



The Mammoth Encyclopedia of the Unsolved

Colin Wilson , Damon Wilson

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An expert examination of the most perplexing and still unexplained mysteries in more than two thousand years of human history. From Atlantis, the Bermuda Triangle, and Bigfoot to Tunguska, vampires, and zombies, the most fascinating subjects previously featured in Colin Wilson's popular Unsolved Mysteries Past and Present, The Encyclopedia of Unsolved Mysteries, and The Unexplained now appear along with new, equally mystifying material in one tremendous revised and updated volume. In it, Wilson shares his expert research and investigation into seventy-five of the world's most enduring mysteries, among them crop circles and crystal skulls, monsters and meteors, pyramids and poltergeists, the Hope Diamond and the Holy Shroud of Turin.

The Mammoth Encyclopedia of the Unsolved Details

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From Reader Review The Mammoth Encyclopedia of the Unsolved for online ebook

Doug says

Most of the stories in here I've already read, however, the chapters on Fulcanelli and the Mysteries of Alchemy, The Holy Shroud of Turin, the Man in the Iron Mask and Rennes-Le-Chateau all allude to Priory of Sion and Merovingian Dynasty theory which has been debunked.

Either that or the government is just covering it up: Either way the information is outdated, but what can you expect from a book printed in 2000?

Matteo Pellegrini says

Oltre sessanta misteri che hanno coinvolto e ancora oggi appassionano l'umanità. Strane creature, fenomeni paranormali, delitti irrisolti, pratiche magiche... Un'indagine sull'ignoto nella quale Colin e Damon Wilson analizzano ipotesi e soluzioni. Molti sono i quesiti ancora in sospeso: che fine ha fatto la mitica isola di Atlantide? È il volto di Cristo quello impresso sulla Sacra sindone? Chi fu realmente William Shakespeare? I vampiri sono esistiti davvero? E poi ancora, storie di contatti con gli extraterrestri, le apparizioni del mostro di Lochness, i delitti di Jack lo squartatore, la maledizione del diamante Hope... Eventi e personaggi, creature e oggetti che custodiscono segreti di ogni tempo e luogo. Un campionario di interrogativi che sfidano da secoli il nostro desiderio di conoscere e di cercare risposte agli enigmi della storia.

Sameer says

i think Wilson just wanted to sell another book.

Jack says

I started this book as a conspiracy nut and finished it (years later) as a skeptic. Whether that was down to the way the book presented each mystery is unlikely but nonetheless, it was a great read which encouraged me to always investigate stories further and take nothing at face value. I have heard that the author is a believer in things "Woo" related but the stories are presented in an unbiased way (sort of) and easily accessible. It is a decent starting point if you are at all interested in mysteries and the paranormal.

Gillian says

This book was interesting, but it also has the dubious (dis)honor of having the most typos of any book I've ever read. There must have been some problem at the printer's because there are errors such as three words

being connected without any spaces between them. It's a real shame.

Elena says

A very entertaining reading! I've always been interested in history, archaeology and folklore and this book mixes up all of these and more: superstitions, legends, 'unsolved mysteries' etc. From the Lochness monster to the legend of Atlantis, from the Pyramids to the Holy Shroud... well, the author tries to keep a rational view on all these 'mysteries' and give evidence, so these stories are even more fascinating.

Emily says

Crazy weird unsolved mysteries? Yes please! I've really enjoyed breaking up my non-fiction reading with some interesting material like this. I like how consolidated the information is and how different the content varies. It's not just the normal conspiracies/unsolved mysteries-- Bermuda Triangle, JFK Assassination or Bigfoot. There's a lot of other crazier and weirder stories that I've never even heard of. I've enjoyed reading this one and recommend this for the person who likes some interesting unsolved mysteries.

Naomi says

The late Colin Wilson is one of those writers I can never decide about: when he's good, he's very, very good, and when he's bad, he's horrid. This book is certainly value for money; it's huge, and if you're at all interested in mysteries, the occult, and general "ghosty stuff" there should be something in it for you. At the outset, I claim myself as an open-minded sceptic. I truly want there to be ghosts, etc in the world, and if you give me enough evidence, I will believe it.

But against all this is Colin Wilson being... Colin Wilson.

He comes across as almost rabidly anti-science and anti-intellectual in some places (unless said science or intellectuals are supporting his case.) His scathing comments about those who doubt the existence of vampires decry "the usual rationalizations" without successfully refuting them. He has staked his support in known frauds such as the Fox Sisters and Uri Geller (I'm not sure whether this was written before or after Uri was outed publicly as a fraud.) In places, he seems determined to not think through the obvious implications of what he's written. For example, in a chapter that establishes someone's "spirit guide" has told them information that is nonsense, he defaults to "the spirit guide was lying", not "the person who claimed to have a spirit guide was lying."

This all would have still rated this book three stars, but I find Wilson almost painfully bigoted in places, particularly regarding sex and sexuality. His argument in chapter 51, that the plays of William Shakespeare could not have been written by Christopher Marlowe (a viewpoint I support in general) is that "Marlowe's work shows the prudery that is often characteristic of homosexuals - the distaste for crude smut." In chapter 42, he touches on a case where a woman was raped (word usage his own) by orderlies in a mental hospital. He writes that this woman's doctor "began to suspect that the orderlies may not have been entirely to blame" due to her having an apparent second personality or a case of possession by a spirit who 'wanted it.' Wilson seems in full agreement of this notion.

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Allen says

There are sixty-three sections in this book, each detailing myths the author chose to include. Lengths vary from a couple pages to about twenty or thirty at the most. Each can be read in one sitting though.

I picked the book up toward the end of my long childhood love affair with myths and urban legends, and was disappointed with what I found. I liked reading about mysteries, the unsolved, and similar phenomenon very much, but I really preferred reference books and catalogs, and the title had made me think that's what I was buying. These are more like articles written for a newspaper (and are sometimes just as dull!)

The editing is also pretty sloppy, not so that it's not unreadable, but it is distracting sometimes.

If this is the kind of book you're looking for, and you don't mind a few minor faults it's definitely worth picking up, but if you don't quite know what you're buying it's probably going to be a disappointment.

Joe Augustyn says

This book is a massive collection of essays on a wide array of paranormal anomalous phenomena. I've been reading this stuff for decades and this book has details of cases I haven't found in other volumes--concise but comprehensive reports. It can be had for a song used on amazon so if you're into the paranormal go buy it now!

Andreas Schmidt says

Try to live with both your lobes

La traduzione è riuscita a fare scempio di questi testi, oltre che ai classici "typo", le date spesso non coincidono un 1926 diventa un 1936, eccetera. Colin Wilson è un "giornalista" dell'occulto e del paranormale che è riuscito a mettere insieme una grande quantità di informazioni in tal senso, prendendo i più autorevoli. Purtroppo molti di questi testi sono obsoleti, hanno spesso più di una ventina d'anni e alcuni "misteri" non sono più tali. Mi sento comunque di affermare che c'è un motivo se gran parte delle teorie qui presentate non sono considerate dalla scienza ufficiale. Capitoli a parte sono stati riservati per l'archeologo T.C. Lethbridge (tralasciando Velikovsky, che ancora non ho avuto il piacere o il dispiacere di leggere); anche se Wilson è più o meno innocente, perché da giornalista riporta le "notizie", si lascia spazio a quelle che mi sembrano sempre di più farneticazioni di un pazzo che in fine carriera ha abbandonato la scienza (e la logica). Lethbridge, appunto un pazzo che dice di aver scoperto il funzionamento dell'universo sulla base delle sue risposte con il pendolo, avanzando ipotesi a dir poco ardite - nello stesso testo "the power of the pendulum", si lancia in ardite affermazioni sulla base di conoscenze totalmente sbagliate, come per esempio il non sapere che non era costume romano divinizzare l'imperatore, informazione che mi sembra basilare per un archeologo no? Quindi in definitiva, può essere un testo interessante, ma va preso decisamente con le pinze.

Tim Pendry says

The Mammoth compilations are usually good value and this is no exception. Authored by the redoubtable Colin & Damon Wilson, it is the merging of the bulk of two earlier works, pulling some 63 'unsolved mysteries' together from A (King Arthur and Merlin) to Z (Zombies).

It is not sensationalist though the subject matter is sensational. It provides a reasoned first stab at assessing these mysteries - nearly all of some cultural importance - so that you can, by the end of the book, have your own opinion whether there is 'something in them' or they are just hoaxes or utter nonsense based on the credulousness of the dim-witted.

I had some fun systematically assessing each 'mystery' as it was presented by the Wilsons - in relation to the persuasiveness of any possible argument that there was something in the mystery that could be taken at face value, whether I thought they were relevant to life as we live it today and to their imaginative or mythic value.

Top of the list for further investigation on these terms were the following:-

- * What precisely was Philip K. Dick 'possessed' by that gave him such imaginative power?
- * How did the Dogon of Africa know what they appeared to know about the stars?
- * What is the true story of Homer and the Fall of Troy?
- * How does hypnosis work?
- * What is the provenance of the Oera Linda book and its relationship to the legend of Atlantis?
- * Did 'hidden masters' ever actually exist?
- * Rennes-le-Chateau (naturally).
- * The Piri Re'is Map (another tale of Atlantis).
- * The existence of sea monsters.
- * Time slips.
- * Vortices as bridges between natural and 'supernatural'.
- * Zombies.
- * (And top of the list) the phenomenon of synchronicity.

At the other extreme, we have the probable nonsense or trivia of Agatha Christie's disappearance, the stories of the Devil's Footprints, the Glozel mystery, the 'real' Mona Lisa and the Joan Norkot mystery - entertaining enough but really the stuff of folk legend or of tales spun out of lack of information and a rich imagination.

But the book is immensely entertaining. The care taken to tell each story as canonically as possible make it an invaluable reference tool that should be in any library of popular culture.

If the vast bulk of it presents mysteries that are only mysterious because information of importance is missing, occasionally the Wilsons do go into territory where Arthur C. Clarke's dictum that magic is undiscovered science really might apply.

Some 'mysteries' are still not adequately explained by current scientific knowledge. Though they may be explained, until then we may rightfully be respectful of those who continue to ensure that anomalous events are not swept under the positivist carpet because of their inconvenience.

We owe a great debt to Charles Fort's refusal to do this a century ago and a lesser one to the Wilsons and others who keep 'problems' before our eyes for eventual solution by means yet to be discovered.
