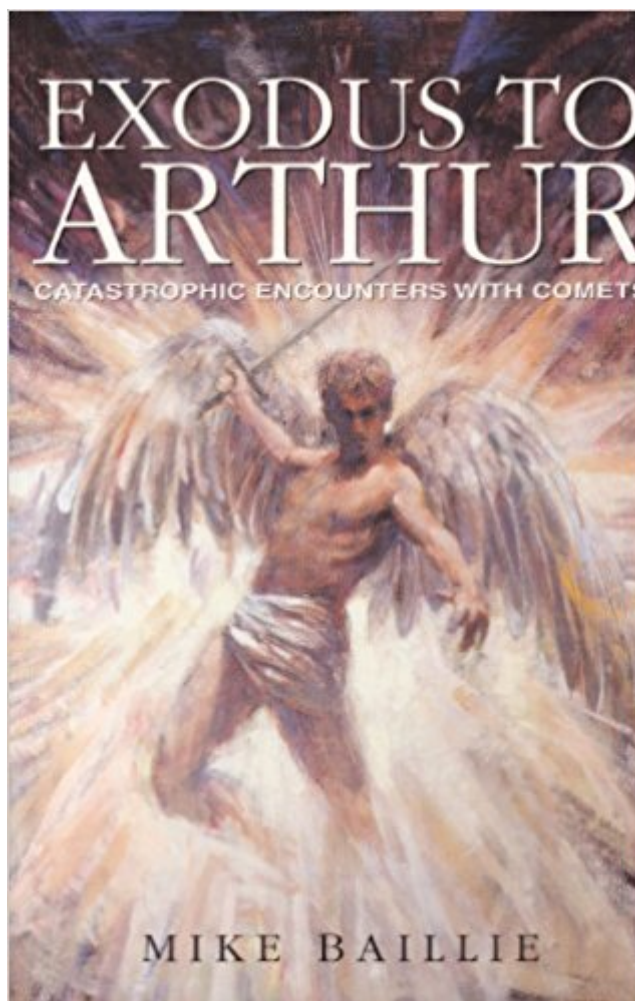




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Exodus To Arthur: Catastrophic Encounters With Comets



Synopsis

This intriguing challenge to traditional views of history, provides explanations for many of the myths and legends that continue to haunt humankind. In particular, it argues that, in the last five millennia, the Earth has undergone several catastrophic encounters with comets and their debris--and that mythology has preserved these events better than so-called "factual" records.

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Customer Reviews

If Baillie is right, history has overlooked probably the single most important explanation for the intermittent progress of civilisation.... if the author is not carried shoulder-high for broaching this important subject, it will be because his doomsday scenario offers little in the way of an immediate technical fix. -- New Scientist, Ben Rudder --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

While I do not agree with all the conclusions as presented, there's no denying the author has laid out a precise case for asteroid impacts in the past that affected civilization and most if not all of them can be found in any folk lore.As a Historian I knew of impacts in the past and I have seen cave drawings in France and Spain.the author lays most of his case on tree rings and dust particles trapped in ancient glaciers. While lacking in detail, it is an excellent and I stress excellent primer for those who wish to start to study our ancient past.

I found this book both entertaining and informative. The author, Professor Mike Baillie, an expert in "dendrochronology" and palaeoecology from Queen's University, Belfast, provides a fascinating scientific detective story. The story starts with the description of a collaborative effort - over many decades - by scientists in several countries to develop a complete record of world-wide, climate modulated, annual tree growth as recorded in tree rings (dendrochronology), from the present back to several thousand years BC. The author then notes several unusual patterns in these records, separated by hundreds of years, which point to multi-year events with very poor growing conditions. This sets up the principal story in the Exodus to Arthur, as the author describes his efforts to explain these anomalies. The Professor Baillie uses as evidence historical records left by - among others - Irish, Mediterranean, Chinese and Mayan writers and story-tellers, and archeological evidence including boats and trees recovered from Irish bogs and well preserved building timbers from long abandoned Anasazi pueblos in Utah. Attention is also given to those cases in which some anomalies in tree ring records do not match well across great distances, for example, between Europe and the American southwest. The conclusion? Well, the title gives it away, so I will not repeat it. I will say that the author does an excellent job of presenting alternative theories, and then explaining why he finds those theories less compelling than the answer he favors. The presentation of the other theories takes the readers on an easy to follow tour of efforts to duplicate parts or all of the dendrochronology timeline using other methods. These methods include gathering and analysis of ice-cores collected in Greenland, the dating of volcano eruptions by radiocarbon methods, and using archeological evidence to note similarities or differences in tools, clothing, burial practices and trade goods between spatially separated cultures. In addition, the author explains his own disagreement with recent attempts to re-arrange the "standard" chronology for the ancient cultures of the Eastern Mediterranean. Exodus to Arthur is one of many recently published books on "catastrophe theory" aimed at "popular" - and not necessarily scientifically trained - audiences. This book is the best one I have read. It appears to me that publishers and editors for these books are demanding "human-interest stories" presenting the thoughts and emotions of the author(s) as they performed their research. Apparently most scientists do not have the skill to write a human-interest story and still present compelling scientific arguments. Professor Baillie pulls off the trick of mixing the personal with the scientific almost seamlessly, probably because he has a good sense of humor, which comes through in his writing. By the way, the dust cover of this book is horrible. I purchased the book through .com based on information gathered from Internet mailing lists. If I had seen the book first in a bookstore, I would have taken one glance at the cover and decided not to

buy it. I suggest buying the book and then throwing the dust cover away as soon as you are near a trash can.

Very happy and excited to read it finally..came in very good to excellent condition..thanks a lot !!!

The first half of the book is good. It is an educating introduction to dendrochronology for the novice. I liked it. The author is an expert in this field. The material is well presented and easy to read. In the second part, unfortunately, the author writes on issues in which he is ill informed, including the history and archeology of Egypt, Israel, and Ireland. The second part of the book is repetitive, boring, and misleading.

Even though this book excellently demonstrates how exact dates can be assigned to historically significant events (both locally and globally) the author deviates too often from the original subject making it a difficult read. Secondly, large number of conjectures written in this book (in my opinion) are very questionable in their very nature or poorly presented. With the exception of the first 50 or so pages, this book put me to sleep every time I attempted to read it.

This book contains incredibly important, scientific observations and conclusions, about the past few thousand years of Earth's history. Unfortunately, the publishers seem to have adorned this brilliant work of science with one of the silliest book jackets I've ever seen in my life. Let me just say right now that I have communicated with the author about this, and the book jacket was NOT his choice. The author, Mike Baillie, is a highly respected professor of palaeoecology at Queen's University Belfast, in Northern Ireland. More than anyone else, he has pioneered the study of "dendrochronology," which is the study of ancient tree rings, and how widely spaced they are in a given year, to infer climate and weather conditions for the years being studied. Basically, the technique is perfectly logical. In a year with terrible weather, trees grow less. Makes sense, right? Well, indeed, this is always the case, and it is possible to see tiny discrepancies in tree growth from year to year, even today. Now, what would you think if you noticed that, at some time in the distant past, trees seem to have gone several years in a row with hardly any growth at all? Scary, eh? What would this mean to you? Well, if you think it over for long enough, you should conclude that SOMETHING was probably blotting out the sun's life-giving rays to such a great extent that trees simply could not grow. If trees could not grow well, it follows that agriculture probably suffered as well. And if agriculture suffered badly enough, there might even be records of actual civilizations

crumbling and vanishing. Professor Baillie has isolated five such periods, in our relatively recent past. These periods took place in 2354-2345 B.C., 1628-1623 B.C., 1159-1141 B.C., 208-204 B.C., and A.D. 536-545. For each of these periods, he has sought to locate historical records, or at least old legends, which might provide some evidence of terrible times for mankind. Sure enough, he always seems to come through with something or other. My favorite part is the A.D. 536-545 period, for which he has made a fairly plausible case of being connected to the old legends of King Arthur's Wasteland. Usually quite a bit of detective work is required here, but more often than not he can make a strong case for something having happened to our climate, at irregular intervals of a few centuries. The title makes plain what he has concluded to be the likely culprits -- comets and asteroids, and possibly an occasional volcano. Current astronomical theory, in fact, actually does hold that statistically, we really should expect to have been hit a few times since the dawn of civilization. Not by anything as bad as the monster asteroid that immolated the dinosaurs -- we would certainly remember that! But even much more moderate-sized asteroids could reasonably be expected to cause significant, widespread social disruption. I would like to point out, to whoever is reading this, that TWO of Professor Baillie's theories in this book have already begun receiving substantial confirmation, since 1999. For example, Baillie believes that something awful happened to the world climate in about 2350 B.C. One of the biggest underreported stories of 2001, pushed off the front pages by the events of September 11, was the discovery of a asteroid-created crater in southern Iraq. It's almost 2 miles in diameter. Many scientists feel that the crater could be the "smoking gun" to explain the events of around 2350 B.C. If you are interested in learning more about this important topic, you don't even need to stand up. Just open another window on your browser, go to any search engine you like, and do a search for the terms "2350," "asteroid," "crater," and "Iraq." You should get a few hits. If that doesn't work, try searching for "Sharad Master." He is the South African geophysicist who discovered the crater, while looking at satellite photos of southern Iraq. He will be presenting his findings at a conference at Brunel University, in the U.K., at the end of August 2002. Hopefully, this time it will get better press coverage than last year. The other theory which has gotten more attention, since 1999, concerns the event of A.D. 536-545. If you'd like to learn more about this, I'd like to recommend that you read "Catastrophe: An Investigation into the Origins of Modern Civilization," by David Keys. "Exodus to Arthur" is a really important book, and I don't understand why it went out of print. It must be because of the stupid cover. Well, listen to the proverbs your grandparents taught you, and DON'T judge this book by its cover. Find a copy and read it. Two thumbs way up.

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