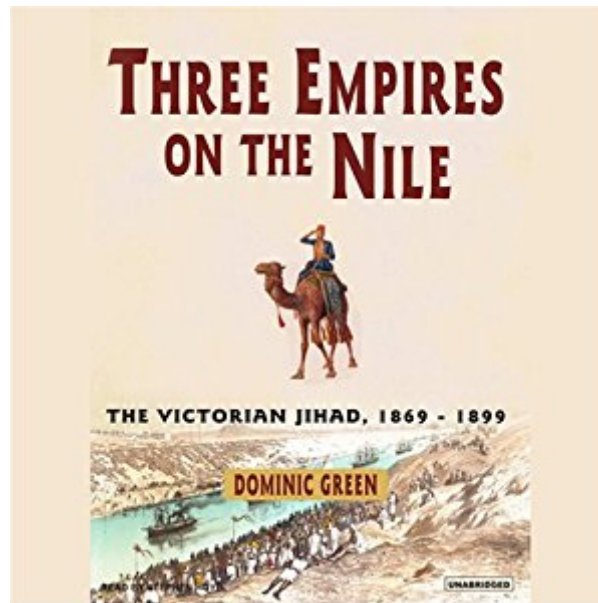




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Three Empires On The Nile: The Victorian Jihad, 1869-1899



Synopsis

A secular regime is toppled by Western intervention, but an Islamic backlash turns the liberators into occupiers. Caught between interventionists at home and fundamentalists abroad, a prime minister flounders as his ministers betray him, alliances fall apart, and a runaway general makes policy in the field. As the media accuse Western soldiers of barbarity and a region slides into chaos, the armies of God clash on an ancient river and an accidental empire arises. This is not the Middle East of the early twenty-first century. It is Africa in the late nineteenth century, when the river Nile became the setting for an extraordinary collision between Europeans, Arabs, and Africans. A human and religious drama, the conflict defined the modern relationship between the West and the Islamic world. The story is not only essential for understanding the modern clash of civilizations but is also a gripping, epic, tragic adventure. *Three Empires on the Nile* tells of the rise of the first modern Islamic state and its fateful encounter with the British Empire of Queen Victoria. Ever since the self-proclaimed Islamic messiah known as the Mahdi gathered an army in the Sudan and besieged and captured Khartoum under its British overlord Charles Gordon, the dream of a new caliphate has haunted modern Islamists. Today, Shiite insurgents call themselves the Mahdi Army, and Sudan remains one of the great fault lines of battle between Muslims and Christians, blacks and Arabs. The nineteenth-century origins of it all were even more dramatic and strange than today's headlines. In the hands of Dominic Green, the story of the Nile's three empires is an epic in the tradition of Kipling, the bard of empire, and Winston Churchill, who fought in the final destruction of the Mahdi's army. It is a sweeping and very modern tale of God and globalization, slavers and strategists, missionaries and messianists. A pro-Western regime collapses from its --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

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Customer Reviews

ISIS...ISSIL...MAHADIST...RELIGIOUS FUNDAMENTALISTS...Great book from authors research notes, well written.You'll see historical aspects, doomed to be repeated by the civilized nations even today... as to why Islamic refugees are drawn to fundamentalism.Not all of course but mix up socio economics into that pot...stoke a fire, and you've got a mix for the ages... you'll see what comes out. It's not pretty, but its reality if you've lived in these nations as I have. 20% can really screw up the other 80% of peoples lives, and its always class or religious issues stoking the flames throughout history. It's no mystery. Without education, the mind dies, and reverts to fundamentalism. Chaos reigns...laws cease to exist...weapons and terrorism too frequently occur, Africa and the middle east will always be places which breed terror and fundamentalism. It's a mathematical certainty.

You could not have invented these characters and this conflict if you were writing fiction. I usually read history with a bias against the self-serving and self-important British but here they are outdone by the inhumanity and barbarity of the other players. Keeping track of all the characters is a bit of a chore, but Green does as good a job as could be done. It is a gripping well-paced telling of a side of Empire-building we don't often examine. If you, like I, visualize what you read, don't read it on a full stomach or just before you fall to sleep.

More comprehensive than single titles focused on Gordon at Khartoum or Omdurman; the gradual creep of,reluctant British imperialism is detailed from the building of the Suez Canal, resulting financial insolvency for Egypt, the drift out of the Turkish Sultan's orbit, Wolsley's failed expedition to rescue Gordon, and the ultimate technological assault of Kitchener on the Mahdi's forces. The early inspirations of Al Quaeda and Isis are all laid out. Fluidly written and engaging.

I found this book enthralling because it relates a part of history that I knew nothing about: Egypt during the Victorian era and attempts by their corrupt rulers to negotiate with the British occupiers, the importance of the Suez canal and struggles of British politicians and military to protect it, the strange, passionate Charles Gordon who became the hero of the seige of Khartoum, the rise of the Madhi in the Sudan who led the first Islamic Jihad in 1869, and the unbelievable bloodshed throughout. This history is all a preview to what is going on i the Middle East and Africa today.

Is very remarkable book is show the history of jihad in Sudan against the black, Women and christian minority

I really enjoyed this book. This is a book about British involvement in Egypt and Sudan between 1869 and 1899. Much of the policies undertaken then by the British parliament echo present day policies in the Middle East. If you are interested in the history of the Middle East, read this book!! most enjoyed the chapters on the Mahdi. According to Islamic traditions, the Mahdi will come to save Muslims from their imminent collapse in society and deliver them from the hands of the unbelievers (the non-Muslims). His name will be Mohammad, like the prophet be peace upon him, and his father will likewise be named Abdullah, like the prophet's father. His appearance will signal the end of days, or the coming of the Day of Judgment. During the Mahdi's lifetime, Jesus Christ will also return to rule the world, according to Islam. It is quite clear that the self-proclaimed Sudanese Mahdi was not the awaited Mahdi Moslems all over the world are waiting for. Yet he was able to save his people from British rule, and successfully retook Khartoum and killed General Gordon after a 300 days siege. Gordon's body was mutilated, and his head severed and taken to the Mahdi. Yet in the process hundreds of thousands of Sudanese died. Was the price worth the freedom from British rule? Interestingly, the Mahdi at first refused to use guns and rifles to fight the British armies, believing that since God was on his side, guns and rifles would be unnecessary. He soon realized though that this was foolishness at its best, not to mention suicide. Another suicidal strategy was to run in masses towards the armed British forces, equipped with rifles and cannons. Thousands of Sudanese died this way, their bodies piled on top of each other. Since any Muslim who dies in Jihad goes straight to Heaven, the Sudanese army was keener of dying in battle and going to Heaven than actually winning the battle. This attitude is clearly shown today in unnecessary terrorist attacks. The Mahdi died quite young, in his early forties and shortly after defeating the British forces. His dreams were of conquering Egypt and then the Gulf states (Middle East), thus cutting the British forces from their Empire in the East (mainly India) and defeating the Ottoman Empire. But right after his death, chaos erupted between the Sudanese and civil war arose between them. The British forces, seeing an opportunity, re-conquered Sudan. The Mahdi's dream was destroyed. Interestingly, during the Sudanese Mahdi's time, another self-proclaimed Mahdi appeared in Libya. However, the Libyan Mahdi did not want anything to do with the Sudanese Mahdi. This demonstrates how religion is used for political ambitions. None of them was the true awaited Mahdi, yet both believed they were. The chapters on General Gordon (Chinese Gordon) and Mr. Gladstone

were also very interesting. It is really amazing to read that Gordon was abandoned by the British during the siege of Khartoum. If only the British sent reinforcements to Gordon, the city would never have fallen and the Mahdi would have been defeated. But politicians back in London, mainly Mr. Gladstone, thought that Gordon was not in need of reinforcements, despite his repeated insistence. Politics! Politicians! Being behind a desk thousands of miles away is much different than being under the line of fire, and this is as true today as ever. It is interesting that some in the British parliament thought that the Sudanese have a right to rule their own country and that the British forces should leave Sudan. Debates actually arose on this point, and this was one of the reasons the British forces were delayed in coming to Gordon's aid. When they finally arrived, it was too late. Gordon was dead and Khartoum had fallen. Another reason for the delay in troop deployment was that Sudan was a burden on the British economy, with more money being invested than actual returns. Sudan was not financially attractive, but rather a financial drain. The chapters on the ruling Egyptian khedive (viceroy) Ismail Pasha were also interesting. Ismail Pasha was westernized, having been educated in Paris, and he liked living the life of an aristocrat. He spent a lot of money for his self entertainment and on acquiring land. But he also borrowed a lot of money from the British to build his country; money that he couldn't pay back. It was Ismail Pasha, together with a French engineer, who built the Suez Canal, separating the Continent of Africa from the Middle East and turning it into an island! His administrative policies, notably the accumulation of an enormous foreign debt, were instrumental in leading to British occupation of Egypt in 1882. When he assumed power, the Egyptian national debt stood at £7,000,000; by 1876 this debt had increased to almost £100,000,000. Eventually Ismail was exiled from his country after bankrupting it and left with all his personal belongings and his personal harem (probably his most important asset) aboard a ship headed for Sicily. He never returned, yet his legacy lives on today by the city named after him, Ismailia. He died on March 2, 1895, in Istanbul. This book reads like a novel, and apart from being informative, is very entertaining. I highly recommend it.

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