



Brigham Young University

Department of Anthropology

Jerry Bodine
13112 Lilly Street
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December 17, 1987

Dear Mr. Bodine:

Thank you for your letter of December 10. I appreciate your concern about mentioning the Book of Mormon in my National Geographic article on El Mirador. You must realize that I do not know whether El Mirador or other sites are, indeed, those mentioned in the Book of Mormon. At present we have no proof of identification of any important site by name except the ancient city Teotihuacan in the Valley of Mexico. We know this particular identification only because the Aztecs of the 16th century told the Spaniards its name. There are other similar cases of the 16th century but these only identify a handful of minor sites.

I would not dare make a claim for anything about ancient cultures unless there was ample evidence to back it up. To do otherwise would be to deceive and be intellectually dishonest, misusing my position as an investigative scientist. While some people choose to make claims for the Book of Mormon through archaeological evidences, to me they are made prematurely, and without sufficient knowledge.

I do not support the books written on this subject including *The Messiah in Ancient America*, or any other. I believe that the authors are making cases out of too little evidence and do not adequately address the problems that archaeology and the Book of Mormon present. I would feel terribly embarrassed if anyone sent a copy of any book written on this subject to the National Museum of Natural History--Smithsonian Institution, or other authority, making claims that cannot as yet be substantiated.

This may sound very negative to you but my intent is let you know that there are very severe problems in this field in trying to make correlations with the scriptures. Simply put, there is not yet enough of a science base to make a case. Speculation, such as practiced so far by Mormon authors has not given church members credibility. Much more research, both in the field and in laboratories, must be carried out before such correlations can ever be attempted.

I appreciate your sincerity in writing me for a point of view.

Sincerely,



Ray T. Matheny