

**Foundation for
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JES-BM

The Jerusalem Scene

PRELIMINARY REPORT

Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν
ἁ ἄλογος. οὗτος
αἰ χωρὶς αὐτοῦ
ἦν ἡν τὸ φῶς

σκοτία αὐτὸ οἰ
θεοῦ, ὄνομα αὐτῷ Ἰωάννης. οὗτος ἦλθεν εἰς μαρτυρίαν, ἵνα μαρτυρή
εἰ τοῦ φωτός, ἵνα πάντες πιστεύσωσι δι' αὐτοῦ. οὐκ ἦν ἐκεῖνος

θεόν, καὶ Θεὸς
δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο
τῷ ζωῇ ἦν, κα
σκοτία φαίνει, κ

εσταλμένος πα
εἰς μαρτυρίαν, ἵνα μαρτυρή
εἰ τοῦ φωτός, ἵνα πάντες πιστεύσωσι δι' αὐτοῦ. οὐκ ἦν ἐκεῖνος

The Jerusalem Scene

The Lachish Letters discovered in 1934 are "the first real personal documents in pre-exilic Hebrew found in Palestine." (Torczyner, p. 115). They also give us the first real insight into the manner in which such personal documents were composed, stored, exchanged, and finally incorporated into the scriptural record. Their authors display an obsessive concern with writing and recording which was not fully appreciated until the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Four of the eighteen surviving letters contain the same material but not in identical copies; their contents vary as writers collect their material "according to the size of the sherd used." (118) The contents of important letters were duly abridged and transferred to official archives. (80) Letters exchanged among religious leaders and their followers were used for reference and even filtered down into our scriptures, for, the Lachish Letters contain "some of the actual documents" on which Jeremiah based his account of his fellow prophet Uriah. (13)

(1 Ne.)

Turning to the Book of Mormon, we find the same obsessive concern with writing and recording. We learn that Jeremiah's own words were put into writing from time to time and that the process was still going on at the time Lehi's family left Jerusalem (5:13); Lehi himself kept a written account of things as they happen including even his dreams and visions (1:16), which things his son Nephi faithfully transmits to the record but only after he has abridged them and added his own account. This process of transmitting, abridging, compiling, and commenting, goes on throughout the Book of Mormon.

Until the Lachish discovery in 1934-35, it was thought that the Hebrew alphabet of those times was invented for making inscriptions, but suddenly it became clear that "the ancient Jews could write quickly and boldly in an artistic, flowing hand . . ." (15). This addiction to writing is as apparent in the Book of Mormon as is the resentment which writers had, and often expressed, against the tough and exasperating business of scratching characters on metal plates.

Torczyner has a hard time explaining why the writer of the Lachish Letter No. 4 describes himself as writing 'al ha-DLT, since DLT "originally meant (door-board), then board in general . . ." (80). He is puzzled why such a word should have been used to indicate "the sheet or page of papyrus . . ." The only occurrence of the word in such a possible context in the Old Testament expressly tells us that Jehdi after reading three or four delatoth of a document threw the roll into the fire. (Jer. 36:23) The DLT here are not the roll, as Torczyner assumes, but sections of it. He concluded that DLT must refer to a sheet of papyrus because "it is not likely that a longer letter should be written on a door-board or upon an ostrakon." (80) But the Lachish Letters were written on ostraca, and a DLT need be neither a door-board nor papyrus; Torczyner suggest the root meaning to be "to lock or shut," Accad. edelu, from wdl or ydl; the noun being a collective suggests things locked, hinged, or joined together. It is now well enough known that the Codex form of the book was very ancient being composed of "pages" of wood, ivory, or metal.

A DLT is a tablet or plate and not a page; how it can belong to a roll became clear with the discovery of the Copper Scroll from Qumran, in which separate plates of copper alloy were riveted together to form a continuous strip. The people of Lehi wrote on thin sheets of bronze and, in the New World, gold, whether in codices or rolls, for the same reason the writer of the Copper Scroll did, to assure the survival of particularly precious records,

and they hated doing it. It was not their normal way of writing: "the scribe (of the Copper Scroll), not without reason, appears to have tired toward the end, and the last lines of writing are badly formed and rather small. One can almost hear his sigh of relief as he punched out the last two words in the middle of the final line."²

Compare this with the sighs of Nephi's younger brother:

. . . and I cannot write but little of my words, because of the difficulty of engraving our words upon plates. . . . But whatsoever things we write upon anything save it be upon plates must perish and vanish away; but we can write a few words upon plates . . . and we labor diligently to engraven these words upon plates, hoping that our beloved children will receive the . . . (Jac. 4:1-3; Cf. Mor. 9:33)

How cleverly the author of the Book of Mormon thinks all these things through, never stepping into a hole!

The Lachish Letters were written on potsherds, according to Torczyner, only because of a serious shortage of papyrus, the normal writing material. But with the use of papyrus went also the rest of the Egyptian scribal equipment. "The new writing material first appears under Tiglath-Pileser III," writes A. T. Olmstead, "and hereafter every expedition has two scribes, the chief with his stylus and tablets, his assistant with a papyrus roll or parchment and Egyptian pen."³ The Egyptian scribe was needed for the same reason "the court found it necessary to possess an Aramaic scribe," namely to deal with records in the foreign language. We must assume that royal records were kept in Egyptian after the manner in which the kings of Egypt had kept theirs for many centuries.⁴ In Lehi's day a new type of Egyptian writing, Demotic, was coming to its own, as much quicker and briefer than Hieratic as Hieratic was than hieroglyphic. This is perhaps what Lehi would have used. Only a thousand years later do we learn of "characters which are called among us the reformed Egyptian," something not recognizable to any Egyptologist today, altered beyond recognition even as "Hebrew has been altered by us also . . ."

(Mormon 9:32-33) It should be noted however, that the only known example of supposed Nephite writing, the so-called "Anthon Transcript", is invariably compared by specialist with Meroitic writing--another type of "Reformed Egyptian" developed at the same time as the Nephite script by people also fleeing from destroyers of Jerusalem, who in a short time transformed Demotic or Hieratic into their own new and mysterious writing. All this is worthy of note because Torczyner makes much of Egyptian writing materials and Egyptian influence in the Lachish scene and some of the severest criticism of the Book of Mormon has been directed against Nephi's opening statement that his record combines "the learning of the Jews and the language of the Egyptians." (1 Ne. 1:2)

The dates post and ante quem of the Lachish Letters are neatly bracketed by two layers of ashes, dating c. 597 and 588 B.C., between which they were found. Letter No. IV "can date only a few years before the fall of Lachish" while others "possibly cover a period of a few years." (18) The king referred to in the Letters "should be Jehoiakim, although it could be his last year." (68). Yet the climactic letters deal "with matters fitting only for the reign of Zedekiah"; some confusion is caused by the commonly recognized anomaly that the Biblical copyists has "erroniously put in Jehoiakim's name instead of Zedekiah's" in Jeremiah 27:1-3. (69) At any rate, "the background of our ostraca actually happened in the last year of the reign of Zedekiah." (69) This tight squeeze between two reigns in the Lachish Letters is of interest to the Book of Mormon student who is told that Lehi's vision (not necessarily his migration) occurred "in the commencement of the first year of the reign of Zedekiah." (1:4) After that vision in the desert Lehi spent some time at Jerusalem entering into the activity of the other prophets and getting himself into the same trouble: "In that same year there came many prophets prophesying

among the people that they must repent or that the great city of Jerusalem must be destroyed." (1:4) This was the very message ("not good!") that "caused the hands to sink even the hands of (those in) the city and the country" according to the Lachish Letters. (VI, 6-7)

The proper names in the Lachish Letters and the Book of Mormon belong to one particular period in Jewish history--the same period. Seven of the nine proper names in Letter No. I end in -Yahu (Jehovah), and in all the letters there are no Baal names and no El names--the lack of which was once thought to be a serious defect in the Book of Mormon. Most important Torczyner finds to be "the spelling of the names compounded with -iah." the -Yahu endings also about a century later among the Jews in Elephantine, who were "perhaps the descendants of those Jews who after the fall of the Judaeen kingdom went down to Egypt, taking with them the prophet Jeremiah." (27) Here we have another control over the Lehi story. For the discovery of the Elephantine documents in 1925 showed that colonies of Jews actually did flee to the desert in the manner of Lehi, during his lifetime, and for the same reasons; arriving in their new home far up the Nile, they proceeded to build a replica of Solomon's Temple, exactly as Lehi did upon landing in the New World. Both of these oddities, and especially the latter, were once considered damning refutations of the Book of Mormon. The -yahu endings of personal names abound at Elephantine, but in a more abbreviated form, -iah, than at Lachish (-yahu), a hundred years earlier. Both forms are found in the Book of Mormon, e.g. the Lachish name Mattanyahu appears at Elephantine as Mtn, and in the Book of Mormon both as Mathonihah and Mathoni. Of the two names in Letter No. I not ending in -yahu, the one Tb-Shim (which Torczyner renders Tobshillem) suggest Book of Mormon Shilom and Shelem, while the other Hgb (T. Hagab) resembles Book of Mormon Hagoth. The Book of Mormon has both long and short forms in

the names Amalickiah, Amaleki and Amlici, Cf. Elephantine MLKih. (24) The Assyrian inscriptions show that the final "h" was dropped in the Hebrew spelling after Lehi left, when the Jews "lost their pronunciation of the consonant "H" under the influence of the Babylonian language." (25)

More significant are the indications that the -Yahu names are "certainly a token of a changed inner-Judaeen relationship to Yahwh. Such reformations, Torczyner suggests, "in some way parallel . . . the first reformation by Moses"; what we have in the predominance of Yahu names reflects "the act of general reformation inaugurated by King Josiah (Yoshiahu) (2 Kings 22:23)." (29) Another interesting coincidence: A Book of Mormon king 450 years after Lehi undertook a general reformation of the national constitution and revival of the religious life of the people. He and his brothers had been stringently trained by their father, King Benjamin, "in all the language of his fathers that thereby they might become men of understanding," familiar with the writings of the ancient prophets and also "concerning the records which were engraven on the plates of brass," without which records, he tells them, even our fathers would have dwindled in unbelief. . . ." "And now my sons I would that ye should remember to search them diligently that ye may profit there by . . ." etc. (Mosiah 1) Fittingly, this king named his eldest son, the great reforming king, Mosiah, suggesting both the early reform of Moses and its later imitation by Josiah. This would be altogether too much of a coincidence were it not that the book of Mosiah supplies the information that fully accounts for the resemblances when it explains just how Nephite names and customs were preserved intact in the transplanting of cultures from the Old World to the New. Lehi's ties to the Yahvist tradition are reflected in the only female name given in his history, that of his wife, Sariah; a special but not unparalleled example since in the normal female -iah names from Elephantine the Yahu element usually comes first. (T. 28)

The action of the Lachish Letters centers around the activities of the prophets in the land who are causing grave concern to the government. On

such a note the Book of Mormon opens: ". . . and in that same year there came many prophets, prophesying unto the people that they must repent, or the great city of Jerusalem must be destroyed." (1:4) The identity of all but two of these prophets has now been lost, but it is clear from both the Lachish Letters and the Book of Mormon that there were more of them. "It must certainly be admitted," writes Torczyner, that there was more than one prophet at this time." (65) The central figure is of course Jeremiah, but it is only by chance that we know even about him, for he is not even mentioned in the Book of Kings--it is the prophetess Huldah, "an otherwise quite unknown figure," whom Josiah consults. (7) Jeremiah in turn happens to mention the prophet Uriah "in only a few passages", and his name turns up nowhere else, though Uriah's "religious influence must have been of great extent and long standing!" (70) Uriah "prophesied against this city according to the words of Jeremiah." (Jer. 26:4) The words of such prophets were dangerously undermining morale both of the military and the people. Lachish Letter VI, 5-6: "Behold the words of the . . . are not good, to weaken the hands . . . then hands of the country and the city." (64) This passage is cited intact by Jeremiah 38:4.

And so to the Book of Mormon. Lehi was one of those distressed and discouraged by the preaching of the "many prophets." As he went forth," apparently on a business journey, for he was a rich merchant, he "prayed unto the Lord, yea even with all his heart, in behalf of his people." (1:5) In reply to his prayer he received a vision which sent him out to join the prophets: "And my father . . . went forth among the people, and began to prophesy and to declare unto them. . . ." (1:18) He indeed was teaching "in the spirit of Jeremiah," for Nephi explicitly links him to the prophet's vicissitudes: ". . . for behold they have rejected the prophets, and Jeremiah have they cast into prison. And they have sought to take away the life of my father, insomuch that they have driven him out of the land." (1 Ne. 7:14)

Torczyner suggests that Uriah "may have hidden in the hills of western Judah for a long time" (70), and we find Lehi doing the same thing. Indeed, as Torczyner points out, what we are dealing with here is a type of thing, Uriah's story being told "only as parallel to Jeremiah's not less dangerous position: . . ." (69) To their number we may add Lehi, whose story has every mark of authenticity.

As the Book of Mormon leads us into a world of Rekhabites and sectaries of the desert so the Lachish Letters give us "for the first time . . . authentic and intimate reports from Jews faithfully following their God (and) about their inner political and religious struggle. . . ." Torczyner sees in the -Yahu names a sure indication of "a loyal reformist faction which included even the highest military officers--" Ya-ush and his men are the prophet's followers (66) even though they are necessarily the king's defenders. We see Uriah hiding out in the hills "where he had friends and followers, for a long time." (70) The Dead Sea Scrolls have put flesh on these sectarian bones showing how from the earliest times communities of the faithful would withdraw from Jerusalem to bide their time in the wilderness. Lehi's activities were not confined to the city, he was in the desert when he received the manifestation that sent him hurrying back to his house in Jerusalem, from which later he "went forth

from among the people" as a prophet. (1:18) Badly received, he was warned in a dream that his life was in danger (2:1) and ordered to go into the wilderness and leave all his worldly things behind. (2:2) It was the idea behind the Rekhabitas (Jer. 35) and the people of Qumran: Nephi, inviting a new recruit to come and "have place with us," points out to him that only so could he "be a free man like unto us," and that to "go down into the wilderness" was the only way to "be diligent in keeping the commandments of the Lord." (1 Ne. 4:33-34) So Zoram duly takes an oath and joins the pious company. (4:35)

One important aspect of Lehi's account has surfaced very recently in the light of what Klaus Koch calls the rediscovery of Apocalyptic. It seems that almost every ancient patriarch, prophet and apostle is credited with having left behind a "Testament" or "Apocalypse" bearing his name. Some of these stories are very old, and a consistent pattern emerges from the telling of them, widely scattered though they are in space and time. Briefly summed up, the general plot is this: a righteous man, sorely distressed by the depravity of the world or of Israel, prays fervidly for light and knowledge, and in due time receives a divine manifestation, when a heavenly messenger comes to teach him and takes him on a celestial journey, climaxing in a theophany, after which he returns to earth and reports his experience to family and friends--often this is just before he dies, bestowing a patriarchal blessing upon his sons. Often also he goes forth to preach to the people, who reject his message with scorn, whereupon he departs into the wilderness, with his faithful followers to establish a more righteous if tentative order of things in the desert, a sort of "church of anticipation." All of which things Lehi also does in due and proper order; the first part of Nephi's writing, he says, is but an abridgement of his father's record, which may properly be called the Testament or Apocalypse of Lehi.

The Rekhabite ideal of the desert sectaries was in full flower in Lehi's day, as many other sources now indicate, is clear from the accusation that Nephi's elder brothers brought against him, that he was planning to set up such a society with himself as "our ruler and our teacher . . ." leading them by his false claims of prophetic inspiration to believe "that the Lord has talked with him . . . thinking, perhaps, that he may lead us away into some strange wilderness (some unoccupied tract) and after he has led us away, he has thought to make himself a king and a ruler over us . . ." Plainly they know about that sort of thing. (16:38) When after eight years of wandering, the party was commanded to build a ship and sail on the waters they were all at their wit's end, because they had never dreamed of such a thing as a promised land beyond the sea; theirs was strictly the tradition of the desert sectaries, "a lonesome and solemn people," as Nephi's younger brother put it.

Against the larger background of national calamity which is never lost from view, both the Lachish Letters and the Lehi story are concerned with relatively narrow circles of friends and relations. Clandestine flights from the city in both stories involve friends and families; Nephi and his brethren go back to town to persuade Ishmael and his family to join them in flight. (7:2-5) But soon the group begins to split up as Laman, Lemuel, and the two daughters of Ishmael, whom they have married, as well as two of Ishmael's sons vote to return to Jerusalem. (7:6, 7) They find the whole idea of giving up their opulent life-style and renouncing their fashionable friends quite unacceptable:

Behold, these many years we have suffered in the wilderness, which time we might have enjoyed our possessions and . . . been happy. We know that the people . . . of Jerusalem were a righteous people; for they kept the statutes and judgments of the Lord . . . they are a righteous people; and our father hath judged them . . . (1 Ne. 17: 21-22)

They are especially disgruntled at having to defer to a quality in their father for which the Lachish Letters have a particular expression, characterizing the man of prophetic calling as ha-piqqeah, which Torczyner finds to mean "the open-eyed or visionary man," (53) "the seer", "the man whose eyes God has opened to see", (65) i.e. things that other people do not see. So in the Book of Mormon:

. . . they did murmur in many things against their father, because he was a visionary man, and had led them out of the land of Jerusalem, to leave the land of their inheritance, and their gold, and their silver, and their precious things. And this they said he had done because of the foolish imaginations of his heart. (2:11)

They make fun of their father for being a piqqeah, a "visionary man." Torczyner explains the word by referring to the instance in 2 Kings 6:20, where Elisha asks the Lord to open the eyes of certain ordinary men so they could see realities, horses and chariots, which otherwise only he could see. In the same way the uncooperative brothers of Nephi hiding out with him in a cave in the Judaeian wilderness had their eyes opened so they could see "an angel of the Lord" while he was reprimanding them. (1 Ne. 3:29, 7:10)

If the Lachish Letters reflect "the mind, the struggles, sorrows, and feelings of ancient Judah in the last days of the Kingdom" (18), so to an even greater extent does the Book of Nephi, where families split along political lines in a tragic conflict of loyalties. And if the situation of Uriah parallels that of Jeremiah, as Torczyner points out, even more closely does it parallel that of Lehi when we learn from the Letters of "a warning from the prophet to one of his friends, who is apparently in the same danger as he, himself. It is, therefore, a prophet fleeing from his home and his friends, a prophet wanted by the military authorities." (64)

The leading character of the Letters is a high military officer suspected by one party of treachery to the king in aiding the prophet, and by the other

of betraying the prophet by revealing the contents of his warning letter to the king. (113) Likewise his superior officer Yaush, who has been ordered to investigate him "appears to be on the best of terms with the king. But still both men respect the prophet and believe in him in spite of the king's attitude towards him, and their hearts ache that they should be responsible for his destruction." (113) The same tragic confusion as in the Lehi story. This is borne out in the relationship of the actors in both dramas to the Egyptians. Though Lehi supports the anti-Egyptian party, his sons have Egyptian names and Egyptian educations and they keep their records after the Egyptian manner. Moreover, the party flees toward Egyptian territory. The same anomaly confronts us in the Lachish Letters, which tell of a certain general sent down to Egypt to fetch a prophet back to Jerusalem for execution. (63) But why on earth, asks Torczyner, would the good man flee to Egypt of all places, when his crime was supporting Jeremiah in calling "for peace with Babylonia?" Our informant finds "this astonishing fact" that he fled towards Egypt instead of Babylonia, quite inexplicable. (T. 67)

As the main actors in the Lachish drama are high military officers, so also in the Book of Mormon the key figure in the Jerusalem episode is another high military officer. This was Laban, whose official position resembles that of Yaush in Lachish very closely. "Thus Yaush must be the military governor of Lachish . . . this greatest fortress of Judah . . ." (87 LL 4); along with that " . . . 'Lord Yaush' may have been Governor of the city, whose archives would probably have been housed in the region of the palace-fort or keep, or perhaps he was only the senior military officer." (12) All of which applies with equal force to Laban, the military governor of Jerusalem, "a mighty man who commands fifty", in his garrison (1 Ne. 3:31) and "his tens of thousands" in the field." (4:1) Where is the king in all this? In both stories he appears as a rather weak character in the background. As for Yaush "the king

appeals to him in everything concerning this part of the country" (118), that is the whole western part of the kingdom (87), and Laban would have enjoyed the same preference at Jerusalem. Laban was of noble descent, of the same ancestry as Lehi himself and of a more direct line to the patriarch Joseph. For the genealogy was kept in his family (5:16) and as in the case of Yaush at Lachish, the archives were housed at his official residence. When Lehi's sons went to get the letters from him they talked with him intimately "as he sat in his house," and proposed buying the plates. He refused giving up the "brass plates" and so they decided to bribe him with what was left of their own family treasures. They knew their man, but not quite well enough, for he kept the treasure but chased them out of the house and sent his servants after them to get rid of them. (3:24) The young men escaped and hid out in a cave, but the cat was out of the bag--Lehi's flight was not known to Laban and Uriah's was to Yaush, and Laban's troops would soon be on the trail of the refugees as Yaush's were already in pursuit of Uriah. Lehi was spared, however, because Laban never got into action on the case. That very night Nephi found him dead drunk in a street near his house and dispatched him with his own sword. (4:5) Going toward the house, he met Laban's servant and got the keys to the treasury and archives from him by a ruse. In the dark the man thought that Nephi was Laban, for he was expecting his boss to be returning very late (and drunk) from an emergency council of "the elders of the Jews . . . Laban had been out by night among them." (4:22) There is a world of inference in this--secret emergency sessions, tension, danger, and intrigue--as there is in Lachish Letter XVIII which must be "forwarded from Yaush to the King through the village of Qiryat Ye'arim by night." (183) Lehi's boys took Laban's servant along with them "that the Jews might not know concerning our flight . . . lest they should pursue us and

destroy us." (4:35) Even so we see in the Lachish Letters "a prophet fleeing from his home and friends, a prophet wanted by the military authorities."

(LL 64) Zoram was carried along by force, but was persuaded that it was in his own interest to join a pious escape-troup in the desert, and duly exchanged oaths with his captors, his conscience not overly bothered by the change of sides: displaying the same hesitant spirit as the various partisans in the Lachish Letters. The military correspondence of the Lachish Letters with its grim suspicions of disloyalty and double-dealing, fervid denials, charges, investigations, and reports, reminds one of the much later Bar Kokhba letters (discovered in 1966), which in turn present truly astonishing parallels to some of the military correspondence in the Book of Mormon..

One peculiar situation in the Lachish Letters casts a good deal of light on an equally peculiar and highly significant episode in the Book of Mormon. "The prophet's warning letter . . . could have been sent while the prophet was still near his home town, through a little boy, most suited as an unsuspected messenger," in view of the fact that little boys performed such offices in the time of David (2 Sam. 15:36; 17:17-21), and that "such small boys are used also today in Palestine, often for quite responsible missions. . . ." (68) What suggests the idea to Torczyner is the mention of one "Nedabياهو the NKD of the King" who delivered a letter from the prophet to one SHLM warning him of the danger he was in (LL III, 19-21) What, the king's own grandson bearing letters for the prophet? There is a Nedabiah, grandson of King Jehoiakim in I Chron. 3:18, and Torczyner finds it "possible and even probable" that he is the very one named here. The exact meaning of NKD is "unfortunately . . . not definitely established" so that the king referred to may be "either Jehoiakim . . . or, less likely, Jeconiah, or Zedekiah. . . ." (61) It is not a direct line of descent, Jeconiah being not the father but the nephew of Zedekiah; but

since most scholars maintain, along with the LXX, that NKD simply means offspring or descendant, "it would be quite possible . . . to call somebody the 'grandson' [NKD] of his grandfather's brother" i.e. in this case of Zedekiah. ". . . the Hebrew necedh may certainly be used at least for grandnephew as well as for grandson." (61) This Nedebiah, whose title "may equally well mean the grandson of Jehoiakim as the grandnephew of Zedekiah," was quite young, "one would prefer the age of 10-13 to that of 5 years" (69), carrying dangerous letters between the towns and camps for the prophet's people. Since he was carrying letters of warning to people ready to decamp to save their lives at a moment's notice, he could surely count on escaping with them. When news reached them that the royal family would be wiped out only one course of action was open to the child (as survivor) and his friends. Where would they go? Torczyner suggests "the date of 590-588," for this episode. According to the Book of Mormon, 11 years after Lehi left Jerusalem, i.e. in 589, a company escaped from the land of Jerusalem bearing with them the youngest son of Zedekiah, the only member of the family not put to death when Jerusalem was taken. From the descendants of these people, arrived in the New World, the Nephites learned that Jerusalem actually did fall as prophesied: ". . . will ye dispute that Jerusalem was destroyed? Will ye say that the sons of Zedekiah were not slain all except it were Mulek? Yea, do ye not behold that the seed of Zedekiah are with us, and that they were driven out of the land of Jerusalem?" (Hel. 8:21). By an interesting coincidence the LXX translates the word NKD by which Nedabyahu is designated in Hebrew, simply as "seed" (61), as apparently does the Book of Mormon: "the seed of Zedekiah". The land north where they settled in the New World "was called Mulek which was after the son of Zedekiah, for the Lord did bring Mulek into the land north. . . ." (Hel. 3:10) Nowhere are we told that Mulek was the leader of the company, and indeed at his age

that would be unthinkable. But as the sole survivor of the royal family and heir presumptive to the throne he was certainly the most important person in the company, a source of legitimate pride to the group. The name tells everything--"Mulek" is not found anywhere in the Bible, but any student of Semitic languages will instantly recognize it as the best-known form of diminutive or caritative, a term of affection and endearment meaning "little King." What could they call the uncrowned child, last of his line, but their Little King? And what could they call themselves but Mulekiyah or Mulekites?

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