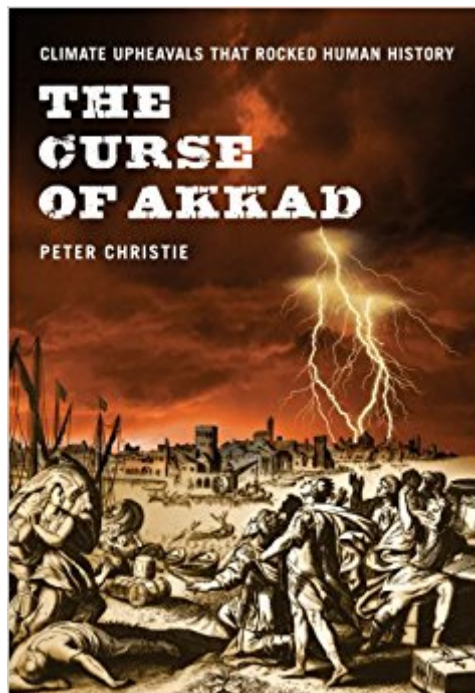




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The Curse Of Akkad: Climate Upheavals That Rocked Human History



Synopsis

Dramatic accounts of turbulent natural forces that shaped civilizations. When Sargon of Akkad created the world's first empire 4,000 years ago, he thought none could conquer his powerful kingdom. He was wrong. A disastrous drought in Mesopotamia helped topple the Akkadian civilization. Similar climate-related events rocked other civilizations. Ancient Rome experienced a catastrophic 18 months of darkness, possibly from a volcanic eruption half a world away. Mayan society in Mexico began to crumble when fresh water became scarce. And both ancient Egypt and ancient China were transformed by failed crops and starving citizens. While many wonder how today's warming climate will affect our future, *The Curse of Akkad* explores capricious climate shifts of the past. From an ice age that gave humans an evolutionary leg up to an El Niño that frustrated the battle plans of Hitler, author Peter Christie shows that the prevailing weather of a place is not simply a backdrop to important events, but often a critical player. *The Curse of Akkad* is an acclaimed writer's exciting and enlightening look at climate's frequent place at the helm of human history.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Grade 6 Up
In a refreshing look at climate change, Christie discusses the ways in which environmental conditions have shaped human history. The chapters, each discussing a different aspect of climate change, are arranged in loose chronological order. Every section opens with a fictionalized account featuring either an imagined or a real historical figure. The author then explains how climate change caused the events to occur. For example, one section introduces Eridu, a

13-year-old laboring in Mesopotamia in 2200 B.C.E. to construct a government building. Before it can be completed, Ekidu and his fellow citizens are forced to abandon the area as famine hits. Christie goes on to explain that archaeological records suggest that a 300-year drought devastated the Middle East, also impacting the Egyptians and Harappans. As a result, some ancient civilizations seem to have evaporated, leaving little record of their existence. Other featured climate changes include ice ages, droughts, volcanoes, and currents. The book is well researched. Its only potential downfall is in the layout; sidebars, which appear on almost every other page, occasionally interrupt the flow of the narrative, but do make the book more visually attractive. In all, the text is readable, and connecting science to history opens the topic of climate change to a wider range of students. --Lindsay Cesari, Baldwinsville School District, NY Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Tailor-made for reluctant readers, this sweeping survey of the effects of climate change on human civilization is presented in digestible segments of one to three pages, some laced with melodramatic passages. For example, during seventeenth-century Europe's Little Ice Age dark and desperate figures began scrounging through fields and streets for anything to eat. Some said grave robbers were scooping out and eating the brains of bodies they uncovered. Sandwiched between chapters of ominous warnings about modern climate trends, Christie suggests that droughts, floods, sunspots, worldwide changes of temperature, and massive volcanic eruptions have been major players in the rise and fall of nearly every human culture. Fictive observers are added to some segments, and the small black-and-white photos are less informative than the occasional map or chart. Some of the claims, such as the connection between the 1815 eruption of Indonesia's Mount Tambora and the creation of both Mary Shelley's Frankenstein and J. M. W. Turner's paintings, seem far-fetched. Still, the subject is compellingly topical, and Christie at least hedges wilder suggestions with qualifiers such as Some say . . . Useful reading lists are appended. Grades 5-8. --John Peters --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

My children, aged 9 and 13, really liked this book. They let their friends read it afterward, which is quite atypical of them, but is perhaps owing in no small part to Christie's fresh approach to what tends to be a rather binary topic. I would like to see this in every public library.

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