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Archaeology, Relics, and Book of Mormon Belief

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Keywords

Mesoamerica, Archaeology, Modern Church, Restoration, Book of Mormon

Abstract

Archaeology has much to offer as a scientific means of gathering evidence of the Book of Mormon's authenticity. But one must be cautious. A cautionary tale is the failed Cluff expedition of 1900, which supported the "hemispheric model" of Book of Mormon geography, traveled to Colombia looking for the city Zarahemla. Yet in 1842 the *Times and Seasons* (under Joseph Smith's editorship) had printed excerpts from a popular Mesoamerican archaeology that demonstrated a surprising ancient civilization, implying that Nephite lands did not extend into the New World supporting the theory of a "limited" geographic model. Book of Mormon archaeology is on their side. Book of Mormon critics also count on their side, but decades of archaeological investigation of the Old World has shown a pattern of increasing convergence supporting Mormon authenticity. Evidences discussed include, among others, stone boxes, ancient writing, warfare, the tree of life and of the New World geography, and cycles of civilization. In a sidebar, an amateur archaeologist challenge a popular assumption

scene of the final battles depicted in the Book of Mormon.

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