arbach and Schiettecatte, "La chronologie," 249.

49 Avanzini, "From South to North," 340. Cf. Avanzini, *By Land and By Sea*, 162: "Political control over the caravan route changed completely between the beginning of the 6th century (Demirjian 1 = B-L Nashq) and the second half of the 5th century. At the beginning of the 6th century, Sabaʿ controlled, despite some problems with the Minaean kingdom, the caravan route along the Ḥijāz, from Dedan to the Mediterranean Sea. In the 5th century the situation was reversed: Maʿīn controlled the caravan route, despite some problems with the Sabaean kingdom." Avanzini's theory—and by extension the earlier dating of B-L Nashq (see note 44 above)—enjoys archaeological support from the stratigraphy of Barāqish and the findings on the plains outside the city walls. The archaeological sequence shows that the city was first under Sabaean rule, but that Minaeans took control in the sixth century BC. See Francesco G. Fedele, "The Wall and Talus at Barāqish, Ancient Yathill (al-Jawf, Yemen): A Minaean Stratigraphy," *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies* 41 (2011): 101–20. Evidence for trade caravans camped outside the city begins in the seventh and early sixth centuries BC—the very time-period of Ṣabaḥuhumu's inscription—when the Sabaeans still had control over the city, confirming both that it was already a staging point

for the caravan trade (as indicated in later sources) during that time and also that control of this key caravan stop transitioned to the Minaeans by the end of the sixth century BC. See Francesco G. Fedele, "Camels, Donkeys and Caravan Trade: An Emerging Context from Barāqish, Ancient Yathill (Wādī al-Jawf, Yemen)," *Anthropozoologica* 49, no. 2 (2014): 177–94.

50 For detailed reconstructions of the north-south trending leg of the Frankincense Trail, see Groom, *Frankincense and Myrrh*, 189–213; de Maigret, "Frankincense Road," 315–31.

51 See Lemaire, "New Perspectives," 102; Lemaire, "Solomon & Sheba," 59; M. C. A. MacDonald, "Trade Routes and Trade Goods at the Northern End of the 'Incense Road' in the First Millennium B.C.," in *Profumi d'Arabia: Atti del Convegno*, ed. Alessandra Avanzini (Rome: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 1997), 337–38, 341–43. On identifying Raamah with Najran, see W. W. Müller, "Raamah," in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 5:597. Mario Liverani demonstrates that Ezekiel 27 reflects a highly accurate and technical understanding of ancient Near Eastern trade networks, running northwest to southeast—including an Israel-Edom-Dedan-Raamah-Sheba network (p. 72 fig. 3)—as they existed within a specific, narrow window of time, ca. 612–585 BC. Mario Liverani, "The Trade Network of Tyre According to Ezek. 27," in *Ah, Assyria …: Studies in Assyrian History and Ancient Near Eastern Historiography Presented to Hayim Tadmor*, ed. Mordechai Cogan and Israel Ephʿal (Jerusalem: Magnes Press and The Hebrew University, 1991), 65–79. Indeed, the references to Sheba in these passages, rather than Maʿīn, fits expectations for the seventh–sixth century BC when Saba evidently controlled the trade route (see note 49 above), and further supports the earlier dating of B-L Nashq (see note 44 above).

52 See Corpus of South Arabian Inscriptions (object name YM 28823, http://dasi.cnr.it/index.php?id=dasi_prj_epi&prjId=1&recId=1310). See also Mounir Arbach and Rémy Audouin, *Ṣanʿâʾ Nation Museum: Collection of Epigraphic and Archaeological Artifacts from al-Jawf Sites, Part II* (Ṣanʿâʾ, YEM: UNESCO; Social Fund for Development in Yemen, 2007), 47, which provides the early seventh century BC dating.

53 Mounir Arbach and Irene Rossi, "Haram: cité antique du Jawf (Yémen). Quelques bribes de dix siècles d'histoire et nouveaux textes amīrites," *Semitica et Classica* 13 (2020): 24n45.

54 See Corpus of South Arabian Inscriptions (object name Haram 11, http://dasi.cnr.it/index.php?id=dasi_prj_epi&prjId=1&recId=2838); and Corpus of South Arabian Inscriptions (object name Haram 12, http://dasi.cnr.it/index.php?id=dasi_prj_epi&prjId=1&recId=2839). See also Christian Robin, *Inventaire des inscriptions Sudarabiques*, vol. 1, *Inabba', Haram, Al-Kāfir, Kamna et al-Ḥarāshif*, bk. A, *Les documents* (Paris: Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres; Rome: Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1992), 52, 76–78. For the dating of these texts to the early seventh century BC, see Arbach and Rossi, "Haram," 24n45, 25–26, 30; K. A. Kitchen, *Documentation for Ancient Arabia*, 2 vols. (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1994–2000), 2:375.

55 This map is adapted from Michael Jenner, *Yemen Rediscovered* (Essex, UK: Longman Group Limited, 1983), 16, who consulted with Nigel Groom for the details (p. 20). Cf. Groom, *Frankincense and Myrrh*, 167. For discussion of the main east-west routes through South Arabia, see Groom, *Frankincense and Myrrh*, 165–88; Richard LeBaron Bowen, Jr., "Ancient Trade Routes in South Arabia," in Richard LeBaron Bowen Jr. and Frank P. Albright, *Archaeological Discoveries in South Arabia* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1958), 35–42, fig. 33.

56 Barry J. Beitzel, "Roads and Highways," in *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, 5:776.

57 Michael C. Astour, "Overland Trade Routes in Ancient Western Asia," in *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East*, 4 vols., ed. Jack Sasson (New York: Charles Scribner & Sons, 1995), 3:1401.

58 Bowen, "Ancient Trade Routes," 36.

59 Potts, "Trans-Arabian Routes," 45, with mention of pilgrimage routes on p. 55.

60 "In any given area the wadi systems are well-known by the inhabitants and serve as networks for communication and travel. … There are several modern tracks which follow more than one wadi to reach the interior Hijaz and Hisma." Michael Lloyd Ingraham et al., "Saudi Arabian Comprehensive

Survey Program: c. Preliminary Report on a Reconnaissance Survey of the Northwestern Province (with a Note on a Brief Survey of the Northern Province)," *ATLAL: The Journal of Saudi Arabian Archaeology* 5 (1981): 63.

61 Aston, "Nephi's 'Shazer,'" 69. Cf. Ingraham et al., "Comprehensive Survey," 63: "Access to the Hisma [a broad plateau east of the Hijaz mountains] through Wadi Sharmah is also relatively easy."

62 See MacDonald, "Trade Routes and Trade Goods," 334, 349 fig. 1. There is ongoing debate regarding the location of Leuke Kome, but many scholars favor this location. In addition to MacDonald, see Ingraham et al., "Comprehensive Survey," 77–78; Lionel Casson, *The Periplus Maris Erythraei: Text with Introduction, Translation, and Commentary* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 143–44; Baseem Rihani, "Identification of Some Archaeological Nabataean Sites in North-West Saudi Arabia," *Studies in the History and Archaeology of Jordan* 8 (2004): 371–74; George Hatke, *Aksum and Nubia: Warfare, Commerce, and Political Fictions in Ancient Northeast Africa* (New York: New York University Press and Institute for the Study of the Ancient World, 2013), 41n149; Michał Gawlikowski, "Looking for Leuke Kome," in *Stories of Globalisation: The Red Sea and the Persian Gulf from Late Prehistory to Early Modernity*, ed. Andrea Manzo, Chiara Zazzaro, and Diana Joyce de Falco (Boston: Brill, 2019), 281–91. For scholars who support an alternative proposal, see note 70 below.

63 It is possible that Nephi, writing decades later (2 Nephi 5:28–34) about his memories of an eight-year-long period (1 Nephi 17:4), did not think it noteworthy or necessary (or perhaps did not even remember) what would have constituted just a few days (likely 4–5) of eastwardly trending travel before returning to a generally south-to-southeastward bearing for the longest portion of his journey. If we follow Brown's reasoning on Nephi's two main directional statements (see note 77 below), then this is a reasonable possibility. It is even possible that Nephi did not consider the family as having departed "Shazer" until they had exited Wadi Sharma, in which case nearly half (~40 miles) of this eastward route would be simply travel *within* Shazer, and thus they would have merged with the Frankincense Trail "following the same direction" (i.e., nearly south-southeast) within just a couple of days following their departure *from* Shazer at the eastern end of Wadi Sharma.

Thus, while routes that better approximate a south-southeastward bearing are available (and in my view preferable), this possibility leading directly through Wadi Sharma should not be completely ruled out.

64 Abdullah al-Wohaibi, "The Northern Hijaz in the Writings of the Arab Geographers, 800–1150" (PhD diss., University of London, 1969), 36–37, 377–91, and his unpaginated "Map of the Northern Hijaz, 800–1150."

65 See Groom, *Frankincense and Myrrh*, 40, 60–61, 64, 192, 205 206, 260n47. The early Islamic sources cited by al-Wohaibi, "Northern Hijaz," also indicate that this road was originally used by trade caravans before the rise of Islam.

66 See Potter and Wellington, *Lehi in the Wilderness*, 78–93. Brown, "New Light from Arabia," 109n50, also mentions this route, implying the possibility that Lehi followed it, and it may be the northern of the two routes across the Hijaz shown on his map (see p. 58). Brown also notes "a person can travel through the mountains from both al-Muwaylih and al-Wajh" (p. 109n50), and thus the two routes on his map may be these two passes, with the route from al-Wajh (discussed below) being the more southern of the two routes. I have not been able to identify any sources describing a possible route from al-Muweileh.

67 Interestingly, each of these two wadis were previously proposed as candidates for Shazer by the Hiltons. See Hilton and Hilton, *Lehi's Trail*, 77 (Wadi al-Azlan = Aznam); Hilton and Hilton, *Discovering Lehi*, 107–109 (Muwaylih = Muweileh). As noted in Aston, "Nephi's 'Shazer,'" 63–65, Wadi al-Aznam is certainly too far south to qualify as a viable candidate for Shazer (and is also weak on several other grounds). Presumably, the Hiltons themselves recognized the weakness of this proposal, and thus made their alternative proposal of Wadi al-Muweileh in 1996, which is a much stronger candidate and conceivably could be reached from Wadi Tayyib al-Ism in four-days, but I agree with Aston that it is ultimately not as compelling as Wadi Agharr. See Aston, "Nephi's 'Shazer,'" 65–66.

68 Ingraham et al., "Comprehensive Survey," 63; de Maigret, "Frankincense Road," 322; Glen Warren Bowersock, "Exploration in North-West Arabia after Jaussen-Savignac," *Topoi* 6, no. 2 (1996): 560.

69 W. G. Lambert, "Nabonidus in Arabia," *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies* 2 (1972): 56.

70 See Dario Nappo, "On the Location of Leuke Kome," *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 23 (2010): 335–48; de Maigret, "Frankincense Road," 322; Groom, *Frankincense and Myrrh*, 192, 208, 261n52. In a later publication, however (see note 81 below), Groom appears to favor Ainounah.

71 There is considerable debate among scholars as to whether or not Mecca was an official stop along the primary route of the incense trade, and just how early Meccan trade emerged. Regardless of these issues, however, the location of Mecca—near the narrowest point along the entire Hijaz and Asir mountain chain—is generally recognized as the most ideal point for trade and exchange between the inland and coastal sides of the mountains, and most scholars agree that there were at least secondary trails connecting Mecca to the primary trade route in pre-Islamic times. See Maraqten, "Dangerous Trade Routes," 227; Potts, "Trans-Arabian Routes," 52; de Maigret, "Frankincense Road," 319–20; Groom, *Frankincense and Myrrh*, 193. For more detailed discussions of this issue, see R. B. Serjeant, "Meccan Trade and the Rise of Islam: Misconceptions and Flawed Polemics," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 110, no. 3 (1990): 472–86; Mikhail D. Burkharin, "Mecca on the Caravan Routes in Pre-Islamic Antiquity," in *The Qurʾān in Context: Historical and Literary Investigations into the Qurʾānic Milieu*, ed. Angelika Neuwirth, Nicolai Sinai, and Michael Marx (Boston: Brill, 2010), 115–34. The route proposed by Burkharin connecting Mecca to the trade route via aṭ-Tāʾif and Bisha (pp. 119–22; cf. Potts, "Trans-Arabian Routes," 56, fig. 1) is the only one that runs generally southeastward, and is thus probably the most consistent of the Meccan routes with Lehi's journey.

72 Adrian Curtis, *Oxford Bible Atlas*, 4th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 100, shows a southeastward route through the mountains connecting coastal and inland trade routes that "may have been in use at approximately the time of the Hebrew monarchy" (p. 99) that appears to correspond with the Qunfudah-Abha-Najran trail discussed by the Hiltons. For discussion of this route as part of the Hiltons' model for Lehi's trail, see note 86 below.

73 See Brown, "New Light from Arabia," 77–79; Potter and Wellington, *Lehi in the Wilderness*, 80–83. Note, however, that Potter and Wellington's argument that Nephi's reference to the "fertile parts" (1 Nephi 16:14, 16) is the proper names *Hijr* and/or *Muhajirun*, meaning "fertile piece(s) of land" (see p. 83) is mistaken. While it is true that Groom defines *maḥājir*, in part, as "a fertile piece of land with good pasture surrounded by high ground," and links it to the term *ḥājir*, completely different Arabic terms stand behind *Hijr* and *Muhajirun*. Groom, *Arabic Topography and Placenames*, 162. Hijr is the Arabic form of Hegra (now known as Madaʾin Salih), which was the Nabataean city at al-Ula which effectively replaced the Liḥyan city of Dedan in the late first millennium BC. While there are extensive tracts of farmland at Hegra, it is in the midst of a rocky landscape, and its most prominent feature is the extravagant rock carved tombs and other stone architecture. Thus, according to Eric A. Powell Hegra (Hijr) most likely means "rocky tract" (cf. the term *ḥajar*, "rock, stone" or its variant *ḥajir*, "stony terrain," in Groom, *Arabic Topography and Placenames*, 101). Eric A. Powell, "Petra's Sister City," *Archaeology* 63, no. 4 (2010): 21. As for *muhajirun*, this is the Arabic term for "emigrants" (plural for *muhājir*, "one who migrates," or when applied as a geographical term, per Groom, *Arabic Topography and Placenames*, 203, "a place to which one emigrates"). Mohammed's supporters who joined him in his migration from Mecca to Medina came to be known as the *muhajirun*, and eventually this effectively became a socio-political designation for supporters of Mohammed in the Medina region, and this is why the villages in the region today are called the Muhajirun; it carries no connotations of fertility. See *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., s.v. "Hiḏjra;" *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., s.v. "al-Muhāḏjirūn;" Daniel C. Peterson, *Muhammad: Prophet of God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2007), 91.

74 Hilton and Hilton, *Lehi's Trail*, 39. Notice that this pre-dates Latter-day Saint awareness of the location of the Nihm tribe and region.

75 Cf. Bowen, "Ancient Trade Routes," 39, who describes being able to take the gravel pass/corridor discussed below to go straight from Shabwa to Marib. The route suggested in Hilton and Hilton, *Discovering Lehi*, 131, fig. 10–4; 137, which portrays Lehi going in more-or-less a straight eastward line from Nihm to Marib to Shabwa, appears to approximate this trail.

76 S. Kent Brown, "Refining the Spotlight on Lehi and Sariah," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 15, no. 2 (2006): 55. For descriptions of this route, see Groom, *Frankincense and Myrrh*, 173–85; Groom, "Trade, Incense and Perfume," 90; Bowen, "Ancient Trade Routes," 36–39.

77 Brown, "Refining the Spotlight," 55. Some may not think that this route qualifies as "nearly eastward," due to its twists and turns from southeast to northeast, but Brown argues that Nephi's statement "carries a general sense of direction, allowing adjustments, and represents the locations of Nahom on the west and Bountiful on the east, relative to each other" (p. 54). On access to resources along this trail, see Andrey Korotayev, *Ancient Yemen: Some General Trends of Evolution of the Sabaic Language and Sabaean Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 80n6: "it goes through populated areas with good water, food and forage supplies."

78 For descriptions of this route, see Groom, *Frankincense and Myrrh*, 175; Bowen, "Ancient Trade Routes," 39; Beeston, "Arabian Aromatics Trade," 56.

79 Korotayev explains that this route and the other, more northerly short-cut (discussed next), "pass through the waterless desert regions" and that they were generally used by "only lightly loaded small caravans." Korotayev, *Ancient Yemen*, 80n6.

80 Beeston, "Arabian Aromatics Trade," 56. Cf. Bowen, "Ancient Trade Routes," 42.

81 See A. F. L. Beeston, "Some Observations on Greek and Latin Data Relating to South Arabia," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 42, no. 1 (1979): 10–12; A. F. L. Beeston, *Warfare in Ancient South Arabia (2nd–3rd Centuries A.D.)* (London: Luzac & Co., 1976), 5–7, 45–46 (Ja 643), 51 (Sh 32), 52–53 (Ja 665). See also Groom, *Frankincense and Myrrh*, 75; Nigel Groom, "The Roman Expedition into South Arabia," *Bulletin for the Society of Arabian Studies* 1, no. 1 (1996): 5–6.

82 See B-L Nashq (Demirjian 1). Cf. the sources cited in note 44 above for slightly varying translations.

83 This is contra Korotayev, *Ancient Yemen*, 81n6, who argues that this and the other northerly short-cut only came to more active use in the later part of the first millennium bc. Groom, *Frankincense and Myrrh*, 175, expresses a similar view.

84 See Potter and Wellington, *Lehi in the Wilderness*, 115–19; Aston, *Lehi and Sariah in Arabia*, 95–100, though Aston argues that this was not being actively used as a commercial route in Lehi's time, and thus he argues that the trade routes are irrelevant at this point. Also, contra Brown (see note 77 above), Aston argues for a strictly literal reading of "nearly eastward," arguing that since Nephi earlier mentioned traveling in "nearly a south-southeast direction" (1 Nephi 16:13), "Had the party traveled *east-northeast* or *east-southeast* … Nephi was quite capable of determining that degree of variation and surely would have so stated" (p. 96). I am open to both interpretations and consider it beyond the scope of this paper to adjudicate between these two views. Whatever the route taken to get there, however, all agree that Nahom and Bountiful were in a very nearly due east-west relationship to one another.

85 On this route, see Bowen, "Ancient Trade Routes," 39; Groom, *Frankincense and Myrrh*, 175; Korotayev, *Ancient Yemen*, 80n6. See also Gus W. Van Beek, "Frankincense and Myrrh in Ancient South Arabia," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 78, no. 3 (1958): 145 (citing Bowen). Notice that although Bowen, Korotayev, and Van Beek all describe this route as going westward from Hadramawt (or Shabwa) to Najran, in order to avoid the Empty Quarter this trail had to merge with the main northbound/southbound route roughly 75–85 miles south of Najran (approximately 30–40 miles north of the Jawf), as can be seen in the maps from Groom, Bowen, and Jenner (see note 55 above), used as the basis for map 2 herein. As discussed later, this trail most likely merged with the main trail around Wadi Khabb (see notes 187 and 212 below), but scholars instead use Najran as a reference point most likely due to it being the next major "nodal point" north of the Jawf—hence, scholars will similarly sometimes describe the road to Gerrha as branching off northeastward from Najran, when in reality it most likely split off from the main route several miles to the north of Najran. See Beeston, "Observations," 7; Beeston, "Arabian Aromatics Trade," 53, 54, fig. 2; MacDonald, "Trade Routes and Trade Goods," 334, 349, fig. 1; de Maigret, "Frankincense Road," 318; Groom, *Frankincense and Myrrh*, 196–97.

86 Hilton and Hilton, *Lehi's Trail*, 39, 101–102 (quote on p. 102). The Hiltons' 1976 discussion of the eastward turn creates some

confusion, for two reasons: (1) They place Nahom at al-Qunfudah (or Kunfidah), near the Red Sea coast, and thus *describe* the trail as going "eastward" or "nearly eastward" from Qunfudah to Abha and then to Najran (see pp. 39, 95–101). Yet the general course of the Qunfudah-Abha-Najran trail is clearly *southeastward*—as is accurately portrayed on their map (see pp. 22–23). (2) The point on their map (on pp. 22–23) where the trail clearly veers into a "nearly eastward" direction is at Najran—but this, too, is likely inaccurate, because as noted above in note 85, one *must* proceed along the predominantly southbound trail some 75–85 miles before reaching the southern edge of the Empty Quarter and being able to strike out eastward. Nonetheless, the Hiltons' description of the trail as an "alternate route of the frankincense trail that skirts the southern edge of the great 'Empty Quarter' desert" (p. 101) is nearly identical to the way this route is commonly described in the literature, and the propensity of scholars to describe this route as connecting to Najran (see note 85 above) could explain why the Hiltons mapped it the way that they did (note that they did not travel this portion of the trail themselves). When the Hiltons later updated and revised their work on this part of the trail in Hilton and Hilton, *Discovering Lehi*, 123–38, they still had Lehi taking the Qunfudah-Abha-Najran trail, but no longer described it as running in an "eastward" direction, but rather more accurately said that it "proceeds southeastward" (p. 128). Although they did change their eastward turning point to accommodate the link between Nihm and Nahom further to the south (see note 75 above), I believe evidence discussed later in this paper makes it worth revisiting this northern route as a viable option for Lehi's turn to the east, and likewise believe it is important to note that the Hiltons were the first to consider this possibility—and did so completely independent of any knowledge about the Nihm tribe.

87 For more detailed discussion of these trails, see MacDonald, "Trade Routes and Trade Goods," 333–49; Potts, "Trans-Arabian Routes," 45–56.

88 Also notice that, as can be seen on map 1, or in the sources in note 87 above, these other trails do not generally lead to coastal locations—let alone one that fits Nephi's description of Bountiful. Rather, their primary aim to is to reach Mesopotamia, with only the trail leading to Gerrha perhaps providing an opportunity to reach the coast of the Persian Gulf.

89   Brown, "New Light from Arabia," 89.

90   Aston, "History of NaHoM," 84.

91   See Nibley, *Collected Works,* 5:109–12; Hilton and Hilton, *Lehi's Trail*, 105–16. For discussion of the specific locations *within Dhofar* of the two leading candidates for the place of Bountiful, see Aston, *Lehi and Sariah in Arabia*, 101–55; Potter and Wellington, *Lehi in the Wilderness*, 121–61. Warren P. Aston, "Identifying Our Best Candidate for Nephi's Bountiful," *Journal of the Book of Mormon and Restoration Scripture* 17, no. 1–2 (2008): 58–64; and Warren P. Aston, "Nephi's 'Bountiful': Contrasting Both Candidates," *Interpreter: A Journal of Latter-day Saint Faith and Scholarship* 55 (2023): 219–68, https://journal.interpreterfoundation.org/nephis-bountiful-contrasting-both-candidates/, provide assessments of the two locations. See also note 20 above.

92   On the location of Bountiful, see the sources in notes 20 and 91 above, and consult the various publications by Aston, Brown, Potter and Wellington, and the Hiltons in notes 75–77, 84, and 86 above for details of the full eastward routes they have proposed all the way to Dhofar and their preferred candidates for Bountiful. There is some debate as to the extent overland routes were used to transport frankincense from Dhofar to Shabwa, but all scholars seem to agree that there *are* viable overland routes that connected these areas, which were likely used by at least small caravans, perhaps as feeder routes to the main hubs, or at least for local/regional exchange between Dhofar and eastern Yemen. See Wilfred Thesiger, "A New Journey in Southern Arabia," *The Geographical Journal* 108, nos. 4–6 (1946): 139n1; Van Beek, "Frankincense and Myrrh," 144; Gus W. Van Beek, "Ancient Frankincense-Producing Areas," in Bowen and Albright, *Archaeological Discoveries*, 141–42; Bowen, "Ancient Trade Routes," 40; Groom, *Frankincense and Myrrh*, 111, 165–66; Beeston, "Arabian Aromatics Trade," 59; Juris Zarins, "Atlantis of the Sands," *Archaeology* 50, no. 3 (1997): 51–53; Juris Zarins, *The Land of Incense: Archaeological Work in the Governorate of Dhofar, Sultanate of Oman, 1990–1995* (Sultanate of Oman: Al Nahda Printing Press, 2001), 137; Ronald G. Blom et al., "Southern Arabian Desert Trade Routes, Frankincense, Myrrh, and the Ubar Legend," in *Remote Sensing in Archaeology*, ed. James Wiseman and Farouk El-Baz (New York: Springer, 2007), 71–87. See also

John Noble Wilford, "Ruins in Yemeni Desert Mark Route of Frankincense Trade," *New York Times*, January 28, 1997.

93 Aston, *Lehi and Sariah in Arabia*, 63. Cf. Brown, "Refining the Spotlight," 55.

94 See Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions*, trans. John McHugh (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans; Livonia, MI: Dove, 1997), 56.

95 Elizabeth Bloch-Smith, *Judahite Burial Practices and Beliefs about the Dead* (Sheffield, UK: JSOT Press, 1992), 112.

96 Rachel S. Hallote, *Death, Burial, and Afterlife in the Biblical World: How the Israelites and Their Neighbors Treated the Dead* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2001), 46.

97 See Yosef Tobi, *The Jews of Yemen: Studies in their History and Culture* (Boston: Brill, 1999), 3.

98 Martin Gilbert, *In Ishmael's House: A History of Jews in Muslim Lands* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 6.

99 Bloch-Smith, *Judahite Burial Practices*, 114–15.

100 For example, Gloria London describes an example of a ceremonial center likely used for mortuary rites discovered near a burial at Tall al-ʿUmayri in southern Jordan. Gloria London, "A Ceremonial Center for the Living and the Dead," *Near Eastern Archaeology* 74, no. 4 (2011): 216–25. Ahmad Al-Jallad discusses Safaitic texts which point "towards the presence of ritual installations … at burials for the performance of mortuary rites." Ahmad Al-Jallad, *The Religion and Rituals of the Nomads of Pre-Islamic Arabia: A Reconstruction Based on the Safaitic Inscriptions* (Leiden, NDL: Brill, 2022), 39. L. Y. Rahmani notes that in the early centuries AD, cemeteries near Jerusalem included a "Place of Eulogy" or "Meeting House" used for holding meetings and ceremonies in honor of the dead. L. Y. Rahmani, "Ancient Jerusalem's Funerary Customs and Tombs: Part Three," *The Biblical Archaeologist* 45, no. 1 (Winter 1982): 44.

101 L. Y. Rahmani explains, "Certain ceremonies performed at the funeral, often repeated at specified occasions … were believed to benefit the deceased." L. Y. Rahmani, "Ancient Jerusalem's Funerary Customs and Tombs: Part One," *The Biblical Archaeologist* 44, no. 3 (1981): 172. Although Rahmani is describing practices at

Neolithic Jericho (ca. sixth millennium bc), he goes on to state that at "1ˢᵗ-millennium B.C. Jerusalem, we find a fundamentally similar picture" (p. 173). Matthew J. Suriano provides a detailed discussion of the ongoing "care for the dead" as reflected in the Hebrew Bible, concluding: "Death in the Hebrew Bible was relational. A person's postmortem existence was dependent upon the care provided to the person by the living. The things done by the living for the dead—things like feeding and remembering their names—sustained their postmortem existence." Matthew J. Suriano, *A History of Death in the Hebrew Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 175.

102 London explains that among the Bedouin, "Burial in the vicinity of a venerated individual was one way to guarantee annual visits by family members *and others who passed by or stopped*. … Whether or not they were actually blood-related or part of an extended family, those buried at important shrines were elevated to ancestor status and were enveloped in oral histories and traditions." London, "Ceremonial Center," 216, emphasis added.

103 Bloch-Smith, *Judahite Burial Practices*, 110.

104 See John A. Tvedtnes, "Burial as a Return to the Womb in Ancient Near Eastern Belief," *Newsletter and Proceedings of the S.E.H.A.* 152 (March 1983): 6; David E. Bokovoy and John A. Tvedtnes, *Testaments: Links Between the Book of Mormon and the Hebrew Bible* (Tooele, UT: Heritage Distribution, 2003), 205–206. See also David J. A. Clines, ed., *The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew*, (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 1993–2011), 5:460 (def. 6). Nephi's reference to "hell" (presumably the Hebrew *sheol*, the destination of the departed soul in Hebrew thought) as a "place of filthiness" (1 Nephi 15:34–35; cf. 2 Nephi 28:23) may also reflect this usage. Tvedtnes identifies several additional Book of Mormon passages where "place" is used either in reference to a physical location where people died, or as the destination of the soul in the afterlife. We should keep in mind, however, that "place" is also used in non-mortuary contexts by Nephi (e.g., 1 Nephi 16:13–14; 17:6), so this possibility is not definitive.

105 Nibley, *Collected Works,* 5:79. Nibley is drawing on modern ethnographic studies of the Bedouin, but a recently published Safaitic inscription documents that ancient Arabian nomads would also sometimes carry their dead a considerable distance to

ensure they were buried at a proper mortuary center. See Al-Jallad, *Religion and Rituals*, 35, 118. The inscription (BESS 19 3 b), which describes carrying the deceased "upon the bier (to this place) from the Ḥawrān," was found at a mortuary complex located in Wadi al-Khuḍarī in Jordan, approximately 41 miles east (as the crow flies) of the border of the Ḥawrān region. Depending on where within the Ḥawrān region the funerary party started, the actual distance of travel on the ground was likely much further, making it likely a several-day journey to reach the burial site. The dating of this text is uncertain, but according to Al-Jallad, the Safaitic corpus generally dates to between the third century BC and fourth century AD (see p. 7n28, 13n41).

106 Breton, *Arabia Felix*, 144.

107 Aston and Aston, *In the Footsteps of Lehi*, 19–20; Aston, "History of NaHoM," 83–84; Aston, *Lehi and Sariah in Arabia*, 72–73.

108 See Tara Steimer-Herbet, "Jabal Ruwaik: Megaliths in Yemen," *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies* 29 (1999): 179–82; Tara Steimer-Herbet, "Results of the Excavation in Jabal Jidran (February 1999)," *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies* 31 (2001): 221–26; Frank Braemer et al., "Le bronze ancien du Ramlat as-Sabatayn (Yémen): Deux nécropoles de la première moitié du IIIe millénaire à la bordure du désert—Jebel Jidran et Jebel Ruwaiq," *Paléorient* 27, no. 1 (2001): 21–44.

109 Brown, "Refining the Spotlight," 56. See also S. Kent Brown, "On the Trail with *Journey of Faith*," in *Journey of Faith: From Jerusalem to the Promised Land*, ed. S. Kent Brown and Peter Johnson (Provo, UT: Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship, 2006), 10–12. Dr. Ghaleb worked on the excavations of these tombs in 1994, per Daniel B. McKinlay, "The Brightening Light on the Journey of Lehi and Sariah," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 15, no. 2 (2006): 79 (timeline), 80.

110 Alessandro de Maigret, *Arabia Felix: An Exploration of the Archaeological History of Yemen*, trans. Rebecca Thompson (London: Stacey International, 2009), 329, cf. 338–39 fig. 74. See also Alessandro de Maigret, "New Evidence from the Yemenite 'Turret Graves' for the Problem of the Emergence of the South Arabian States," in *The Indian Ocean in Antiquity*, ed. Julian Reade (New York: Routledge, 1996), 334 fig. 13; Steimer-Herbet, "Excavation in

Jabal Jidran," 222 fig. 1 also shows a cluster of necropolises in the Jawf area.

111 Angela Luppino, "Distribution of Turret Tombs in Yemen," in Alessandro de Maigret and Sabina Antonini, *South Arabian Necropolises: Italian Excavations at Al-Makhdarah and Kharibat al-Ahjur (Republic of Yemen)* (Rome: IsIAO, 2005), 43. These are likely the tombs "located in the hills of Nehem itself" mentioned in Aston and Aston, *In the Footsteps of Lehi*, 19, and marked on the map by Nigel Groom in the same volume (p. 24).

112 See de Maigret, *Arabia Felix*, 327; Luppino, "Distribution of Turret Tombs," 43. Cf. Braemer et al., "Le bronze ancien du Ramlat as-Sabatayn," 24.

113 Luppino, "Distribution of Turret Tombs," 46. The location of Milḥ on Luppino's map (p. 42, fig. 32) is clearly misplaced, since Milḥ is described as being 50 km north of Sanaʿa, and yet it is situated very close to Sanaʿa on the map (closer than Bayt Naʿam, which is only 20 km west of Sanaʿa), and shown *south* of Jebal Riqbān, when it is in fact *north* of this site. Although it is not labeled, Milḥ is almost certainly the burial grounds identified south-southwest of Barāqish in de Maigret, *Arabia Felix*, 338–39 fig. 74; de Maigret, "New Evidence," 334 fig. 13.

114 This map is primarily based on that published in de Maigret, "New Evidence," 334 fig. 13 (cf. de Maigret, *Arabia Felix*, 338–39 fig. 74), supplemented to include markers at Jebal Riqbān in Wadi as-Sirr (see Luppino, "Distribution of Turret Tombs," 46), ath-Thaniyyah (see Luppino, "Distribution of Turret Tombs," 44; Steimer-Herbet, "Excavation in Jabal Jidran," 221), and Wadi Nihm (see note 109 above).

115 See Steimer-Herbet, "Jabal Ruwaik," 181; Steimer-Herbet, "Excavation in Jabal Jidran," 223, 226; Braemer et al., "Le bronze ancien du Ramlat as-Sabatayn," 40–41.

116 See Braemer et al., "Le bronze ancien du Ramlat as-Sabatayn," 42; Burkhard Vogt, "Death and Funerary Practices," in Simpson, *Queen of Sheba*, 180. The first millennium BC/early centuries AD reuse of Bronze Age tombs is also attested in the Hadramawt region. See Rémy Crassard et al., "Reuse of Tombs or Cultural Continuity? The Case of Tower-Tombs in Shabwa Governate (Yemen)," in *Death and Burial in Arabia and Beyond: Multidisciplinary*

Perspectives, ed. Lloyd Weeks (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2010), 173–77; Joy McCorriston et al., "Gazetteer of Small-Scale Monuments in Prehistoric Hadramawt, Yemen: A Radiocarbon Chronology from RASA-AHSD Project Research 1996–2008," *Arabian Archaeology and Epigraphy* 22, no. 1 (2011): 4–5, 11–12, 14, 16–18.

117 Alessandro de Maigret reports first millennium BC (ca. 8th century BC to 1st century AD) dates from turret tombs near Ṣirwāḥ. De Maigret, "The Italian Archaeological Mission: An Appraisal of 25 Years Research (1980–2004)," *YICAR Papers* 2 (2005): 14 (cf. de Maigret, *Arabia Felix*, 333; de Maigret, "New Evidence," 328). See also Alessandro de Maigret, "Excavations of the Turret Tombs of Jabal al-Makhdarah," in Alessandro de Maigret and Sabina Antonini, *South Arabian Necropolises: Italian Excavations at Al-Makhdarah and Kharibat al-Ahjur (Republic of Yemen)* (Rome: IsIAO, 2005), 11–40. Luppino says of the tombs on the southern border of the Jawf: "the state of conservation of the tombs is comparable to that of the turrets in the Ṣirwāḥ area," and thus indicated that "a similar attribution to the 1st millennium B.C. may be postulated for the period of use of these necropolises." Luppino, "Distribution of Turret Tombs," 43.

118 See de Maigret, *Arabia Felix*, 337–40; de Maigret, "Italian Archaeological Mission," 14–16; de Maigret, "Excavations of the Turret Tombs," 38–40; Luppino, "Distribution of Turret Tombs," 48–49; Vogt, "Death and Funerary Practices," 180. See also Steimer-Herbet, "Jabal Ruwaik," 182; Steimer-Herbet, "Excavation in Jabal Jidran," 226. Similar conclusions are reached about these tomb types in the Hadramawt. See T. Steimer-Herbet, G. Davtian, and F. Braemer, "Pastoralists' Tombs and Settlement Patterns in Wādī Washʿah during the Bronze Age (Ḥaḍramawt, Yemen)," *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies* 36 (2006): 7–8.

119 See de Maigret, *Arabia Felix*, 340.

120 De Maigret, "Excavations of the Turret Tombs," 39.

121 De Maigret, *Arabia Felix*, 340.

122 Vogt, "Death and Funerary Practices," 180. De Maigret similarly states: "The distribution of the turret tombs … marks the routes travelled by these nomads. Since this distribution coincides with the itineraries of the famous 'frankincense route', it seems plausible that it was the nomads who conducted the international

commerce which made such a notable contribution to the prosperity of Arabia Felix." De Maigret, "Italian Archaeological Mission," 16. Luppino reasoned that the tombs being "situated on the ancient caravan route … seems to confirm the hypothesis that it was ancient merchants who had these monument[s] built," and they were likely "used as 'a form of sign posting above the caravan routes.'" Luppino, "Distribution of Turret Tombs," 48–9, quoting Brian Doe, "Ghanam al-Kuffar in the Wādī Ahwar," *Aden Antiquities Bulletin, Report for the Years 1963–1964* (1965). Cf. de Maigret, "New Evidence," 335, "evidence … seems to suggest also that those carrying out the burials were travellers."

123 De Maigret, *Arabia Felix*, 337. An example of this comes from excavations of necropolises north of Ṣirwāḥ, where de Maigret found that they intersected with the route connecting from the Jawf to Marib (see map 4) in a way that "reveals an important stretch of the ancient route" previously undetected. See de Maigret, "Excavations of the Turret Tombs," 40.

124 De Maigret, "Excavations of the Turret Tombs," 40.

125 Steimer-Herbet, "Excavation in Jabal Jidran," 221. Cf. Luppino, "Distribution of Turret Tombs," 43: "a group of large necropolises on the south side of the Jawf valley (Jabal Yām e Jabal Silyām), on the eastern edge of its northern flank (Jabal al-Lawdh) and in the desert stretch (Ramlat Sabʿatayn) which, in alignment with the northern boundary of the Jawf, runs eastward towards the city of Shabwat, the ancient capital of Ḥaḍramawt." Luppino again mentions a chain of 3000 tombs "starting from Jabal al-Lawdh and ending to the E in the Jabal ath-Thaniyyah, bound the Ramlat Sabʿatayn desert to the North" (p. 44).

126 Breton, *Arabia Felix*, 144. Somewhat confusingly, after stating that the tombs "run along the principal routes *eastward*," Breton's list of locations actually starts in the east and runs *westward*. Cf. Tara Steimer-Herbet, "Le Mégalithisme au Yémen," *Arabian Humanities: International Journal of Archaeology and Social Sciences in the Arabian Peninsula* 6–7 (1999): 8, https://journals.openedition.org/cy/27: "*Les cartes détaillées de la distribution des tombes circulaires hautes ont mis en évidence la position stratégique de ces nécropoles: le long des pistes à travers le désert.*"

127 Most of these are documented in Mounir Arbach and Jérémie Schiettecatte, *Catalogue des pièces archéologiques et*

épigraphiques du Jawf au musée national de Ṣanʿâʾ (Sanaʿa, YEM: French Center of Archaeology and Social Sciences of Ṣanʿâʾ and UNESCO, 2006), 97–117; Mounir Arbach, Jérémie Schiettecatte, and Ibrâhîm al-Hâdî, *Collection of Funerary Stelae from the Jawf Valley* (Sanaʿa, YEM: UNESCO Social Fund for Development, 2008); Sabina Antonini and Alessio Agostini, *A Minaean Necropolis at Barāqish (Jawf, Republic of Yemen): Preliminary Report of the 2005–2006 Archaeological Campaigns* (Rome: IsIAO, 2010).

128 In addition to the sources cited in note 127 above, see Alessandra Lombardi, *South Arabian Funerary Stelae from the British Museum Collection* (Rome: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 2016), 31–46.

129 Lombardi, *South Arabian Funerary Stelae*, 32; Arbach, Schiettecatte, and al-Hâdî, *Stelae from the Jawf Valley*, 15; Sabina Antonini, "The Archaeological Materials," in Antonini and Agostini, *Minaean Necropolis at Barāqish*, 45.

130 Arbach, Schiettecatte, and al-Hâdî, who push back against the conclusion that these are a foreign population, nonetheless concede: "Even if most of the stelae were produced by the local population, a small number of them could have been made for deceased of different cultural origins (caravan traders, nomads, Mineans established in Northern Arabian, Central or North Arabian populations)." Arbach, Schiettecatte, and al-Hâdî, *Stelae from the Jawf Valley*, 15.

131 See Robin, *Inventaire des inscriptions Sudarabiques*, 1, bk. A: 39–40; Antonini, "Archaeological Materials," 45.

132 See Giovanni Garbini, "Iscrizioni sudarabiche," *Annali* 36 (1976): 308–15; Giovanni Garbini, "Su alcuni tipi di stele e statuette sudarabiche con iscrizione," *Annali* 37 (1977): 375–81. Some of this appears to be due to shared elements of a pan-Arabian culture, rather than influence from North Arabia. See Jérémie Schiettecatte, "The Arabian Iron Age Funerary Stelae and the Issue of Cross-Cultural Contacts," in Weeks, *Death and Burial*, 191–203; Arbach, Schiettecatte, and al-Hâdî, *Stelae from the Jawf Valley*, 17–19, 21. Still, the onomastics manifest many elements that are unique within the current Corpus of South Arabian Inscriptions, and show some affinities to North Arabian names. See Arbach and Schiettecatte, *Catalogue des pièces archéologiques*, 99–100;

Arbach, Schiettecatte, and al-Hâdî, *Stelae from the Jawf Valley*, 13–14; Alessio Agostini, "Funerary Stelae from Barāqish: Study of the Onomastics," in Antonini and Agostini, *Minaean Necropolis at Barāqish*, 49–70.

133 Arbach and Schiettecatte, *Catalogue des pièces archéologiques*, 100, referring to al-Jawf 04.211 (see pp. 107).

134 Agostini, "Study of the Onomastics," 51, 69–70.

135 Antonini, "Archaeological Materials," 45. See also Sabina Antonini and Alessio Agostini, "Excavations of the Italian Archaeological Mission in Yemen: A Minaean Necropolis at Barāqish (Wadi Jawf) and Qatabanian Necropolis of Ḥayd bin ʿAqīl (Wadi Bayḥān)," in Weeks, *Death and Burial*, 217.

136 Antonini, "Archaeological Materials," 45; Antonini and Agostini, "Excavations," 217.

137 Arbach, Schiettecatte, and al-Hâdî, *Stelae from the Jawf Valley*, 72. This is the source for the image in figure 1.

138 See Neal Rappleye, "An Ishmael Buried Near Nahom," *Interpreter: A Journal of Latter-day Saint Faith and Scholarship* 48 (2021): 33–48, https://journal.interpreterfoundation.org/an-ishmael-buried-near-nahom/. Admittedly, there is nothing culturally Israelite or Judahite about this burial stela, but as noted previously a similar stela commemorates a Babylonian woman (al-Jawf 04.211, see note 133 above), and there is nothing culturally Mesopotamian on that stela. Furthermore, according to Hallote, *Death, Burial, and Afterlife*, 17–18, Israelite funerary customs were virtually indistinguishable from their Canaanite neighbors, so it is possible, even likely, that while traveling and living among Arab tribes and caravaneers, the Lehites adopted their funerary practices (see Rappleye, "Ishmael Buried," 37). B. S. J. Isserlin, *The Israelites* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 145, hypothesized that rank and file Israelites were buried with an inscribed stela, and Bloch-Smith, *Judahite Burial Practices*, 113–14, notes that in the Bible funerary markers are associated with memorializing the name of the dead, and so something similar to these funerary stelae may have been familiar to Lehi and his family. Only the anthropomorphic depiction might have been unusual, but since some evidence suggests that the faces were pre-carved onto them (see Arbach, Schiettecatte, and al-Hâdî, *Stelae from the*

Jawf Valley, 6–7), Ishmael's family may not have had the option to get one without a face. Bloch-Smith, *Judahite Burial Practices*, 94–103, documents numerous examples of Judahite burials that included anthropomorphic figurines, so in any case Israelites were evidently comfortable with using anthropomorphic depictions in a funerary context.

139 R. Dennis Cole, "Burial," in *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. David Noel Freedman (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2000), 204.

140 De Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, 57. Philip J. King, *Jeremiah: An Archaeological Companion* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/ John Knox, 1993), 126, likewise assumes that burial typically took place the same day as the death.

141 Aston, *Lehi and Sariah in Arabia*, 63. Hilton and Hilton, *Lehi's Trail*, 92 reasoned that they grew crops and thus stayed for a full growing season, partially based on the interpretation of "space of a time" offered by George Reynolds and Janne M. Sjodahl, *Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1955), 1:167. While I would not rule the possibility out, the evidence for assuming they specifically stayed a full growing season is thin, and it is hard to know how they would have procured arable land for planting crops (even if they were in a fertile region, productive land would not have been unclaimed and loaning it for use presumably would not have been cheap).

142 Aston, *Lehi and Sariah in Arabia*, 63.

143 Alan Goff suggests a connection between the symbolism of the broken bow and the complaints at Nahom. Alan Goff, "A Hermeneutic of Sacred Texts: Historicism, Revisionism, Positivism, and the Bible and Book of Mormon" (master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1989), 92–99.

144 See Potter and Wellington, *Lehi in the Wilderness*, 111–15.

145 Groom, *Frankincense and Myrrh*, 187–88; de Maigret, "Frankincense Road," 317. See also Hermann von Wissmann, *Zur Geschichte und Landeskunde von Alt-Südarabien*, vol. 3 of *Sammlung Eduard Glaser* (Vienna: Der Öserreichischen Akadaemie der Wissenchaften in Wien, 1964), 84–85, map 2; 117–28.

146 Harry St. John Philby, *Sheba's Daughters: Being a Record of Travel in Southern Arabia* (London: Methuen & Co., 1939), 32.

147 Potter and Wellington, *Lehi in the Wilderness*, 95–106, report the discovery and testing of suitable bow wood up in the mountains near Bishah. If one prefers a coastal route, Hilton and Hilton, *Lehi's Trail*, 81–82; Hilton and Hilton, *Discovering Lehi*, 112–13, suggest a point along the coast, further to the north around Jiddah, but do not appear to have verified the existence of suitable bow wood in the area. Nibley says there is bow wood on Jebal Jasum near Mecca or Jebal Azd further south along the coast, but later investigations, as reported by Potter and Wellington, cannot verify this claim. Nibley, *Collected Works,* 5:61, 141n73.

148 See Aston, *Lehi and Sariah in Arabia*, 65; Brown, "Refining the Spotlight," 49–50.

149 Aston and Aston, *In the Footsteps of Lehi*, 21.

150 Aston, Lehi and Sariah in Arabia, 65.

151 King, *Jeremiah*, 140–41; London, "Ceremonial Center," 223–24. See also Susan Ackerman, "A Marzēaḥ in Ezekiel 8:7–13?," *Harvard Theological Review* 82, no. 3 (July 1989): 267–81, esp. 278. Note that while the KJV says "neither shall men tear themselves for them in mourning, to comfort them for the dead," more recent translations have "break bread for the mourner, to offer comfort for the dead" (NRSV) or "offer food to comfort those who mourn for the dead" (NIV). Hence, the bread/food of the feast "comforts" (*nḥm*) and the cup offers "consolation" (*tnḥmṯ*) to the mourners—both terms are from the same Hebrew root, suggesting a new perspective on the mourning daughters of Ishmael lamenting their lack of food and drink at *Nahom*. Goff argues this root (*nḥm*) is being used as a wordplay on *Nahom* in this narrative, and this connection offers a potentially new dimension to that wordplay as being blessed with food in the culmination of the narrative could also signal the reception of comfort/consolation over the passing of Ishmael. Goff, "Hermeneutic of Sacred Texts," 100–107.

152 George Potter and Richard Wellington, *Discovering the Lehi-Nephi Trail* (pre-publication draft, July 2000), 143–52, 159–62, https://archive.bookofmormoncentral.org/content/discovering-lehi-nephi-trail. The argument made in this earlier draft is similar to that which appears, in more abbreviated form, in their published

book, Potter and Wellington, *Lehi in the Wilderness*, 111–15, but in this earlier draft they made a more thorough argument, and reached a somewhat different conclusion about the location of Nahom (see note 153 below).

153 Potter and Wellington, *Lehi-Nephi Trail*, 152. Significantly, they arrived at this conclusion despite the evidence for the Nihm tribe/region further to the south, which they were certainly aware of (see pp. 152–58), and they knew of no evidence *outside* the Book of Mormon to support the conclusion that the Nihm tribe/region extended further to the north in Lehi's day. "We favor the idea that the name Nahom must have been associated with an area north and east of the present day location of the Nahom tribe because the Book of Mormon text demands it," they explained (p. 159). This conclusion, however, was revised in Potter and Wellington, *Lehi in the Wilderness*, 113–15, where, instead, they reason that Lehi's family lost the correct trail while in the area north of the Jawf and thus wound up by-passing the Wadi Jawf cities altogether and arrived at the northern end of Wadi Nihm. This argument feels like they are trying to shoehorn their original argument— which led them to conclude that Nahom was *north* of the Jawf—to fit with the *southern* location of Nihm. I think the argument of their earlier draft was stronger, and is especially intriguing in light of evidence related to the historical geography of the Nihm tribe that I will discuss later in this paper.

154 Tragically, the status of the Nihm district in the Republic of Yemen has been uncertain since civil war broke out in 2014 and Nihm has been ground zero of several conflicts. See Wikipedia, s.v. "Nihm Offensive," last modified July 6, 2023, 20:49, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nihm_Offensive. On the Nihm district in the former Yemen Arab Republic, see Hiroshi Matsumoto, "The History of ʿUzlah and Mikhlāf in North Yemen," *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies* 24 (1994): 176.

155 Marieke Brandt, "Introduction: The Concept of Tribe in the Anthropology of Yemen," in *Tribes in Modern Yemen: An Anthology*, ed. Marieke Brandt (Vienna: Austrian Academy of Sciences Press, 2021), 12.

156 See Marieke Brandt, *Tribes and Politics in Yemen: A History of the Houthi Conflict* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 24–34 for several examples.

157 For instance, Brandt notes that the Rāziḥ tribal territory expands beyond the Rāziḥ district into the neighboring Shidāʾ district. Brandt, *Tribes and Politics in Yemen*, 27–28.

158 Christian Robin, "Nihm: Nubdha fī ʾl-jughrāfiyya al-taʾrīkhiyya wafqᵃⁿ li-muʿṭiyāt al-Hamdānī," in *Al-Hamdani, A Great Yemeni Scholar: Studies on the Occasion of His Millennial Anniversary*, ed. Yusuf Mohammad Abdallah (Sanaʿa, YEM: Sanaʿa University, 1986), 84–87, 98 (map).

159 Ahmed Fakhry, *An Archaeological Journey to Yemen (March–May 1947)*, 3 vols. (Cairo: Government Press, 1952), 1:13.

160 See Philby, *Sheba's Daughters*, 381, 398.

161 See Gee, "Nahom Maps," 40–57; Aston, *Lehi and Sariah in Arabia*, 75–76. Cf. Lindsay, "Dream Map: Part 2," 247–326; Rasmussen, "Evidence, Episode 7," on the claim that Joseph Smith could have used one of these maps to write about Arabia, including Nahom.

162 Robert Wilson, "Al-Hamdānī's Description of Ḥāshid and Bakīl," *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies* 11 (1981): 96.

163 Wilson, "Al-Hamdānī's Description," 97, with reference to Nihm on p. 99. Bakil is a large tribal confederation, of which Nihm is a part. See Brandt, *Tribes and Politics*, 30.

164 Wilson, "Al-Hamdānī's Description," 95–104. Cf. Paul Dresch, *Tribes, Government, and History in Yemen* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 320–29.

165 *"s'étendait au nord du Jawf, entre le jabal al-Lawdh et la wādī Khabb."* Christian Robin, "La pénétration des Arabes momades au Yémen," *Revue du mondes musulmans et de la Méditerranée* 61, no. 1 (1991): 85. For detailed analysis reconstructing these borders from Hamdānī's writings, see Robin, "Nihm," 87–93, 97 (map). For the references to Nihm in Hamdānī's writings, see David Heinrich Müller, ed., *Al-Hamânî's Geographie der arabischen Halbinsel: Nach den Handschriften von Berlin, Constantinopel, London, Paris und Strassburg*, 2 vols. (Leiden, NDL: E. J. Brill, 1884–1891), 1:49.9; 81.4, 8, 11; 83.8–9; 109.26; 110.2, 4; 126.10; 135.19, 22; 167.15, 19–20; 168.10, 11.

166 See the quote and discussion at note 153 above. A review of the full argument laid out in Potter and Wellington, *Lehi-Nephi Trail*,

143–62 reveals no awareness that Hamdani documented this region as part of the Nihm tribal territory.

167 See Werner Caskel, *Ğamharat an-Nasab: Das Genealogische Werk des Hišām Ibn Muhammad al-Kalbī* (Leiden, NDL: E.J. Brill, 1966), 2:46–47; Jawad ʿAli, *Al-Mufassal fi Taʾrikh al-ʿArab qabla al-Islam* (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-ʿIlm lil-Malayin, 1969–1973), 4:187; 7:414. An Arabic transcription and partial English translation of Muhammed's letter can be read in Aston, *Lehi and Sariah in Arabia*, 77.

168 On the borders of the Hamdan in early Islamic sources, see Christian Robin, *Les hautes-terres du Nord-Yemen avant L'Islam*, part 1, *Recherches sur la geographie tribale et religieuse de Ḥawlān Qudāʿa et du pays de Hamdān* (Istanbul: Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut, 1982), 1, 41; Christian Julien Robin, "Matériaux pour une prosopographie de l'Arabie antique: les noblesses sabéenne et ḥimyarite avant et après l'Islam," in *Les préludes de l'Isam: Ruptures et continuités dans les civilisations du Proche-Orient, de l'Afrique orientale, de l'Arabie et de l'Inde à la veille de l'Islam*, ed. Christian Julien Robin and Jérémie Schiettecatte (Rome: De Boccard, 2013), 268, map 4.

169 Marieke Brandt dates the Nihm's affiliation with Hamdan to "as far back as the sixth century." Marieke Brandt, "Heroic History, Disruptive Genealogy: Al-Ḥasan al-Hamdānī and the Historical Formation of the Shākir Tribe (Wāʾilah and Dahm) in al-Jawf, Yemen," *Medieval Worlds: Comparative and Interdisciplinary Studies* 3 (2016): 137.

170 R. B. Serjeant, foreword to *Gazetteer of Historical North-West Yemen in the Islamic Period to 1650*, by Robert T. O. Wilson (New York: Georg Olms Verlag, 1989), xi.

171 Robin, "Matériaux pour une prosopographie de l'Arabie antique," 127.

172 Robin, "Matériaux pour une prosopographie de l'Arabie antique," 127.

173 Brandt, "Concept of Tribe," 12.

174 Brandt, "Concept of Tribe," 12 n.8, citing Warren P. Aston, "The Origins of the Nihm Tribe of Yemen: A Window into Arabia's Past," *Journal of Arabian Studies: Arabia, the Gulf, and the Red Sea* 4, no. 1 (2014): 134–48.

175 Most of the inscriptions in Table 1 can be found using the sigla in the CSAI online database, see http://dasi.cnr.it/. For additional information on specific inscriptions, see the following footnotes: for CIH 673, see note 184; for Haram 16, 17, and 19, see note 184; for DAI Barʾān 1988–2, 1994/5–2, and 1996–1, see notes 180 and 182; for RES 5095, see note 192; for Gl 1637, see note 192; for YM 11748, see note 179; for CIH 969, see note 191; for Ph 160 n 20, see note 188. In addition to these inscriptions, Ir 24 lists banu Nihm (*bn nhmn*) as one of the authors three lineages, and two inscriptions from Baynūn (BynM 217 and 401) also attest to dhu-Nihm (*ḏt-nhmn*) as a family or lineage name. These may also be related to the Nihm tribe's pre-Islamic origins. Corpus of South Arabian Inscriptions (object name Ir 24, http://dasi.cnr.it/index.php?id=dasi_prj_epi&prjId=1&recId=5951); Corpus of South Arabian Inscriptions (object name BynM 217, http://dasi.cnr.it/index.php?id=dasi_prj_epi&prjId=1&recId=478); Corpus of South Arabian Inscriptions (object name BynM 401, http://dasi.cnr.it/index.php?id=dasi_prj_epi&prjId=1&recId=490).

176 See A. F. L. Beeston, M. A. Ghul, W. W. Müller, and J. Ryckmans, *Sabaic Dictionary (English-French-Arabic)* (Sanaʿa, YEM: University of Sanaʿa, 1982), s.v. "NHM;" Joan Copeland Biella, *Dictionary of Old South Arabic: Sabaean Dialect* (Leiden, NDL: Brill, 1982), s.v. "NHM;" Ricks, *Lexicon*, s.v. "NHM." See also Alessio Agostini, "Building Materials in South Arabian Inscriptions: Observations on Some Problems Concerning the Study of Architectural Lexicography," *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies* 40 (2010): 85–98.

177 See Aston, "Origins of the Nihm Tribe," 145–47. A. F. L. Beeston, "Notes on Old South Arabian Lexicography X," *Le Muséon: Revue D'études Orientales* 89 (1976): 412–13, argues that a similar process took place with the related term *grbyn*, which also stems from a root (*grb*) related to stone working. For the interpretation of the *nhmy* or *nhmt* as stoneworkers, see W. W. Müller, "Die Inschriften Khor Rori 1 bis 4," in Hermann von Wissmann, *Das Weihrauchland Saʾkalān, Samārum und Mos-cha* (Vienna: Der Öserreichischen Akadaemie der Wissenchaften, 1977), 54; Robin, *Inventaire des inscriptions Sudarabiques*, 1, bk. A:86; Hani Hayajneh, "Eine Sammlung von fragmentarischen altsüdatabischen inschriften aus dem Jemen," *Arabian Archaeology and Epigraphy* 15, no. 1 (2004): 134; Walter W. Müller, review of *Nihm*, by Serguei Frantsouzoff,

Orientalistische Literaturzeitung: Zeitschrift für die Wissenschaft vom ganzen Orient und seinen Beziehungen zu den angrenzenden Kulturkreisen 112, no. 1 (2017): 59; Norbert Nebes, "Sabäische steinmetze in Äthiopien: Eine altsabäische personenwidmung aus dem grat Beʿal Gibri in Yeha," in *Klänge der archäologie: Festschrift für Ricardo Eichmann*, ed. Claudia Bühring, Margarete van Ess, Iris Gerlach, Arnulf Hausleiter, and Bernd Müller-Neuhof (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2021), 322. Note, however, that there is only one late pre-Islamic text (Ghul-Y 81, in Hayajneh) where the context clearly connects a *nhmy* with stone working, suggesting caution is warranted in adopting this hypothesis.

178 Von Wissmann, *Geschichte und Landeskunde*, 84–85, map 2; 96–97; 294–95, map 17; 307–308.

179 Peter Stein, *Die altsüdarabischen Minuskelinschriften auf Holzstäbchen aus der Bayerischen Staatsbibliothek in München* (Tübingen, Germany: Ernst Wasmuth Verlag, 2010), 1:22n43, 1:23, fig. 1: "*Der geographische Horizont der Minuskelinschriften.*" On YM 11748, see Jacques Ryckmans, Walter W. Müller, and Yusuf M. Abdallah, *Textes du Yémen antique inscrits sur bois* (Leuven, Belgium: Institut Orientaliste, Université Catholique de Louvain, 1994), p. 46–50, pl. 3A–B. Aston reports being shown another palm stalk text, privately owned by the Sheikh of the Nihm tribe, recording a land agreement involving a *nhmyn*. Aston, *Lehi and Sariah in Arabia*, 91n56.

180 Burkhard Vogt, commentary on catalog no. 240, in *Jemen: Kunst und Archäologie im Land der Königin von Sabaʾ*, ed. Wilfried Seipel (Vienna: Kunsthistorisches Museum, 1998), 325, translated into English in Simpson, *Queen of Sheba*, 166. See also Alessandro de Maigret, ed., *Yemen: Nel paese della Regina di Saba* (Rome: Palazzo Respoli Fondazione Memmo, 2000), 345. On the dating of these inscriptions, see Norbert Nebes, "Zur Chronologie der Inschriften aus dem Barʾān-Temple," *Archäologische Berichte aus dem Yemen* 10 (2005): 115, 119.

181 Jan Retsö, *The Arabs in Antiquity: Their History from the Assyrians to the Umayyads* (New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), 536–74; Robin, "Pénétration des Arabes," 78. This region is also referred to as the "land of ʾAmīr" in the inscriptions, referring to the ʾAmīr tribe, the main Arab tribal confederation of pre-Islamic times. It is also possible that the early "Arab" designation for the Nihm is

due to later intermixing of Arabs with the Nihm population (as is the case with some other tribes, discussed in Retsö, p. 563), rather than the Nihm tribe itself having its *origins* as an Arab group.

182 Norbert Nebes, commentary on "Les autels du temple Bar'ân à Ma'rib," in *Yémen: au pays de la reine de Saba'*, ed. Christian Robin and Burkhard Vogt (Paris: Institut du monde arabe and Flammarion, 1997), 144: *"sans doute au nord du Jawf."* The initial announcement of Biʿathtar's altars to a Latter-day Saint audience by S. Kent Brown was dependent upon this French catalog, and thus likewise noted the Nihm tribe was "evidently … in the highlands that rise to the north of Wadi Jawf at that time." Brown, "Place that was Called Nahom," 68. Since that time, however, Brown himself has assumed a location further to the south (see Brown, "New Light from Arabia," 82) and the notion or possibility that the Nihm were north of Jawf has since fallen out of Latter-day Saint discourse on the subject (with the exception of Potter and Wellington's unpublished theory, see notes 153 and 166 above).

183 See Aston, "Origins of the Nihm Tribe," 145–47; Robin, "Nihm," 94–95; Robin, "Pénétration des Arabes," 85. Note that Robin (as well as others) treats "Arab" as an equivalent to "nomad" or "Bedouin," but Retsö, *Arabs in Antiquity*, 562, argues that the notion of the "Arabs" in South Arabian inscriptions as "identical with nomads or bedouin should be discarded." They may have been in areas peripheral to South Arabian society, but they were not necessarily nomadic, and some did participate in the activities of the South Arabian kingdoms.

184 See Giovanni Garbini, "Haram: Una città minea alleata di Saba," *Semitica* 23 (1973): 130 (for Nahmatan); Holger Preißler, "Abhängigkeitsverhältnisse in Südarabien in mittelsabäischer Zeit (1. Jh. v. u. Z. – 4. Jh. u. Z.): Philologish-historische Untersuchungen altsudarabischer Inscriften," in *Islamica: Studies in Memory of Holger Preißler (1943–2006)*, ed. Andreas Christmann and Jan-Peter Hartung (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 304 (for Nihmatān). In addition to Garbini and Preißler, see the discussion and sources cited in Rappleye, "Ishmael Buried," 36, 44nn21–23. On CIH 673, von Wissmann, *Geschichte und Landeskunde*, 307–308, argues that the nearly identical expression *kbr nhmt* referred to Nihm.

185 See Haram 11 and 12, discussed earlier this paper (see note 54).

186 The possibility that the title *kbr nhmtn* referred to the leader of a Haramite trading outpost in Nihm territory was suggested to me by Alessandra Avanzini, email message to author, May 15, 2019.

187 See von Wissmann, *Geschichte und Landeskunde*, 119, 124, 128. The route passing through Khabb from Haram was traveled by Joseph Halévy in the late nineteenth century, taking five and half days to reach Najran using that route. See von Wissmann, *Geschichte und Landeskunde*, 124n154; Philby, *Sheba's Daughters*, 32.

188 "*daß der Gau der Oase Ḫabb und Tieflandes von al-Furuṭ im weiten östlichen Halbkreis um Ḫabb bis zur Sandwüste hin auch schon in vorislamischer Zeit NHM heiß, und sein Stamm NHMYN.*" von Wissmann, *Geschichte und Landeskunde*, 96. The texts with *nhm* are most likely personal names, rather than tribal names. On Ph 160 n 20, see Albert van den Branden, *Les textes Thamoudéens de Philby* (Louvain, Belgium: Publications Universitaires and Institut Orientaliste, 1956), 1:52; Christian Julien Robin et al., *A Stopover in the Steppe: The Rock Carvings of ʿĀn Jamal near Ḥimà (Region of Najrān, Saudi Arabia)* (Paris: Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, 2022), 266 (JML-F-74 = Ph 160 n 20). Robin et al. translate *nhmyn* as "stonecutter" here, but acknowledge that Nihmite is also a possible translation (p. 451). On the possibility that the Nihmites were stoneworkers who formed a tribe, see note 177 above. Hima is to the north of Najran, but some of the inscriptions there (including this one) are South Arabian. The use of the nisba is foreign to the local population, and all the attested nisbas come from South Arabian tribes, likely representing caravaneers from those tribes passing through the region. See Christian Julien Robin and Maria Gorea, "L'alphabet de Ḥimà (Arabie Séodite)," in *Alphabets, Texts and Artifacts in the Ancient Near East: Studies Presented to Benjamin Sass*, ed. Israel Finkelstein, Christian Robin, and Thomas Römer (Paris: Van Dieren Éditeur, 2016), 310–75. The use of an informal graffito script with a South Arabian nisba in this inscription would be consistent with someone living on the periphery of South Arabian society—such as a Nihmite from around Wadi Khabb.

189 Retsö, *Arabs in Antiquity*, 563.

190 Robin, *Inventaire des inscriptions Sudarabiques*, 1, bk. A:39–40. Note, also, the dedicatory inscription from the chief of the ʾAmīr

(the main tribe north of the Jawf) found at Maḥram Bilqīs (near Marib), dated to the sixth century BC. See Corpus of South Arabian Inscriptions (object name Ja 832, http://dasi.cnr.it/index.php?id=dasi_prj_epi&prjId=1&recId=1176).

191   See von Wissmann, *Geschichte und Landeskunde*, 97, who notes that the decorative motif used is characteristic of the highlands south of Jawf. In addition, this inscription also invokes the deity ʿAthtar Shāriqān (*ʿttr s²rqn*), an epithet of ʿAthtar used in the highlands, and attested in several inscriptions specifically from the Nihm region. See Serguei Frantsouzoff, *Inventaire des inscriptions Sudarabiques*, vol. 8, *Nihm*, bk. A, *Les documents* (Paris: Diffusion De Boccard, 2016), 100–101, 106–109, 133–36. For more on the background of CIH 969, see Mayer Lambert, "Les inscriptions Yéménites du musée de Bombay," *Revue d'Assyriologie et d'archéologie orientale* 20 (1923): 80–81; Alessandra Lombardi, "Le stele Sudarabiche denominate *ṢWR*: Monumenti votivi o funerari?," *Egitto e Vicino Oriente* 37 (2014): 149–77, esp. 152, 153, 155, 159, and 171.

192   On RES 5095, see Gonzague Ryckmans, "Inscriptions Sud-arabes. Septième série," *Le Muséon: Revue D'études Orientales* 55 (1942): 125–27; Albert Jamme, "Un désastre Nabatéen devant Nagran," *Cahiers de Byrsa* 6 (1956): 166; Albert Jamme, *Miscellanées d'ancient Arabe IX* (Washington, DC, 1979), 87; Fakhry, *Journey to Yemen*, 1:53; von Wissmann, *Geschichte und Landeskunde*, 97. On Gl 1637, see J. M. Solá Solé, "Inschriften von ed-Duraib, el-Asāhil und einigen anderen Fundorten," in Maria Höfner and J. M. Solá Solé, *Inschriften aus dem Gebiet Zwischen Mārib und dem Ğōf*, vol. 2 of *Sammlung Eduard Glaser* (Vienna: Der Öserreichischen Akadaemie der Wissenchaften in Wien, 1961), 40; Kitchen, *Documentation*, 2:208. According to Frantsouzoff, the Ṣirwāḥ tribe held control or influence over at least part of the Nihm region (south of the Jawf) in the early first millennium BC, based on the reference to Ṣirwāḥ in Nihm/al-ʿAdan 1, dated to the early sixth century BC. Frantsouzoff, *Inventaire des inscriptions Sudarabiques,* 8, bk. A, 22, 66, 76–77.

193   Retsö, *Arabs in Antiquity*, 563–64.

194   On the issue of whether a place name in the Book of Mormon can reasonably be correlated with a tribal entity in Yemen, see Neal Rappleye, "The Place—or the Tribe—Called Nahom? NHM

as Both a Tribal and Geographic Name in Modern and Ancient Yemen," *BYU Studies* 62, no. 2 (2023): 49–72.

195 Dever, *Biblical Writers*, 107.

196 See Potter and Wellington, *Lehi in the Wilderness*, 111–15.

197 See Brown, "Refining the Spotlight," 56; Brown, "On the Trail," 10–12; McKinlay, "Brightening Light," 79, 80.

198 Potter and Wellington, *Lehi in the Wilderness*, 115–19.

199 Alan Verskin, trans., *A Vision of Yemen: The Travels of a European Orientalist and His Native Guide, A Translation of Hayyim Habshush's Travelogue* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2018), 129–130. Incidentally, Habshush reported finding "an ancient graveyard" underground near Barran, a village a short distance northwest of Milḥ (p. 115). I could not find further information on this reported burial area.

200 Aston and Aston, *In the Footsteps of Lehi*, 13. Cf. Aston, *Lehi and Sariah in Arabia*, 63. Although he has put more emphasis on the burials out in the eastern desert in recent publications, this scenario where they go up into the hills bordering the Jawf strikes me as more likely in light of the known historical geography of Nihm.

201 See Antonini, "Archaeological Materials," 43; Antonini and Agostini, "Excavations," 215. It should be noted, however, that very little proper excavation has taken place within the Jawf city-states, so this is an instance where absence of evidence should not be taken as evidence of absence.

202 See Antonini, "Archaeological Materials," 15–45.

203 Aston, *Lehi and Sariah in Arabia*, 94–100.

204 See notes 152, 153, and 166 above. I was unaware of this hypothesis from Potter and Wellington when I first learned that some evidence existed for placing the Nihm in this more northern region and thereby began exploring the possibility that this was where the events at Nahom took place. I had already formulated most of my ideas on this through my own research when I discovered— much to my amazement—that Potter and Wellington had arrived at some similar conclusions, albeit for different reasons, and without the benefit of the sources I had connecting this region to the Nihm—thereby indicating that situating Nahom in this area

can be arrived at based on a reasoned case for where the events of the text best fit within Arabia, *independent* of the location of the Nihm tribe. I have thus sought to appropriately acknowledge their work on this subject, but my own ideas differ from theirs in important respects and the merits of both hypotheses should be given independent consideration by interested researchers.

205 Located just three and a half miles west of the rock outcrop called Ban, this appears to be the well that von Wissmann, *Geschichte und Landeskunde*, 118–19, refers to as Bayn or Du Bayn. Contrary to von Wissmann's theory, however, there is no evidence there was ever an ancient ʾAmīrite temple at this site, and the temple of BYN which he places there was most likely located at Haram. See Robin, *Inventaire des inscriptions Sudarabiques*, 1, bk. A:47–48. Nonetheless, that the ʾAmīrite temple at Haram would have the same name as the well near Wadi Khabb further strengthens the possibility that there was a connection between these two places, as I proposed earlier (see discussion attached to note 187 above). Incidentally, this is also the well where Potter and Wellington, *Lehi-Nephi Trail*, 151, tentatively situate the events of 1 Nephi 16:33–39—something I discovered only *after* I had begun to develop my own theory, based primarily on my reading of von Wissmann and Philby.

206 Philby, *Sheba's Daughters*, 36, 424–25.

207 See von Wissmann, *Geschichte und Landeskunde*, 97, 119. Starting at the mountains, there is considerable fertility all along the wadi as it winds westward for approximately ten miles, from which the large patches of fertility continue for several more miles along both of the major tributaries.

208 Verskin, *Vision of Yemen*, 155.

209 See von Wissmann, *Geschichte und Landeskunde*, 124n154.

210 Steimer-Herbet, "Mégalithisme," nn14, 17. As with the lack of any cemeteries near the Jawf city-states (see note 201 above), this may be due to the general lack of excavation and exploration in the area more so than an actual absence of burials in the region.

211 Philby, *Sheba's Daughters*, 42, 418, 421. I refer to these merely as "tomb-like" because Philby never confirms whether these are tombs or not, and I have found no follow-up work by other scholars discussing these cairns or their function. If they are tombs, some

of them are perfectly located next to where the trail to al-ʿAbr strikes out eastward.

212 On the Hiltons' eastward route, see note 86 above. Philby, *Sheba's Daughters*, 182–83, talks about how before the well at Mushayniqah dried up, one of the Islamic pilgrimage routes from Hadramawt followed this route, going from Tarim to al-ʿAbr to Mushayniqah to Wadi Khabb, and going on from there to Najran, where they crossed the mountains and reached the coast near Qunfudah, and then continued on to Mecca. This replicates a significant portion of the original route proposed by the Hiltons, and confirms that despite how they represented it on maps, it came down *south* from Najran to Khabb before truly turning east.

213 On these two Bountiful candidates, see notes 20 and 91 above.

214 Not counting Aston or Potter, among scholars or researchers who have published an opinion, the majority favor Khor Kharfot over Khor Rori. See, for example, Peterson, "Not So Easily Dismissed," xxvi; Chadwick, "Archaeologist's View," 76; Lindsay, "Dream Map: Part 1," 200–207; Brant A. Gardner, *Second Witness: Analytical and Contextual Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, vol. 1, *First Nephi* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2008), 295–96; David A. LeFevre, "We Did Again Take Our Journey," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 15, no. 2 (2006): 65; Noel B. Reynolds, "Lehi's Arabian Journey Updated," in *Book of Mormon Authorship Revisited: The Evidence for Ancient Origins*, ed. Noel B. Reynolds (Provo, UT: FARMS, 1997), 382–87; Lundquist, "Biblical Seafaring," 174. Note, however, most of these scholars to do not decisively rule Khor Rori out, and Gardner, *Traditions of the Fathers*, 110–12, expresses a more neutral opinion than his earlier assessment. To my knowledge, Terry Ball and independent researcher Alan Miner are the only scholars/researchers, besides Potter and his co-authors, who favor Khor Rori. See Terry Ball, "Letter to the Editor," *Journal of Book of Mormon and Other Restoration Scripture* 18, no. 1 (2009): 56–57, and Alan Miner, personal conversations on multiple dates.

215 Aston, "Best Candidate," 59, 63n2, addresses a similar misconception.

216 Christensen, "Place Called Nahom," 73.

217 On the issues and inaccuracies in the Hiltons mapping of this route, see notes 86 and 212 above.

218 Nibley, *Collected Works,* 5:79; Hilton and Hilton, *Lehi's Trail*, 27.

219 Nibley, *Approach to the Book of Mormon*, 63; Hilton and Hilton, *Lehi's Trail*, 39.

220 Nibley, *Collected Works,* 5:79.

221 Nibley, *Collected Works,* 5:109–12; Hilton and Hilton, *Lehi's Trail*, 105–16.

222 Most of this area is part of what is today known as the al-Jawf Governate, and Brandt described the Nihm's territory from Hamdani's time as "areas in central and southern al-Jawf." Brandt, "Heroic History," 127.

223 Dever, *Biblical Writers*, 107.

224 Dever, *Biblical Writers*, 108.

225 Dever, *Biblical Writers*, 108.