

An Ancient Arabian Language Discovered In America?

By George Potter

In our book [*Lehi in Wilderness*](#), in our films [*Discovering the Land of Bountiful*](#), and in [*Discovering Nephi's Harbor*](#), Richard Wellington, Timothy Sedor, and I proposed the theory that Nephi built his ship at the ancient Frankincense harbor of Khor Rori on the coastal plain of Dhofar in Oman. Furthermore, we have suggested that the core of Nephi's crew were experienced Omani sailors.

Our theory was in response to the real obstacles Nephi faced in sailing a great ship to the New World. It must be remembered that the ancient Israelites were technically landlocked. They had no ocean-going maritime lore. Without availing himself of the expertise of the Omani, how did Nephi acquire the necessary maritime experience to sail his ship? Furthermore, how did those aboard his ship obtain the ability to man a ship every hour of the day and night? Without a comprehensive working knowledge of sailing, Nephi's ship would not have made it out of its harbor, let alone successfully complete passages of two great oceans.

Besides the abundant evidence we found at Khor Rori to support our theory, there is now possible linguistic and archaeological evidence in America that supports our proposal! In a documentary film "Old News" by TransVision Corp., (see www.archaeoastronomy.com/oldnews.shtml, and at <http://onter.net/scripts.html> see film transcript pages 26-27), you can find an interesting interview with Ali Ahmed Ali Ash-Shahri, who grew up at the harbor of Khor Rori, the very place where we believe Nephi built his ship. Ali is the author of the book *Dhofar: Its Ancient Inscriptions and Writings and the Language of AAD*. Ali has spent decades documenting the rock art and inscriptions found in Dhofar. He was quite surprised at what he saw when he was shown inscriptions discovered along the Purgatoire River in southeastern Colorado. Quoting the transcript, Ali said:

"I came to America. I was invited by, uh, for two days by the Brigham Young University people and I did the lecture there and I met Phillip Leonard and he took me for about fourteen days on his cost, on his money, and he did everything for me. So, we went to Colorado and we saw these inscriptions and was astonished. I mean, you know, I was, it was amazing, it was (not) unbelievable that you find these inscriptions exactly the same as ours, the same characters, the way that they have written it and the same way that our people and the people here have done it."

When asked if he was astonished Ali replied:

"Absolutely. I mean, how can I believe that, you know,...., uh, thousands of kilometers away from our area that the same people or the same characters have been found in here? [Narrator] "Their meaning, at this time, is unknown, but the set of 33 characters corresponding to the sounds in the Shahri language is a near perfect match; 28 of the symbols correspond to 28 common characters with the Thamudic alphabet, and 4 of the 5

distinctively Dhofari characters are *nowhere else to be found outside of Dhofar* but on the rocks of southeastern Colorado.”

[Narrator] “Here’s yet another tantalizing link! Notice how this Colorado rock engraving of an ocean-going vessel in use more than a millennium ago compares to the rock art of an ancient ship with the same distinctive rigging and hull in Dhofar, halfway around the globe.”

If the above observations prove true, we have possible evidence that:

- 1) Nephi hired a crew of experienced Omani sailors, or
- 2) Someone in Lehi’s family possibly learned the language of the Dhofari.
- 3) That other Omani sailors reached the New World, proving that the Book of Mormon account of Nephi building a ship in Dhofar and sailing it to the New World is in harmony with the shipbuilding and seamanship skills of the ancient sailors at Khor Rori.

While it is too early to judge the credibility of this research, it is worth following the efforts of these explorers.