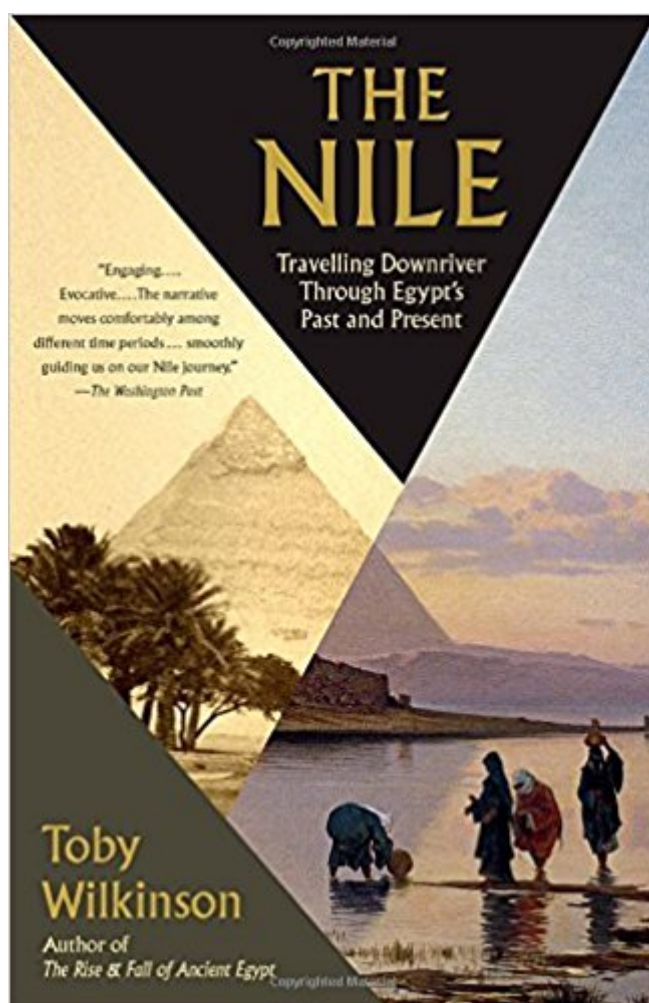


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# The Nile: Travelling Downriver Through Egypt's Past And Present (Vintage Departures)



## Synopsis

The Nile, like all of Egypt, is both timeless and ever-changing. In these pages, renowned Egyptologist Toby Wilkinson takes us on a journey downriver that is both history and travelogue. We begin at the First Nile Cataract, close to the modern city of Aswan. From there, Wilkinson guides us through the illustrious nation birthed by this great river. We see Thebes, with its Valley of the Kings, Valley of the Queens, and Luxor Temple. We visit the fertile Fayum, the Great Pyramid of Giza, and finally, the pulsing city of Cairo, where the Arab Spring erupted on the bridges over the water. Along the way, Wilkinson introduces us to the gods, pharaohs, and emperors who joined their fate to the Nile and gained immortality; and to the adventurers, archaeologists, and historians who have all fallen under its spell. Peerlessly erudite, vividly told, *The Nile* brings the course of this enduring river into stunning view.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

A descriptive descent of the Nile, from Aswan to Cairo, Wilkinson's travelogue fascinatingly blends the historical and the contemporary to underscore the eternal truth about Egypt, its absolute dependence on the Nile's waters. An able writer (*The Rise and Fall of Ancient Egypt*, 2011), Wilkinson enriches his observations with those of Western visitors since Herodotus, biographically digressing into their awestruck interests in Egyptian antiquities. Regularly contrasting their sketches and his own observations, Wilkinson unveils continuities in the depth of the Nile's historical time. Start with what he regards as the Nile Valley's most significant monument—no, not Karnak or

the pyramids but rock-cut steps near Aswan. They are the Nilometer, the key to Egypt's fabled wealth; they measured the Nile's annual flood. Water's vital importance to Egypt for millennia surfaces repeatedly in Wilkinson's pleasingly paced presentation, materially as the means of transportation and agriculture and also spiritually in ancient Egyptian religion, Wilkinson's commentary about whose pantheon underscores motivations of divine propitiation behind the construction of pharaonic monuments. From its archaeological past to its populous present, Egypt has a marvelously acute expositor in Wilkinson. --Gilbert Taylor --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Engaging. . . . Evocative. . . . The narrative moves comfortably among different time periods . . . smoothly guiding us on our Nile journey. • "The Washington Post" Fascinating. . . . Compelling. . . . The Nile emerges as potent as ever, the sole bringer of life to Egypt. • "The Guardian (London)" First-rate. . . . The Nile and the history it has engendered still manage to stir something in all of us. • "The Daily Beast" Impressive. . . . Hugely entertaining. . . . Wilkinson's book is bound to reawaken the joys of armchair traveling. • "Richmond Times-Dispatch" Tell[s] the entire layered story of Egyptian civilization. Wilkinson deftly mingles ancient lore from the Pharaonic past with tales of 19th-century tomb robbers and contemporary clashes between the competing imperatives to develop and preserve sites along the riverbanks. • "The Christian Science Monitor" Masterful. . . . Thoroughly enjoyable and gloriously catholic. • "The Times (London)" Dexterously done and rich in detail. . . . This is infectious stuff that should surely inspire its readers to a fresh bout of Egyptian adventures. • "The Telegraph (London)" In this felucca voyage of the Nile, you see all of its history and you are constantly reminded that Egypt is also a living nation of today. . . . [Wilkinson] has done for popularizing this land what Michio Kaku and DeGrasse Tyson have done for astronomy and physics. • "The New York Journal of Books" [A] gently meandering tour of the Nile River in the company of a deeply knowledgeable guide. . . . To understand the cataclysmic changes gripping Egypt at the moment, eminent British Egyptologist Wilkinson urges a return to the heart of the country, the Nile, the source of the country's economy, spiritual beliefs and political structure. • "Kirkus Reviews"

I have been reading about the history of Egypt for many years, but nothing I have read has been as informative, well-written, and personable as Professor Wilkinson's remarkable book. I am particularly struck by his ability to weave together a historical journey on the Nile with eccentric characters from the past and the events of the last few years in that troubled nation. Given the

recent political upheaval , the crush of tourists around the ancient monuments, and the urban blight the book describes, I have no wish to visit Egypt today. This book makes that journey unnecessary for timid travelers like me.

Glad I had this to read before my cruise down the Nile in 2016.

A good weaving of ancient and more recent history into a journey down the Nile. Well written and the stories hold you attention.

This book has a blend of ancient and modern facts of benefit to the reader. Being there makes it even better.

A readable and most interesting book. It narrates the author's boat voyage on the river Nile from the Cataracts at the southern-most part of Egypt to its capital Cairo. Perhaps one might say, it is a leisure- travelogue, written from the perspective of a modern Egyptologist, who combines his knowledge of Egypt's past history, with insightful observations on some of its historical sites, towns, and cities; coupled with the author's views, understanding, and notions of the recent developments in Egypt. One however can't help but note some speculative views in reading some observations on contemporary Egypt, e.g. he correctly describes the city of Qena as an area, which has historically flourished and benefited from east-west trade through Egypt. He seems however to believe this trade might have influenced a local culture, or perhaps subculture, that leans more towards independence, secretiveness, and self-sufficiency. This might or might not be true; however linking these "perceived" cultural influences to the observed cleanliness of the area, perhaps might be more of a stretch. The author provides a well-balanced review for many anecdotal episodes of Egypt's past history, and should also be credited with including some important though more often forgotten episodes, e.g. he notes the almost- unknown and forgotten last "true ancient Egyptian" Pharaoh of Egypt, Ankhwennefer, who attempted against great odds to regain Egypt's independence from the Ptolemaic "Greek" kings circa 186 BC, he also notes another "true ancient Egyptian" from the 3rd - 4th century AD, Saint Anthony the Great (251-356 AD), who embraced the Christian faith, led an exemplary ascetic life, and became the Father of Christian monasticism, which influenced Christendom all over the world, he also narrates his visit, as a young man, to a Coptic Orthodox Church in Minya, where he seems to have been pleasantly surprised to hear some of the sounds of the ancient Egyptian language, still preserved in the Coptic Church's liturgy, ...etc.

All in all the book provides an entertaining and informative read of Egypt's past and present, and perhaps it might even inspire a traveler, not only to visit Egypt, but also enjoy a leisurely cruise over the Nile.

Bought this in preparation for a Nile River Cruise, particularly because it covered much of the Nile and cities along the river, not just the Cairo area. A good mix of history, modern day information, and some political commentary sprinkled throughout. Gave a good primer before our trip.

Loved this book so much that i bought the paper copy as well so that i could reference back easily. Just wish i could return to see these sites again, with this book in hand. A great read and never ever boring

Loved this book; It provided me with a much better understanding of that part of the world, especially in relation to what is happening in the here and now.

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