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The Seventy Great Mysteries of the Ancient World: Unlocking the Secrets of Past Civilizations edited by Brian M. Fagan. New York: Thames & Hudson, 2001. 304 pp. \$40 (hardcover). ISBN 0-500-51050-4.

The Seventy Great Mysteries is very impressive externally and internally. It weighs almost 4 pounds and is printed on 304 heavy, beautifully laid out pages, with 431 excellent illustrations (177 of them in color). These statistics easily place it in the coffee-table class.

Just as the photos are superb, so is the text up-to-date and scientifically accurate. The words, in fact, are those of 28 well-established professors, curators, and teaching fellows. There can be no question; this book is authoritative—an excellent store of sound archeological data. However, the book is also, well, mainstreamish. It has to be, for all of the 28 contributors are well entrained in the archeological mainstream. A few heretics are mentioned in the text but they are quickly disposed of, as are radical interpretations of the subjects under discussion.

The 70 *great mysteries* (actually, there are many hundreds just as great) are split into six categories:

- Myths and Legends: Hidden Truths (Example: The Trojan War)
- Mysteries of the Stone Age (Example: How Farming Began)
- Ancient Civilizations (Example: The Lost Legions of Rome)
- Tombs & Lost Treasures (Example: The Tomb of Christ)
- Ancient & Undeciphered Script (Example: The Indus Script)
- The Fall of Civilizations (Example: The Fall of Rome)

The 70 mysteries are treated evenly and accurately according to current archeological thinking. If contention exists on a specific subject, as on the real age of the Sphinx, the conservative view is always promoted. Very seldom are real, tough, paradigm-challenging anomalies found among these 304 pages. To be sure, the still-undeciphered Phaistos Disc is dealt with, as is that

mysterious image on the Turin shroud. But a hard-core anomalist will find this book bland, even while it is authoritative and gloriously illustrated.

There are no hard edges. I was surprised that the spectacular ruins on Nan Madol, in Micronesia, did not make the cut. How about the Olmecs' links with Asia thousands of years ago? Why are not those incredible stone spheres found buried in Costa Rica's banana plantations pictured? How did corn and peanuts get to Asia long before Columbus? Just as some really controversial ancient mysteries were jettisoned, so were some prominent archeological heretics, such as George Carter¹, left unmentioned.

All these anomaly-seeker quibbles aside, we do have here a truly beautiful and impressive tome. All the libraries will want it. But the anomalist will find it wanting, perhaps "expurgated" is a better word!

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FURTHER BOOKS OF NOTE

The Trickster and the Paranormal by George P. Hansen. Philadelphia: Xlibris Corporation, 2001. 564 pp. \$22.94 (paper). ISBN 1-4010-0082-7.

This is an important book for the Society for Scientific Exploration and its membership. It is important because it addresses key underlying reasons for the risks and difficulties faced by scientists (especially), who are compelled by scientific curiosity and an explorer's drive to study anomalies, and especially those anomalies classed as paranormal. As an indicator of interest in the book, this will be the sixth review of it of which I am aware.

I knew the author as an acquaintance several years prior to the book's publication, and now consider him an important friend. That's how I "found" this book. Hansen is not a professional scientist, but the quality and value of his book certainly belie that fact. However, he spent eight years of his adult life employed in