

**N**  **phites**  
**in**  
**E** **U** **R** **O** **P** 

# **Nephites in Europe**

*Hagoth's Northward Exodus,  
Book of Mormon prophecy,  
and ancient Europe*

Researched by John D. Nelson  
& Donald G. Nelson

Written by John D. Nelson

Copyright John D. Nelson, 2006.

### **About the Author**

John served a mission in Scandinavia. Later, he studied European culture at Brigham Young University, and Scandinavian culture at the University of Washington.

Other books written by John include:

1844 in Prophecy – Book 1  
The Martyrdom and Daniel

1844 in Prophecy – Book 2  
The Martyrdom and Patmos

Nephites in Europe - Book 2  
(Twice the content)

Nephites in Europe - Book 3  
(100% new advanced content)

<http://www.candlestickstudio.com>

<http://www.beowulfstitute.com>

Queries can be relayed to:

JohnDavidNelson2@gmail.com

# **Nephites in Europe**

## **Table of Contents**

Introduction

Hagoth's Exodus

Nephite Prophecy

Nephite Geography

Nephite Culture

Hagoth and Rome

By Land or By Sea

Divine Visitation in Northern Europe

Long Hair

Frisians, Nephites, and Saxons

Government

Hagoth and Columbus

Conclusion

## Introduction

A generation before the birth of Jesus Christ, a Nephite named Hagoth built several ships, all but one of which sailed “northward”.

A few decades later, when Jesus was a young boy, the Roman Empire advanced into Northern Europe and encountered a coastal people they had never even heard of before. The people themselves claimed to have arrived by sea.

According to modern linguists, the inhabitants of this region originally spoke a language from the Hebrew/Egyptian family, but quickly adopted the Germanic tongue of their neighbors. Later, this people committed their own history to writing in a handful of manuscripts that have barely survived the passage of time. Although their history and traditions seem strange to some, they will resonate with those who have read the Book of Mormon.

Centuries later, in alignment with Nephite prophecy, the descendants of these people explored and spread to every corner of the world, colonizing Australia, New Zealand, Africa, and both Americas. In their journeys across seas and continents, they shaped and forever changed world history.

This is their account.



## Hagoth's Exodus

The Book of Mormon tells us that approximately a generation before the birth of Christ, thousands of Nephites packed up their belongings and left the lands of their inheritance. The last chapter of Alma describes that they departed on ships, built by an otherwise unknown man called Hagoth. The Book of Mormon does not tell us what became of Hagoth. However for matters of simplicity, we will refer to the 1<sup>st</sup> century Nephite exodus as Hagoth's exodus.

Several things about this exodus are unique within the Nephite account. The most intriguing of these is perhaps this: with many key Nephite events, the prophets that recorded them provided commentary on their reason for including those events in their account. More specifically, a “thus we see” object lesson is frequently included. However the Hagoth account offers no such direct explanation. It simply hangs there, with the remaining Nephites (and most readers) wondering where they had gone.

Additionally, Nephi of old left a strict command that only sacred things should occupy the precious space on those plates.<sup>1</sup> Thus it would appear that there was a sacred reason for the record to preserve the account of Hagoth's exodus. To illustrate the significance of this event, the Nephites openly admitted that they were unable to record “even a hundredth part”<sup>2</sup> of their shipping and boat-building activities. Yet for some specific reason, they choose to preserve the account of Hagoth. This suggests prophetic intent.

The Book of Mormon suggests an explanation for events like Hagoth's migration:

*And it came to pass that the master of the vineyard saw it, and he said unto his servant: It grieveth me that I should lose this tree...*

---

<sup>1</sup> 1 Nephi 19:5-6; Jacob 1:2-4;

<sup>2</sup> Helaman 3:14

*And behold, saith the Lord of the vineyard, I take away many of these young and tender branches, and I will graft them whithersoever I will; and it mattereth not that if it so be that the root of this tree will perish, I may preserve the fruit thereof unto myself; wherefore, I will take these young and tender branches, and I will graft them whithersoever I will.<sup>3</sup>*

## **To the South Pacific and Elsewhere**

Many believe that Alma 63 simply provides an account of Nephites who eventually arrived in the South Pacific Islands. For example, Elder Mathew Cowley, who served among the Pacific Islanders taught that they were descendants of Lehi. He drew specifically from Alma 63 while teaching this. Because of this and the statements of others, many have assumed that all of the voyages in Alma 63 refer to an exodus into the Pacific Ocean. However that is not what Elder Cowley actually taught. Nor is it what the Book of Mormon actually states.

The Nephite exodus of Alma 63 spans a handful of years. During that period of time, more than one departure is actually mentioned. It is suggested that readers open their own scriptures while exploring the following accounts of the voyages of Hagoth’s ships.

<b>Sailings</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>1<sup>st</sup> voyage</b> Alma 63:5-6 <i>ca. 60 BC</i>	Hagoth built an “exceedingly large” ship, which launched into the Nephite west sea with “many” Nephites and sailed northward.
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> voyages</b> Alma 63:7-8 <i>ca. 59 BC</i>	In the second year of Hagoth’s exodus, while Hagoth was building other ships, the first ship that had sailed northward returned. This suggests that an initial colony had been planted somewhere “northward”. That first ship was then reloaded with more Nephite emigrants, and left on its second and final voyage “northward”, never to be heard of among the American Nephites again.

---

<sup>3</sup> Jacob 5:7-8



	<p>In addition, during that same year, “one other ship” sailed. But instead of sailing northward into the west sea, it sailed into an unspecified sea, <u>in an unknown direction</u>. The Nephites merely said “whither she did go we know not.”</p> <p>The Nephites remaining in Bountiful did not know for certain what became of those two vanished ships – nor does their record tell us what became of any of the remaining “other ships” that Hagoth built that year. Perhaps the remaining ships simply remained in local Nephite service, staying close to the coastline for trade and/or coastal defense.</p>
<p><b>Possible 4<sup>th</sup> voyage</b> Alma 63:10 <i>some time prior to ca. 58 BC</i></p>	<p>In the third year of Hagoth’s migrations, it was reported that Corianton had failed to return from an earlier seafaring voyage northward. The record does not specify which northward voyage Corianton had departed in previously. It could have been the second and final northbound voyage of Hagoth’s “exceedingly large” ship. Or, it could have been a separate northward voyage in one of Hagoth’s “other” ships. Either way, this passage, and the absence of further Nephite mention of Corianton, suggests that Corianton either perished at sea, or he lived out his days among a transplanted Nephite colony in a “land northward”.</p>

So the last chapter of Alma tells us of at least three distinct sailings a generation before Christ’s birth:

- 1) the “exceedingly large” ship which sailed to a land northward and then returned mostly empty to the American Nephites.
- 2) A second departure of the “exceedingly large” ship, again for the land northward, never to be heard from again.
- 3) The departure of one of the “other ships” that Hagoth built, which sailed in an unspecified direction into an unspecified sea, also never to be heard from again.

- 4) And finally, the northward voyage of Corianton, heir to the Liahona, which may possibly be the same as #2.

Although Alma 63 does not specifically tell us what became of the shipbuilder Hagoth, it does tell us the man was “exceedingly curious”.<sup>4</sup> As we will soon see, history suggests this means he was an inquisitive explorer at heart – a kindred spirit to Christopher Columbus.

---

<sup>4</sup> Alma 63:5.

## Nephite Prophecy

Before leaving the Nephite shore, it would be helpful to review a handful of Nephite prophecies that suggest where we can begin our search for one landing of Hagoth's people.

### Nephite Prophecy

My brother and I have always felt drawn or called to study the ancient tribes of Europe. Until recently, we didn't know why, but we merely did our best to continue our journey along that path of study. But a few years ago, my brother finally came across the first clue as to why. After studying the third chapter of 2 Nephi, the portion where the aged Lehi left a parting blessing to his youngest son Joseph, my brother was struck by the implications of what he was reading.

In this blessing, Lehi did a number of things. First, Lehi affirmed that his own son Joseph was a descendant of Joseph of Old, the Joseph of Egypt. Second, Lehi foretold the mission of Joseph Smith. However, once my brother pointed out to me the third and final thing Lehi said, it brought me to the edge of my seat.

Speaking directly to his own son Joseph, Lehi promised that his son's seed "shall not be destroyed, for they shall hearken unto the words of the book".<sup>5</sup> And to reiterate the prophecy about Joseph Smith and the book that would come forth, Lehi added,

*And there shall rise up one mighty among them, who shall do much good, both in word and in deed, being an instrument in the hands of God...unto the bringing to pass much restoration unto the house of Israel, and unto the seed of thy brethren.*<sup>6</sup>

Now the context and theme throughout Lehi's entire blessing was of seed, and of the prophetic role one's seed would play because of one's righteousness. That this mighty one, Joseph Smith,

---

<sup>5</sup> i.e. the Book of Mormon.

<sup>6</sup> 2 Nephi 3:22-24

would rise up “among” the seed of Lehi means one of two things. Either he would physically be among them. Or he was one of them. In other words, Joseph Smith himself would descend through Lehi’s son Joseph, in keeping with the main theme of Lehi’s blessing. As my brother explained, if this was the meaning of Lehi’s promise, Joseph Smith’s family tree somehow included Nephites.

Since Joseph’s ancestry included American colonists who came from Europe, there were only two real possibilities for such a heritage. Either during the early American colonial period, Joseph’s colonial forefathers intermarried with Native Americans who happened to descend through Lehi’s son Joseph (a premise which, based on the well-documented genealogy of the Smith family, is apparently untenable), or at some point long before the European colonization of America, Nephites arrived in Europe and became Joseph Smith’s forefathers.

A closer reading of the Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants actually confirms the promise that Lehi’s seed would spread to every corner of the world. For example, only five chapters into the Nephite record, Lehi is filled with the spirit of prophecy, and “began to prophesy concerning his seed.” What he foretold was that the plates of brass would go forth “unto all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people who were of his seed.” So we know that Lehi’s children who would receive the Book of Mormon<sup>7</sup> would be spread among many nations. The next few verses suggest where some of those nations were.

Lehi further prophesied “many” other things concerning his seed.<sup>8</sup> Then, Nephi received a vision, in response to his fervent prayer to be shown “the things which my father saw”.<sup>9</sup> The reader should

---

<sup>7</sup> ...if the reception of the plates of brass is fulfilled by reception of the portions of the plates of brass cited or referred to in 1 Nephi, 2 Nephi, Jacob, Alma, Helaman, and 3 Nephi.

<sup>8</sup> 1 Nephi 5:19.

<sup>9</sup> 1 Nephi 10:17, 11:2-3

note that Nephi's vision (which was thus a review of what Lehi saw when he had prophesied of his own seed) included the course of Western European history and the subsequent European settlement of America – the land promised to Lehi's seed. Lehi's prophecy and Nephi's vision suggest that before the restoration, their seed would be spread among many nations, which according to Nephi's vision, appears to include Europe.

The fifth chapter of Jacob (another son of Lehi) likewise affirms that the Nephites would be transplanted to several regions of the world. Thus it is quite possible for Joseph Smith to descend directly through Lehi's son Joseph.

*And these will I place in the nethermost part of my vineyard, whithersoever I will, it mattereth not unto thee; and I do it that I may preserve unto myself the natural branches of the tree; and also, that I may lay up fruit thereof against the season, unto myself; for it grieveth me that I should lose this tree and the fruit thereof.*

Finally, in 1828, in the third section of the Doctrine and Covenants, we are told that through the Book of Mormon the Restoration would bring a knowledge of the Savior not just to the Lamanites, but also “to the Nephites, and to the Jacobites, and the Josephites, and the Zoramites, *through the testimonies of their fathers.*”<sup>10</sup>

There are other Nephite prophecies that relate to Nephites in various corners of the world which we could touch upon. However for the purposes of this chapter, the prophecies addressed here provide a sufficient starting point to help trace part of Hagoth's Exodus.

---

<sup>10</sup> D&C 3:16-19

## Nephite Geography

Many who have read the Book of Mormon account of Hagoth's ships departing near a narrow neck of land have assumed the voyages meant nothing more than a departure into the Pacific Ocean to transplant Nephites to the Polynesian islands. There are three problems with that assumption.

First, such an understanding is not inclusive enough. As we addressed in the previous chapter, Nephite prophecies tell us that by the time of the Restoration, Lehi's seed needs to have been transplanted throughout the world, including Europe.

Our second problem is that both voyages of Hagoth's "exceedingly large" ship were specifically described to have sailed northward – as was Corianton's voyage. However, the Polynesian islands are actually hundreds of miles *south* of any narrow neck of land. Even Hawaii is not north of the Mayan Yucatan peninsula. Thus both northward voyages of Hagoth's "exceedingly large" ship do not properly account for a transplant of Lehi's seed from Mayan regions to the Pacific Isles. However, we do have Alma's account of one of Hagoth's "other" ships, which departed from an unspecified location, into an unspecified sea, on an unspecified heading. This "other" ship could very well have embarked into the Pacific and arrived in Hawaii or the South Pacific, since it was *not* one of the voyages that was specifically said to have sailed northward.

Finally, this leaves both voyages of Hagoth's "exceedingly large" ship unaccounted for. Alma and Mormon would not have preserved this account unless it had some significant prophetic purpose. Thus this brings us to a closer examination of Nephite geography.

### The Nephite west sea

The key reason most people assume that Hagoth's entire expedition spilled into the Pacific Ocean is that Alma specifically says that Hagoth's exceedingly large ship launched "into the west

sea.” Most readers familiar with continental maps and satellite photos assume that the Pacific Ocean is the Nephite “west sea” mentioned in Alma. Surprisingly, that assumption is based on a flawed frame of reference. With a corrected frame of reference, an entirely unexpected body of water presents itself as a more likely candidate for the Nephite “west sea”.

Many modern LDS scholars, and most of the FARMS studies published by Brigham Young University, place “the narrow neck of land” and the Nephite lands of Bountiful, Zarahemla, and Desolation in the vicinity of the Yucatan peninsula.



Some of their reasoning for placing Nephite society here leans upon statements about the Yucatan region published during and since Joseph Smith’s lifetime. Others refer to linguistic, historical,

or other cultural parallels between the Book of Mormon and the cultures occupying or previously occupying the Yucatan region.

If the Yucatan peninsula was the center of Nephite culture, as those studies affirm, then it introduces the end of a long-established paradigm. The map above demonstrates that a society centered in this region would consider the Pacific Ocean not as their west sea, but instead as their “south sea.”

Actually, the existence of a south sea, which according to the Nephite record actually did exist, is difficult to account for without this geographic frame of reference. Furthermore, early maps of that region drawn by European explorers specifically referred to the Pacific Ocean as the south sea. Thus, dwellers of the Yucatan peninsula do not consider the Pacific Ocean their west sea. Instead, for them, their west sea is the Gulf of Mexico – an extension of the Atlantic Ocean.

Observe the regional map carefully. The Nephite record specifically says that the ships embarking into the west sea sailed northward. To sail into the Pacific Ocean from the Yucatan region, one cannot sail northward. One has no choice but to sail south. (Only after sailing far out of site of the Nephite chroniclers who remained behind, could the seafarers even consider changing course and sailing in a different direction.)

So on every count, for a society centered in the Yucatan region, sailing northward into the Gulf of Mexico as their west sea is a more likely and consistent possibility. In fact the Gulf Stream lends its powerful current to any vessel wishing to sail in a northward direction.

### **Sweeping Implications of an Atlantic Migration**

In short, since 1830, there has been considerable conjecture over Book of Mormon geography. Regarding that ongoing attempt to understand Book of Mormon lands, Elder Widtsoe said, “All such studies are legitimate, but the conclusions drawn from them, *though they may be correct, must at best be held as intelligent*



*conjectures.*”<sup>11</sup> Let us then proceed in our attempt to understand Hagoth’s Exodus based in a manner that is admittedly “at best an intelligent conjecture.”

The implications as to which body of water was the Nephite west sea are pivotal and far-reaching. If Hagoth’s largest ship embarked into the Gulf of Mexico as suggested above, then there are two viable northward destinations: the short trip across (and/or around) the Gulf of Mexico to North America; and the greater trek across the Atlantic to Europe – comparable in distance to the initial voyages of the original Jaredites, Nephites, and Mulekites. If Hagoth’s Nephite settlers arrived in North America, they might have been able to make such a landing without contemporaries making written record of it. However, a landing in populated Europe would scarcely escape the notice of the surrounding peoples, many of whom already kept written records. As such, if a party of Nephites ventured that far north, we would expect some historical trace of their arrival, and of their society.

### **Hagoth and Nephi**

Although this research does not attempt to explain where each Nephite migration settled, ancient European manuscripts suggest that at least one of Hagoth’s ships, most likely the “exceedingly large” one, reached the shores of northern Europe. If so, Hagoth’s exodus helped fulfill Nephite prophecy. Thus this interpretation not only provides a clue to help locate a previously unknown Nephite transplant, but it offers an interesting backdrop for Nephi’s keen interest in Europe.

In Nephi’s vision of Europe’s early interaction with the New World, he specifically referred to Native Americans as “the seed of my brethren.” This phrase apparently refers to the seed of Laman and Lemuel, since the righteous seed of Sam, Joseph, and Jacob were promised to be numbered among Nephi’s seed. Furthermore, Nephi specifically said that the European settlers were led by God to obtain America for their inheritance. Yet this

---

<sup>11</sup> Book of Mormon Encyclopedia, Geography.

same land had been specifically promised to Lehi's seed. It is possible that these two promises were inclusive – that the one fulfilled the other.

Of further interest are the early Central American accounts and ancient murals which tell of two peoples that coexisted in ancient America: (i) the darker-skinned natives, and (ii) a fair-skinned, golden-haired people that vanished. However the description of the vanished people would also suit many of the peoples of Europe. And we should recall that Nephi's vision of Europe was his personal viewing of what Lehi had previously spoken of *concerning the future of their seed*. To emphasize this parallel, Nephi noted that the Europeans who would take possession of the New World "were like unto" his own people.

In short, this account suggests that prophecy and history have come full circle. A people that appeared on the coast of Europe two thousand years ago may literally be an outgrowth of (and sequel to) the Book of Alma.

*Teach ye diligently, and my grace shall attend  
you...in all things that pertain unto the kingdom of  
God, that are expedient for you to understand;  
Of things both in heaven and in the earth, and  
under the earth; things which have been, things which  
are, things which must shortly come to pass...and a  
knowledge also of countries and of kingdoms –  
That ye may be prepared in all things when I  
shall send you again to magnify the calling whereunto  
I have called you, and the mission with which I have  
commissioned you.*

*D&C 88:78-80*

## **Nephite Culture**

So far, we have reviewed a few verses from Alma 63 pertaining to Hagoth's exodus, and a few prophetic passages from the Book of Mormon and Doctrine and Covenants referring to Lehi's posterity. After reviewing Nephite prophecies that foretold their being spread throughout the nations of the earth, we should now commit a few pages to Nephite culture. More specifically, before stepping on European soil, we need to be clear about the culture that existed among the Nephites at the time of Hagoth's exodus. Otherwise any attempt to find traces of their landfall elsewhere would have no sample for meaningful comparison.

What we need for our pre-flight check is an accurate snapshot of Nephite society as it existed in Hagoth's day, around sixty years before Christ's birth. For it was not just families and provisions that Nephites packed onto Hagoth's ships. They also took with them their language, their memory of current events, their prophecies, their history, their customs, their traditions, their views on religion and government, and their concept of themselves as a people. Clarity on these aspects of Hagoth's culture will better equip us to pick up the trail of Hagoth's ship on distant shores.

### **Nephite Religion**

The first and most central aspect of Nephite culture we should review is Nephite religion. Most readers are well aware that the Nephites believed in a God of prophecy, in prophets who revealed His will, in sacrifice, in temple worship, and in the eventual birth and sacrifice of God's Son. In fact many of the younger souls departing Nephite shores around 60 BC expected the fulfillment of some of those Messianic promises during their lifetime.

In addition, we need to be clear that although prophets appeared throughout Nephite history, the role of a combined prophet-king like Nephi of old had been retired long before Hagoth. Instead, people in Hagoth's day expected a separation of powers and

duties. For example, in Hagoth's day, order and doctrine in the matters of faith and worship were governed by priests, who were subordinate to a single "high priest" (for example, Alma). Meanwhile, the civil government was administrated through other means.

### **Nephite Government**

A generation before Hagoth, a major political revolution had occurred. The institution of the monarchy had been peacefully surrendered at the end of King Mosiah's reign, in part due to the dangers of that office recently made evident by the wickedness of King Noah. So although the concept of kingship was not far distant in Nephite history, monarchy was a form of government that was both feared and despised by most of Hagoth's contemporaries.<sup>12</sup>

In Hagoth's day, rather than a king who ruled for a lifetime and passed his scepter down to his son, society was ruled by judges who were subordinate to the law and to a "chief judge" who was elected by the people to serve for a limited period of time (for example, Pahoran). In addition to the rule of the judges, in times of war, Hagoth's civil society was protected and defended under the leadership of military captains who commanded their citizen soldiers under the command of an elected chief captain (i.e. Moroni). This commander was not only authorized in times of war to appoint military command below him,<sup>13</sup> but war was even considered authorized and justified to overthrow a corrupt chief judge, as Moroni's warning letter to Pahoran implies.

Thus Nephite culture in Hagoth's day was much different than Nephite culture in 550 BC. Rather than a single leader, society was now governed by several leaders: a high priest over religious

---

<sup>12</sup> The "kingmen" of Hagoth's day attempted to reinstate monarchy among the Nephites ca. 65 BC, but were routed and put down by Captain Moroni.

<sup>13</sup> Alma 56:9

matters; a chief judge over legal matters; and a military commander over matters of war.

### **Nephite Law**

As part of Nephite government, we should also touch briefly upon Nephite law. As Israelites, their law was largely based on the Law of Moses. However, although slavery was practiced among some Jews in Palestine and among the Lamanites, it was strictly forbidden among the Nephites.<sup>14</sup>

### **Nephite Commerce**

In the context of Nephite culture, we should also touch upon Nephite commerce. The Nephites of Hagoth's day were adept with shipbuilding, agriculture, fabrics, metalworking, armaments, and working timbers. We should also be aware that the hub of Nephite commerce rotated upon an interlocking system of weights and measures, which was clearly defined in Alma's record.

### **Nephite Language**

Finally, we have the issue of the Nephite language, which by their own account was derived from the Hebrew and Egyptian languages.<sup>15</sup>

Of course, there are other aspects of Hagoth's culture not touched upon here. But what we have touched upon will suffice for our journey into ancient Europe.

---

<sup>14</sup> Alma 27:9

<sup>15</sup> 1 Nephi 1:2; Mosiah 1:4; Mormon 9:32-33

## Hagoth and Rome

To approach the Hagoth account with a useful frame of reference, the reader should be aware that Hagoth and Julius Caesar were contemporaries. This parallel takes on greater significance as we reconcile Nephite chronology with other ancient European events.

According to Nephite reckoning, the first wave of Hagoth's Exodus took place around fifty-five years before the birth of Christ. However the reader should be aware that Elder Bruce R. McConkie, Elder Hyrum M. Smith, and President J. Reuben Clark Jr have suggested that our European Christian calendar (the system using BC and AD reckoning) was off a few years in its attempt to pinpoint the time of Christ's birth.<sup>16</sup>

In other words, to align Hagoth's exodus with European chronology, we need to take into account the New Testament assurance that Christ (i) was born in Judea during the reign of Herod the Great, and (ii) was in faraway Egypt before an angel told his family that Herod was dead. So if historians are correct in placing Herod's death in 4 B.C., and if enough time is allowed for (i) the wise men to visit the young Christ during Herod's reign and then (ii) for Joseph and Mary's flight into Egypt to escape Herod's murderous hand, Christ's birth was perhaps no later than 5 BC. Since Hagoth's first ship sailed from Nephite shores fifty five years before that time, Hagoth's exodus dates to approximately 60 BC.

On the other side of the Atlantic, in what was likely the year after the beginning of Hagoth's exodus, Julius Caesar was appointed Roman governor over what is now northern Italy and southern France. So this would likely be the same year as the second and final northbound voyage of Hagoth's "exceedingly large" ship.

---

<sup>16</sup> McConkie, *Mortal Messiah*, pgs. 349-350. See also Nelson, 1844 in *Prophecy* – Book 1, pgs 20-29, 90-99.

The following year, in 58 BC, Caesar marched his troops further north into Europe in an eight-year campaign to conquer most of northern France.

The peoples Julius Caesar encountered during his eight-year campaign were not backwards barbarians. Instead, they had agriculture and trade networks, towns with timber and earthwork reinforcements, and sophisticated metalworking and coins.

### **Foothold**

The implications of this historical situation spelled danger for any new people attempting to establish a foothold along the coasts of Northern Europe. Thus if one of Hagoth's ships landed on the Celtic coasts of ancient France at this juncture, their colony would have been conquered and enslaved by Rome. On the other hand, any attempt to land and establish a colony along occupied lands further east along the Germanic coast would have been met with resistance from native tribes already experiencing a land shortage.

As if on cue, at this crucial juncture, the seas began to recede. Archaeologists affirm that in the middle of the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC, as Rome advanced (and as Hagoth's ships sailed from Nephite shores), the North Sea withdrew (or the seabed raised), exposing fresh, unoccupied land along the European coast. Although this newly-exposed land bordered Germanic territory, it was not only protected and largely hidden by surrounding tideland marshes, but was also just out of reach of Roman aggression. Archaeologists affirm that this new land was immediately occupied by new settlers, who quickly set about establishing homes and farms.

According to historians and linguists, northwest Europe was at one time occupied by three main peoples:

- 1) Celtic speaking peoples (mostly in France and Britain),
- 2) Germanic-speaking peoples (in much of Germany, and Scandinavia).
- 3) A smaller third group, wedged between the Celtic and Germanic peoples.

### **The Third Group in Europe**

According to those who have closely studied the ancient placenames in that third region of Europe, the peoples who took possession of that land were originally neither Germanic nor Celtic in origin. Instead, linguists assert that when this people first arrived in northwest Europe, they initially spoke a tongue from the Hamo-Semitic language family, but then adopted the Germanic tongue during the generation before Christ. And because of their early adoption of the Germanic tongue, Roman observers simply assumed this third people were Germanic in origin. But for clarity, the Hamo-Semitic language family encompasses Hebrew and Egyptian, the two languages spoken by the Nephites.

Peoples living in this region include those who would later be known as Lombards, Frisians, and Saxons.



## By Land or By Sea

By their own accounts, the inhabitants of Europe's northwest coast consistently affirmed that their forefathers arrived by ship from across the sea.

- 1) The earliest historian among the Saxons, who drew his written account from his people's oral history, says that "what is certain is that the Saxons arrived in these parts by sea."<sup>17</sup>
- 2) Additionally, the oldest book in English<sup>18</sup> affirms that the leading family of Denmark originally came by boat from unknown lands across the ocean.
- 3) Medieval accounts from Danes and Saxons alike affirm that the Saxon and Danish people were originally kindred peoples, at times even ruled by literal brothers.
- 4) That these oral accounts trace back to ancient origins is affirmed by earlier records. An account written around 100 AD says that there was a religious tradition circulating in northwest Europe that involved a sacred procession on land of a model seafaring ship – in memorial of some event that was unclear to Roman observers. This may well be a Passover-like remembrance of God's guidance to cross the ocean.
- 5) The earliest account describing Lombard origins describes their previous homeland across the ocean. That same account said the north portion of their homeland had a name that meant "destruction" or "ruin".<sup>19</sup>

---

<sup>17</sup> Widukind of Corvey, *Sachserkroniken*, 1:3 (translation by John D. Nelson).

<sup>18</sup> The Anglo-Saxon account of *Beowulf*.

<sup>19</sup> Compare the Land of Desolation, which in Hagoth's day once formed the northern border of Nephite lands. See Alma 63:5.

- 6) Finally, one account said that when they arrived in Europe, their revered leader was named Hadgoth.<sup>20</sup>

These European accounts suggest a likely counterpart to Hagoth's exodus. And these parallels suggest a specific means for the fulfillment of multiple Book of Mormon and Doctrine of Covenants prophecies.

This should suffice for an introduction. In subsequent chapters, we will explore additional details about the settlers' culture and traditions, and compare those details to Nephite culture.

---

<sup>20</sup> Whether Hagoth eventually left the Nephite land of Bountiful is unknown – we are simply told that he was still in Nephite lands during the first voyage of his “exceedingly large” ship, since Alma says he built other ships during the first ship's initial voyage. What became of him after that first voyage is uncertain, for the Book of Mormon makes no mention of him after that chapter. However, Alma did say that Hagoth was an “exceedingly curious man”, which suggests he was the inquisitive and adventurous type like Columbus and other seafaring explorers. If that is an accurate interpretation of Alma's description, it is unlikely that a man of Hagoth's disposition would allow the final northward voyage of his greatest ship to depart without him. In fact Hagoth may be the very reason the first ship returned for its second and final voyage.

## Divine Visitation in Northern Europe

As stated in a previous chapter, the premise of a Nephite colony in ancient Europe raises a number of implications. Those implications increase with the timing of Hagoth's departure – which took place shortly before Christ's birth. If such a Nephite colony arrived in Europe by the time of Christ's ministry, that would mean some northern Europeans would have been awaiting Christ's appearance, and would have been among the sheep of Israel Christ was sent to teach.

Jesus of Nazareth promised the Jews in Jerusalem that there were other sheep that would yet hear his voice.<sup>21</sup> Shortly afterwards, the risen Christ also told the Nephites in the Americas that there were yet other sheep that he must visit.<sup>22</sup> Thus if some of Hagoth's people landed on the shores of Europe a generation before Christ's birth, the European children and grandchildren of those settlers could have been among those ministered to by the Son of God.

In Jerusalem, Christ's ministry left a wake that resulted in the New Testament.<sup>23</sup>

Likewise, Christ's ministry in the New World resulted in the written account of 3<sup>rd</sup> Nephi,<sup>24</sup> and apparently left such a lasting imprint on the collective memories of New World cultures that the memory of the visitation of a bearded white god was passed down from generation to generation among the pre-Columbian Americans and Pacific Islanders.

---

<sup>21</sup> John 10:14-16

<sup>22</sup> 3 Nephi 15-16

<sup>23</sup> Plus a number of apocryphal accounts.

<sup>24</sup> Plus perhaps a number of tribal legends scattered through the Americas, and across the Pacific Islands – tribal accounts that were still in circulation centuries later when European explorers arrived on their shores.

## The European Record

Ancient writings attest a divine visitation to northern Europe. By the time the account was committed to writing in 98 AD, word of this visitation had spread as far south as Rome. This account says northern Europe was visited by a son of God. After introducing the account of a Hercules-like visit to northern Europe, the Roman chronicler admitted:

*It may be that Hercules did go there<sup>25</sup>; or perhaps it is only that we<sup>26</sup> by common consent ascribe any remarkable achievement in any place to his famous name<sup>27</sup>.*

By way of context, the “remarkable achievements” ascribed to Hercules according to Roman tradition included the following:

- 1) Hercules was reportedly the son of a mortal woman. But his father was God.
- 2) As a child, an attempt was made on his life.
- 3) As a young man, he had a vision that offered him a choice between an easy life of pleasure and vice, or a more difficult life filled with danger, hardship, and virtue. He chose the latter.
- 4) He restored a dead woman to life.
- 5) He took upon his shoulders the weight of the world.
- 6) His last deeds involved overcoming and escaping the world of the dead, by which he achieved immortality.
- 7) Afterwards, he ascended to heaven, where he joined his father.

Thus we have the testimony that one like the son of God visited northern Europe before 98 AD. This same witness added that distance made it difficult to continue “further research” into the actual identity of this visitor to the north. And he said that no Roman had attempted to research the topic further simply because

---

<sup>25</sup> northern Europe

<sup>26</sup> i.e. Romans familiar with the story of Hercules

<sup>27</sup> Tacitus, *Germania*.

it was judged “more pious and reverent to believe in the alleged exploits of gods than to establish the true facts.”<sup>28</sup>

Those who have studied the Book of Mormon, however, have a different approach, believing that through the Holy Ghost, the truth of all things can be known.

---

<sup>28</sup> Tacitus, *Germania*, ch. 34. For additional information about ancient Germanic beliefs, read *Odin's Toga* (also written by John Nelson).

## Long Hair

The first portion of the Nephite record clearly depicts a migratory society. The middle portion tells us of additional migratory offshoots. Speaking of the Lord's dealings with his people, Nephi himself declared, shortly after his vision of Europe and the Americas:

*And he leadeth away the righteous into precious lands....*<sup>29</sup>

Nephi's brother Jacob, the same Jacob who recorded Zenos's Olive Tree allegory, explained:

*For behold, the Lord God has led away from time to time from the house of Israel, according to his will and pleasure. And now behold, the Lord remembereth all them who have been broken off, wherefore he remembereth us also.*<sup>30</sup>

With these realities in mind, let's consider a map of Europe. In review, we have a culture in northwest Europe that claimed to arrive by sea. According to their own testimony, they made their landfall on the shore of the North Sea approximately where the Danish peninsula of Jutland meets the mainland of Europe. This is the same region from which the English people left the European continent around 500 AD to take possession of the island of England.

---

<sup>29</sup> 1 Nephi 17:38

<sup>30</sup> 2 Nephi 10:22.



The region referred to here was occupied by Canne-nefates, Lombards, and Frisians who were first encountered by Rome's legions in 5 AD, during the reign of Caesar Augustus, heir of Julius Caesar.<sup>31</sup> Later, Saxons were known to inhabit some of this region, and were believed to be a confederation of some of those previously mentioned peoples.

### **Lombards**

One of the names the Romans knew this people by was Langobardi, Langobards, or, as they would be known in later centuries, Lombards. In each case, their name simply means "those with long hair".

---

<sup>31</sup> Approximately two centuries later, the Saxons were found in this region, but are believed by most historians to be a confederation of some of the previously-mentioned tribes.

There are several facets of Lombard culture that may interest the reader. Their name, in the context of their culture, is significant. To understand the significance of their name in the context of Hagoth's exodus, however, we should keep in mind that Nephite culture derived from Jewish culture (or as Nephi called it, "the learning of the Jews").<sup>32</sup>

As affirmed by Egyptian art and even Egyptian mummies, it was an Egyptian custom to shave regularly (a custom which was later adopted by the Romans). As an extension, this Egyptian custom was apparently even expected of Egyptian servants. For example, when the Pharaoh released Joseph of old from prison, Joseph immediately cleaned himself, dressed, and shaved.<sup>33</sup>

However, a few centuries after Joseph, when Moses delivered the Israelites from Egyptian bondage, it was declared wrong for an Israelite to "round" their hair or trim the edge of their beard.<sup>34</sup> Jews then came to consider it an indignity to be shaved.<sup>35</sup> In effect, long hair among the Jewish people became an outward expression of their faith. Central to this tradition was the mighty, long-haired Samson, who fought to defend the freedom of his people. This Jewish practice continued during Christ's first ministry, when it was practiced among the Nazarites in Palestine.

### **Long Hair Among the Early Nephites**

When considering Nephite culture, we should remember that at the time of Hagoth's exodus, those sailing from the land of Desolation still operated under the Law of Moses. In other words, in strict accordance with the Law of Moses, the Nephites would likely have honored the Levitical prescriptions about hair and beards.

---

<sup>32</sup> 1 Nephi 1:2

<sup>33</sup> Genesis 41:40

<sup>34</sup> Leviticus 19:26-28; 21:5

<sup>35</sup> 2 Samuel 10:4



Furthermore, during Hagoth's day, two additional covenants entered the scene. Under Moroni's title of liberty, the Nephites covenanted<sup>36</sup> to unite in defense of their faith, their liberties, and their families. Likewise, the sons of Ammon entered into a similar covenant.

*And they entered into a covenant to fight for the liberty of the Nephites, yea, to protect the land unto the laying down of their lives; yea even they covenanted that they never would give up their liberty, but they would fight in all cases to protect the Nephites and themselves from bondage.*<sup>37</sup>

### **Long Hair in Europe**

A century after Hagoth, we find a striking nexus between Jewish custom and Nephite history in Northern Europe. Roman chroniclers described a custom that was rapidly spreading and becoming fashionable among other tribes in northern Europe. This custom directly connected long hair with a promise to defend one's people.

*There is one custom...that has become a general rule.... As soon as they reach manhood they let their hair and beard grow.... This fashion of covering the face is assumed in accordance with a vow pledging them to the service of valour...*<sup>38</sup>

Additionally, it was said that fulfilling this vow would prove themselves "worthy of their native land and parents."<sup>39</sup>

This tradition continued among the Saxons as late as 570 AD, and among the Franks even later. In fact the Frankish Merovingian dynasty came to an end during the Dark Ages when their deposed king's long hair was cut off with symbolic finality. Even modern commentators unfamiliar with the Book of Mormon assert that the

---

<sup>36</sup> Alma 46:12, 19-21

<sup>37</sup> Alma 53:17

<sup>38</sup> Tacitus, Germania, 31

<sup>39</sup> Tacitus, *ibid.*

early European tradition of long hair was reminiscent of the “ancient Israelite Nazirites...”<sup>40</sup>

Centuries after the Romans first encountered the Lombards, it was still widely known that they received their name “from their flowing and never-shaven beards,”<sup>41</sup> or as their own chronicler said, “on account of the length of their beards untouched by the knife.”<sup>42</sup>

Based on these correlations, it would appear that the long-hair tradition was introduced into ancient Europe by the Lombards themselves, as their name suggests. For the Romans made no mention of any such tradition spreading in Europe until after they discovered the Lombards. Thus it would appear that as Lombard prestige in battle grew, their ancient custom of long hair, and the duty to defend their people associated with it, became fashionable among neighboring peoples.

### **Lombard Origins**

According to the Lombards themselves, they claimed to have come from “an island” across the sea. Although the reader might consider it a stretch to consider the Americas an island, the Vikings who later landed in North America referred to that new land as an island, as did almost every other early European explorer. Even the Nephites in America considered their land to be “an isle of the sea”.<sup>43</sup>

In addition, the Lombards said their homeland was “where many people dwell”. Other than the Americas, there are few lands bordering the Atlantic which fit that description.

Also, the Lombards said that long ago, in their previous homeland across the sea, their enemy came with an army demanding tribute

---

<sup>40</sup> Rives, *Germania*, p. 250.

<sup>41</sup> Isidore of Seville, *Etymologies*, IX, 2, 94

<sup>42</sup> Paul the Deacon, *History of the Lombards*, IX:1

<sup>43</sup> 2 Nephi 10:20.

(bondage) under threat of war. This is precisely what happened among the Nephites just before Hagoth's exodus.

Additionally, although the Lombards are often *assumed* to be of the same ethnic stock as their Germanic neighbors, one of the first Romans to encounter them suggested otherwise. Speaking of the Lombards' ferocity in battle, he said that they were actually "more fierce than the Germans."<sup>44</sup> This suggests that, like the Frisians, Lombard roots were something other than Germanic. They in fact occupied part of the same region that linguists say was inhabited by a people that once spoke a language from the Hamo-Semitic (Egyptian-Hebrew) family.

Finally, the Lombards maintained an ancient tradition about their pre-European homeland across the ocean. They said the name of the north part of that homeland meant "destruction". The Book of Mormon offers an interesting parallel:

*And it came to pass that Hagoth...built him an exceedingly large ship...by the land of Desolation...by the narrow neck which led into the land northward.*<sup>45</sup>

---

<sup>44</sup> Velleius Paterculus, Roman History, II:106. Compare Mosiah 20:11 and Alma 56:56.

<sup>45</sup> Alma 63:5

## **Frisians, Nephites, and Saxons**

### **The Freemen**

The early colonists of northwest Europe may have splintered into more than one subtribe by 5 AD, approximately 60 years after their arrival. A people known as the Frisii or “Frisians” may well be a kindred tribe of the Lombards. The Frisian name itself simply means “the free”. Those familiar with the last chapters of Alma may recall how the free men were those who rallied around Moroni’s title of liberty to put down the kingmen who were trying to alter the law and restore a monarchy among the Nephites.

Whatever their origins, Frisians still live along the coast of the North Sea, from the coast of the Netherlands in the province called Friesland, west through the northwest German coast, and upwards along Denmark’s southwest coast. According to linguists, the Frisian language is the closest living language to Old English. However, as suggested earlier, that language was not the original tongue spoken among the Frisians in ancient times. Linguists assert that the ancient Frisians only adopted the Germanic spoken language after their arrival in northwest Europe.

### **Nefates**

In 5 AD, when Roman legions crossed the Rhine to conquer new peoples, among the peoples these legions encountered, the Canninefates were mentioned first and foremost. Shortly afterwards, however, the Canninefates, Lombards, Frisians, and neighboring people rose up and revolted against Roman rule.

When it comes to ancient European tribal names, the most intriguing tribe in northwestern Europe was the Canninefates or Cannanefates, who were known to be confederate with the Saxon and Lombard peoples. In the ancient Germanic languages, “Canna” means tribe or descent. (For example, the modern English word “kin” derives from that ancient word.) In other words, the very name of the Canna-Nefates likely means “the tribe of Nefates”. This could attest to their origin as a people of Nephite descent.

## **Saxons**

Although each of the previous tribal names was known to Roman historians by the early 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, the name “Saxon” did not appear until a century or two later. The Saxon name itself reportedly refers to the short sword or “sax”<sup>46</sup> common among them. When the Saxons first appear in history, the land they were said to occupy was actually Lombard territory, with whom they were allied. For a number of reasons, many historians believe the Saxons were not a new ethnic group, but were instead simply a new confederation of the same tribes that had occupied the region earlier. Thus it is asserted by many historians that the Saxon confederation included Lombards and Frisians, who were known to have accompanied the Saxon confederation in their later occupation of Britain.<sup>47</sup>

A few centuries later, around the time Nephite society in the Americas was destroyed, many Saxons were invited by the British to cross the English Channel to restore order in Britain in the wake of the fall of the Western Roman Empire. These Saxons were reportedly also invited by the war-weary Britons to impose whatever terms they saw fit as their reward for establishing stable government. Because of this, Britain became a new land of inheritance for a portion of the Saxon confederation. Those Saxons thereby became the forefathers of men like Joseph Smith, whose ancestry traces back to the regions of Britain those Saxons settled.

And those Saxons, by their own account, descended from a seafaring people that arrived in Europe centuries earlier, led by an aging veteran named Hadgoth.

---

<sup>46</sup> Our modern words “scissors” and “incision” come from the same root word.

<sup>47</sup> Christie, *The Lombards*, p. 11. Foulke, *History of the Lombards*, Ch. 13, note 6.

# Government

## American Government

Latter-day scripture openly declares that the Founding Fathers of the United States were “raised up” by God for the very purpose of establishing the Constitution.<sup>48</sup> Furthermore, these Founding Fathers acknowledged that they intentionally drew from northern European forms of government for their drafting of the Constitution. For example, Thomas Jefferson proposed that the official seal of the United States include “Hengist and Horsa,<sup>49</sup> the Saxon chiefs, from whom we claim the honour of being descended and whose political principles and form of government we have assumed.”<sup>50</sup> Thus if Nephites arrived in Europe and founded the very societies from which the Founding Fathers drew their principles, the American Constitution itself traces back to Book of Mormon principles of government.

As a biographer of one of the Founding Fathers stated:

*Jefferson's great ambition at that time was to promote a renaissance of Anglo-Saxon primitive institutions on the new continent. Thus presented, the American Revolution was nothing but the reclamation of the Anglo-Saxon birthright of which the colonists had been deprived by 'a long train of abuses.' Nor does it appear that there was anything in this theory which surprised or shocked his contemporaries.<sup>51</sup>*

According to Cleon Skousen, Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin agreed that in their struggle to wrest free from tyrannical government, their best models to draw upon to form a new representative government were found (i) among ancient Israel and (ii) among the later Anglo-Saxons.<sup>52</sup>

---

<sup>48</sup> D&C 101:80

<sup>49</sup> Two Saxon brothers who according to early English history led the Saxon migration from the European continent to Britain.

<sup>50</sup> Skousen, *The Making of America*, pg. 32.

<sup>51</sup> Skousen, *The Making of America*, pgs. 32-33

<sup>52</sup> *ibid*, pg 47

Jefferson claimed “the honor” of being descended from the Anglo-Saxons. In addition, as part of that heritage, Jefferson explained that our “political principles and form of government” also trace back to Anglo-Saxon principles. According to Jefferson, the Anglo-Saxon system of government, and the government of ancient Israel, were “the wisest and most perfect ever yet devised by the wit of man”.<sup>53</sup>

### **Early European Government**

As attested by numerous sources, the form of government found among the early Europeans was a system based on a strong sense of individual freedom, justice and a division of powers.

Around 100 AD, Roman observers noted that the tribes in northern Europe typically refused to accept the rule of a king – seeing that office as an unnatural elevation of a fellow mortal, and an imposition on individual freedom. Instead, the people were ruled by a balance of powers divided among a chief priest and his priests who were responsible for religion, a chief judge who was responsible for the laws, and in times of war, a dux or general.

Law and justice were considered paramount. The handshake to conclude an agreement, and our modern jury system of twelve witnesses derives from the Anglo-Saxons’ system of justice. In addition, these same principles echo throughout Lombard and Scandinavian society.

### **Nephite Government**

As introduced in a previous chapter, ancient Nephite government incorporated the same offices, elements and principles found later in European society among the Anglo-Saxon, Lombard, and Scandinavian nations.

It is certain that the American Constitution derives from the ancient traditions of the Anglo-Saxons and their neighbors. It is

---

<sup>53</sup> *ibid.*, p. 60

therefore also quite possible that the very premise of a modern constitutional, representative government traces back to the ancient Nephites.



## Hagoth and Columbus

The founding of the Nephite nation on American soil was due to Nephi building a ship, and crossing the ocean with his family. Two thousand years after Nephi, a man named Christopher Columbus, who had been seen in vision by Nephi, was led by God to sail west from Europe and bring the knowledge of an unknown land to the people of Europe. It would appear that Hagoth is the missing link between Nephi and Columbus. For as we will soon see, a Nephite colony in Europe suggests that Christopher Columbus was a descendant of Nephi of old, returning to the Americas to reclaim the land of his inheritance.

As mentioned earlier, tens of thousands of Lombards migrated to Italy in 568 AD, and setup a kingdom that lasted for over two centuries. There, their descendants remained for centuries to come. What is unknown to most is that one of the regions they conquered and governed was Genoa, the later birthplace of Christopher Columbus.

According to archaeologists, the Lombards stood a head taller than their Roman neighbors. They had fair hair. Seven centuries after the collapse of the Lombard kingdom, Christopher Columbus was born. According to his contemporaries, Columbus grew to become a “tall, well-built” man, with a fair complexion, “light” or “blue” eyes, and “blond hair which had turned gray by his thirtieth year.”<sup>54</sup> This description does not fit the dark-haired, dark-eyed Italian stereotype. It suggests some other ancestral origin.

The family name of Columbus (or Colombo, as they were known in the city of Genoa), is worth closer consideration. In Italian, the prefix “co-“ means “associated” with or “related to”. Dozens of English words begin with this prefix. Because of its meaning, it is quite possible that Christopher’s Co-lombo’s forbears considered themselves descendants of the Lombards. Christopher’s height

---

<sup>54</sup> Brigham, Christopher Columbus p.19.

and fair complexion, eyes, and hair suggest that to be the case. In fact the language spoken in Genoa during Christopher's day was still a blend of the Italian and Lombard which few outsiders could understand. Furthermore, Christopher's first America-bound armada was armed, according to Christopher's own writings, with "lombard" cannon.

Thus it would appear that Christopher descended at least in part from the Lombards who claimed centuries earlier to have arrived in Europe by boat, and who settled in Italy almost nine centuries before Christopher was born. It would appear that in Genoa, Italy, Nephi's vision came full circle.

### **The Hagoth Chronicles**

As mentioned earlier, many of the Lombards later joined the Saxon confederation. Over a thousand years ago, the Saxons committed their history to writing, providing us a better glimpse of Lombard origins. Again, they affirmed that they arrived in Europe aboard a single boat. When threatened with extinction by a neighboring tribe, many of the people in the new colony desired to flee elsewhere in search of a safe haven. However, their aging leader Hadgoth arose, put his hand on their banner, and reminded them of their heritage. He promised them that if they would follow him faithfully, he would lead them to victory, and they would be established in the new land. The men rushed for their weapons, to take up the defense of their people.

By night, Hadgoth led his armed men to the walled city whose people had threatened to emerge the next morning to exterminate his colony. Hadgoth's men *let themselves over the wall during the night*,<sup>55</sup> took up position, and fell upon the enemy. *Not a single one of Hadgoth's men was killed.*<sup>56</sup>

---

<sup>55</sup> Compare parallel Nephite tactics of Moroni and Teancum – who died just before Hagoth's ships departed Nephite shores.

<sup>56</sup> Again, a deliverance similar in magnitude to events described in the closing chapters of Alma.

The next morning, as the sun rose on the victors, Hadgoth erected his people's standard<sup>57</sup> atop the city's eastern gate. For three days, they offered sacrifice and prayer to commemorate the victory and deliverance that was granted them. It was in effect a European feast of remembrance, similar in nature and purpose to Jewish feasts like the Passover.

That October celebration was passed down from generation to generation until at least the 17<sup>th</sup> century, losing some of its original significance with each passing generation. The modern Oktoberfest may well derive from the original celebration.

### **Bridging the Atlantic**

Approximately a century before Christopher Columbus rediscovered America, a common English rhyme placed "Veneland" and "Frisland" in the West Atlantic. In addition, numerous maps from the early age of exploration show both Viniland and Frisland in the Atlantic – far west of Ireland. Some suggest that this Atlantic Frisland (which can also be interpreted as "Freezing Land") was simply confused by cartographers for Iceland. However the maps that depict Frisland also place Iceland further north.

An elaborate account of Frisland by a European named Zeno was published in 1558. He claimed to have visited there, and described the land and the people in considerable detail. Some modern historians point to Zeno's elaborations to suggest that the entire idea of a Frisland in the West Atlantic was a hoax derived entirely from Zeno's imagination. However, in addition to the 14<sup>th</sup> century English rhyme mentioned above, Frisland actually appeared on numerous Atlantic maps *prior to* Zeno's works. Thus the tradition of a Frisian land or homeland west of Ireland predates Zeno's elaborations. So although Zeno's fictional account may have been built upon an actual tradition still

---

<sup>57</sup> Compare the standard of liberty in Alma.

circulating among Europeans that the Frisian homeland lay west across the Atlantic.

Earlier, we explored Lombard descriptions of their homeland across the ocean. Their own written history claims that they were known as Lombards in Europe, but were called Winnili in their previous homeland, a word which modern linguists interpret to stem from a word meaning “pasture”. In other words, they were originally a pastoral or farming people.

Additionally, we should note that the Lombard history was not written until approximately 800 AD, at the beginning of the Viking Age. Thus up to the Viking Age, the Lombards had passed down the memory of their origins by word of mouth, including their original Winnili name.

As mentioned in a previous chapter, Christian Vikings ventured as far west as North America, where they landed approximately 1000 AD. There, they gave the land a very interesting name. They called the land Viniland<sup>58</sup>. Some interpret the name to mean the land of grapes. Others interpret it as the land of meadows or pastures. However, just as Frisland means the land of the Frisians, Viniland could also mean the land of the Winnili. In other words, those Vikings may simply have acknowledged that they had returned west to their ancient homeland.

In seeming confirmation of this, the Viking sagas themselves described their explorers returning from reconnoitering the land as loaded down with grapes and grain. To an agricultural people, and especially to a Judeo-Christian audience, the implication of this imagery was both clear and intentional. It was a promised land.

*And Moses sent [twelve men] to spy out the land of Canaan, and said unto them... 'bring of the fruit of the land' ....So they went*

---

<sup>58</sup> Described elsewhere and in other languages as Wineland, Vinland, Vinilanda, Vinlandia, and Veneland.

*up, and searched the land...and...cut down from  
thence...grapes... pomegranates, and...figs.*

*And they went and came to Moses, and to Aaron, and to all the  
congregation of the children of Israel...and brought back word  
unto them....and said, 'We came into the land whither thou  
sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey, and this is  
the fruit of it.'<sup>59</sup>*

After their arrival by boat, the Icelandic sagas specifically describe Leif Erikson setting out on foot to explore a “choice” land with a party of twelve men, and highlights the discovery of abundant pasture, timber, fish, and grapes. As proof of what they had discovered, they then returned to Greenland with timber and a boat loaded with grapes.

Thus the cultural knowledge of a land (or even homeland) across the Atlantic persisted from generation to generation in northern Europe. Over a decade before Christopher Columbus’ famous voyage to America, he arrived in the British Isles, and even sailed north to Iceland. In the British Isles he likely learned of land to the west. In Iceland, he likewise also learned of similar traditions. These accounts likely strengthened his resolve to attempt the voyage west, which eventually resulted in Queen Isabella’s sponsorship of his voyage. Then in 1492, Christopher Co-lombus sailed west to fulfill Nephi’s vision.

---

<sup>59</sup> Numbers 13:17-27

## Conclusion

To recap, Roman legions first stumbled across the Lombards on the northern coast of Europe in 5 AD. The Lombards were a notably tall people.<sup>60</sup> During the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, they were also described as fierce in battle, despite their relatively small population. They were named for their long hair, which was reportedly associated with an oath to defend their people and way of life. Even modern commentators note the parallel between their oath and Jewish tradition. According to linguistic evidence, this new people adopted the Germanic tongue, only after surrendering their previous Hamo-Semitic language, a language family which encompasses the Egyptian and Hebrew languages of the Nephites.

The Lombards in Europe claimed to have originally sailed from a land where many people dwelt, whose northern region meant “destruction” or “ruin” – parallel to the Nephite “Land of Desolation”. Furthermore, the Saxon confederation claimed they had been originally led to Europe by a man known as Hadagoth, or Hadgoth. Under his leadership, they fought under a standard reminiscent of the title of liberty, and used battle tactics reminiscent of Nephite tactics in the last chapters of Alma.

Peoples allied with the Saxons included Danes, Lombards, Frisians and the seafaring Cana-Nefates.

The peoples occupying this part of Europe were governed anciently by priests led by a high priest, by judges led by an elected chief judge, and in times of war by a chief commander – just like the Nephite system of government.

In later generations, some of these people migrated south to occupy Italy, including Genoa, the later birthplace of Christopher

---

<sup>60</sup> By comparing cemeteries, archaeologists have determined that the average Lombard was a head taller than the average contemporary Roman.

Co-lombus. Others migrated to England, the homeland of Joseph Smith's forefathers. And others remain to this day along the northwestern coast of the European mainland.

For centuries, these people retained the memory of their previous arrival in ancient Europe by boat. And around 1000 AD, when they sailed west and landed in America, they named it Viniland, reminiscent of the Winnili, the pre-European name of the Lombards. Those voyagers depicted the land as a choice land, with imagery parallel to the Israelite entry into the promised land of Canaan.

Finally, descendants of the ancient Lombards, Frisians, Cannefates, Saxons, Winnili, or whatever else we may call these people, have since spread throughout the rest of Europe, and from Europe to New Zealand, Australia, the Americas and beyond. Perhaps one of them is even now preparing to finish reading this account.

Hopefully this will lead to renewed commitment rather than pride. As John the Baptist warned the descendants of Israel,

*...Think not to say within yourselves, 'We have Abraham to our father', for I say unto you that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.<sup>61</sup>*

Instead, John urged:

*Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance.<sup>62</sup>*

As the Nephite prophets urged us:

*Wherefore I will consecrate this land unto thy seed, and them who shall be numbered among thy seed, forever, for the land of their inheritance, for it is a choice land, saith*

---

<sup>61</sup> Matthew 3:9

<sup>62</sup> Matthew 3:8

*God unto me, above all other lands, wherefore I will have all men that dwell thereon that they shall worship me, saith God.*

*And now, my beloved brethren, seeing that our merciful God has given us so great knowledge concerning these things, let us remember him, and lay aside our sins, and not hang down our heads, for we are not cast off; nevertheless, we have been driven out of the land of our inheritance; but we have been led to a better land, for the Lord has made the sea our path, and we are upon an isle of the sea.<sup>63</sup>*

*...Wherefore it is an abridgement of the record of the people of Nephi...Which is to show unto the remnant of the House of Israel what great things the Lord hath done for their fathers, and that they may know the covenants of the Lord, that they are not cast off forever...<sup>64</sup>*

*...And at that day shall the remnant of our seed know that they are of the house of Israel, and that they are the covenant people of the Lord, and then shall they know and come to the knowledge of their forefathers, and also to the knowledge of the gospel of their Redeemer, which was ministered unto their fathers by him, wherefore, they shall come to the knowledge of their Redeemer and the very points of his doctrine, that they may know how to come unto him and be saved..<sup>65</sup>*

*Wherefore, the fruit of thy loins shall write, and the fruit of the loins of Judah shall write, and that which shall be written by the fruit of thy loins, and also that which shall be written by the fruit of the loins of Judah, shall grow together, unto the confounding of false doctrines and*

---

<sup>63</sup> 2 Nephi 10:19-20

<sup>64</sup> The Book of Mormon, Title Page

<sup>65</sup> 1 Nephi 15:14



*laying down of contentions, and establishing peace among the fruit of thy loins, and bringing them to the knowledge of their fathers in the latter days, and also to the knowledge of my covenants, saith the Lord.*<sup>66</sup>

I hope you enjoyed this early sampling from 2006. For additional extensive research unfolded during the last several years, you may query at [johndavidnelson2@gmail.com](mailto: johndavidnelson2@gmail.com) for information on purchasing Book 2 and Book 3 of Nephites in Europe, or our audio versions of each book, and for heritage tours based on Nephites in Europe.

---

<sup>66</sup> 2 Nephi 3:12 (compare 3 Nephi 5:20-26)