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New Light: Sunken Ruin Off Cuba

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Abstract Reports of an underwater city off the island of Cuba have caused many Latter-day Saints to believe that the city is a remnant of a Book of Mormon city. However, archaeologists have not found any reason to support that idea.



NEW LIGHT

Sunken Ruin off Cuba?

In December 2001, newspapers in the U.S. published a press release purporting to reveal a “ruined city” under the sea off the island of Cuba. The information came from an organization publicizing an unmanned submarine exploring device that had “seen” the ruins via a form of radar. No archaeologist was reported to be involved. This is the latest in a series of uncertain reports of “sunken cities” in waters off the coasts of tropical America that go back to the 1920s,

when Charles A. Lindbergh, the famous American aviator, was supposed to have spotted such a ruin under the sea. A branch of LDS folklore has seized upon these reports and connected them with “evidence” of the great natural catastrophe reported in 3 Nephi. None of the claims have been supported by enough reliable information to convince competent archaeologists that there is anything worth investigating further. The most influential report, from the 1970s, claimed that stone ruins could be seen off the island of Bimini in the Bahamas.

“Atlantis Found!” trumpeted various articles in the popular press. Eventually, earth scientists looked at that purported archaeological site only to find that all it consisted of was an area of blocks of stone with unusual right-angle corners in a natural formation. It is highly likely that the flurry of publicity surrounding the work off Cuba will at best turn out to have been caused by a similar natural phenomenon. (For comments on previous doubtful reports in the press, see *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 8/1 [1999]: 73–74.)