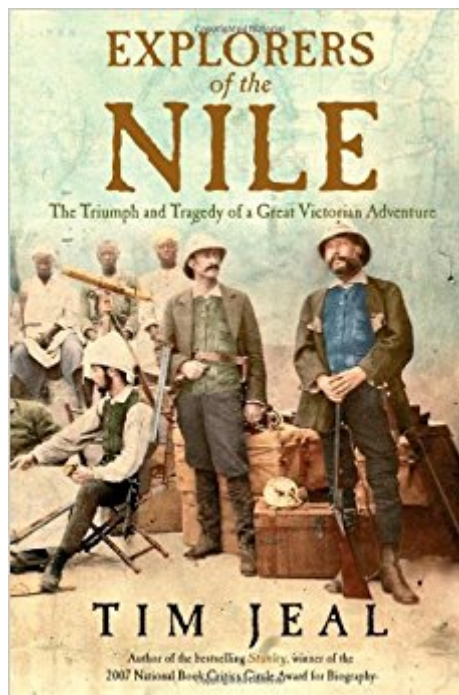




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Explorers Of The Nile: The Triumph And Tragedy Of A Great Victorian Adventure



Synopsis

Nothing obsessed explorers of the mid-nineteenth century more than the quest to discover the source of the White Nile. It was the planet's most elusive secret, the prize coveted above all others. Between 1856 and 1876, six larger-than-life men and one extraordinary woman accepted the challenge. Showing extreme courage and resilience, Richard Burton, John Hanning Speke, James Augustus Grant, Samuel Baker, Florence von Sass, David Livingstone, and Henry Morton Stanley risked their lives and reputations in the fierce competition. Award-winning author Tim Jeal deploys fascinating new research to provide a vivid tableau of the unmapped "Dark Continent," its jungle deprivations, and the courage—as well as malicious tactics—of the explorers. On multiple forays launched into east and central Africa, the travelers passed through almost impenetrable terrain and suffered the ravages of flesh-eating ulcers, paralysis, malaria, deep spear wounds, and even death. They discovered Lakes Tanganyika and Victoria and became the first white people to encounter the kingdoms of Buganda and Bunyoro. Jeal weaves the story with authentic new detail and examines the tragic unintended legacy of the Nile search that still casts a long shadow over the people of Uganda and Sudan.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

“Explorers of the Nile is a brilliant, scholarly and at times almost unreadably vivid account of the two decades in the middle of the 19th century when the search for the Nile’s source in central Africa was at its height.” —Ben Macintyre, New York Times Book Review (Ben Macintyre New York Times Book Review) “Elegantly written and skillfully crafted...The greatest

strengths of this highly enjoyable and readable book are Jeal's passion for his subject and his mastery of personalities as complex as the geography they battled to understand."

•Diane Preston, Washington Post (Diane Preston Washington Post)"Superb narrative . . . Jeal's judicious account is a must-read for anyone hoping to understand the internal dynamics of modern state-building in central Africa."

•Brian Odom, Booklist (Brian Odom Booklist)"Masterly...One of the fascinations of Jeal's book and his account of this astonishing period of exploration is that it makes great efforts to strip away the accumulated myths and through this process we can begin to see these 'heroic' figures plain, to imagine them as they were to their contemporaries."

•William Boyd, TLS (William Boyd TLS)"Tim Jeal's masterly book ... can safely supplant Alan Moorehead's 1960 classic, *The White Nile*... Jeal also knows how to tell a fabulous story, and he lets old-fashioned epic adventure sit at the heart of his fine book."

•James McConnachie, Sunday Times (James McConnachie Sunday Times)"[A] wonderfully entertaining and authoritative account of the search for the Nile and its consequences."

•John Preston, Sunday Telegraph (John Preston Sunday Telegraph)Runner-up for the 2011-2012 Los Angeles Book Festival in the General Non-fiction category (General Non-Fiction Award Runner-up Los Angeles Book Festival)"There are few greater stories than the race to the Nile's source... Tim Jeal gives a fine reprise, bringing together in one well-paced narrative the interlocking Nilotic adventures ... Its place [is] alongside the classics of Victorian explorer history."

•Tim Butcher, Daily Telegraph (Tim Butcher Daily Telegraph)"If there is one book about the search for the sources of the Nile to read and keep on the shelf, this is it."

•Tim Severin, Irish Examiner (Tim Severin Irish Examiner)"Epic in proportion...An absorbing adventure and a thought provoking morality tale."

•Peter Burton, Daily Express (Peter Burton Daily Express)"Tim Jeal's gripping book pulls the whole astonishing story together. . . . It's as intricate and unexpected as the source of the river itself. . . . All the main players were. . . . examples of grit, resourcefulness and courage on a heroic scale. . . . How intimately Tim Jeal knows them all, and brings them back to life for us."

•Tom Stacey, The Spectator (Tom Stacey The Spectator)"Jeal's lengthy, comprehensive, and revisionist book is exciting reading both about the adventures in the field and about the clash of personalities."

•Rob Hardy, The Dispatch (Rob Hardy The Dispatch)"Tim Jeal's wonderful book is filled with anecdotes and brilliant cameos, which keep the narrative fresh and sparkingly alive. His treatment of these legendary figures is authoritative and compassionate."

•Alexander Maitland, Literary Review (Alexander Maitland Literary Review)"Splendid."

•Bernard Porter, Guardian (Guardian)Won Honorable Mention in the 2012 New York Book Festival History category, sponsored by the New York Book Festival

(History Honorable Mention New York Book Festival 2012-06-12)

Praise for Tim Jeal's Stanley, winner of the 2007 National Book Critics Circle Award for Biography "A magnificent new life. . . . There have been many biographies of Stanley, but Jeal's is the most felicitous, the best informed, the most complete and readable and exhaustive, profiting from his access to an immense new trove of Stanley material." —Paul Theroux, front page, New York Times Book Review "[An] impressive, revealing, and well written biography. . . . Tim Jeal has had both the good fortune to see [Stanley's] papers and the skill to construct a new interpretation around them. He recognizes Stanley's feats and views them in the context of his age rather than ours. Moreover, he adds new layers to his subject's character." —David Gilmour, New York Review of Books "[T]his commanding, definitive biography . . . is an unalloyed triumph." —Jason Roberts, Washington Post Book World —"Sympathetic yet balanced, perceptive and full of perspective, this is biography at its best." —Ross Leckie, The Times London Named one of the 100 Notable Books of 2007 by the New York Times Book Review Selected as one of the best books of 2008 by the Washington Post Nominated for the 2007 Los Angeles Times Book Prize for Biography

An interesting read. Although a relatively long book it details the life and times in a way that shed a completely new light on the way countries such as France, Germany and most importantly England impacted the country, often times for altruistic purposes. The tribulations, the agony and the extreme efforts to explore the Nile is extremely awe inspiring. The tenacity of some of these explorers is beyond imagination and truly defines the term "extreme". Unfortunately, the book also sheds lights on the extremely terrible actions of slave trading, elephant tusk trading and other atrocities that make up the history of the world. A truly sad state of affairs. Maybe countries in their false belief that they know better should stick to their own environments rather than believe they know better and colonize others. Sure, there may be some advantages to the people of another country but what the missionaries did and the sanctioned actions of others on the belief that there may be a way to dominate another weaker country simply to exploit the natural resources of another is totally and completely wrong. We can only imagine how the world would be today if the British had not defined country boundaries the way they did in Africa. Has anything been learned and has anything changed - I don't think so. A good read.

Jeal's latest book is certainly worth reading if you're interested in exploration or African history. As in

his other books, Jeal's analysis and opinions are frequently given. The narrative follows the adventures and achievements of each of the prominent British explorers of the Nile sources. Burton comes off the worst by a long shot, Speke is much in favor, Grant seems to be mostly in the background. Sam and Florence Baker get a mixed review tilting toward the negative. Stanley is much appreciated by Jeal as any reader of his highly recommended biography of Stanley will know. Livingston gets grudging respect from Jeal, more than I recall seeing in Jeal's much earlier biography of the man. As other reviewers have noted the closing chapters on subsequent events in the region make for a rather disappointing conclusion. Readers may find it worthwhile to also read Alan Moorehead's "White Nile" for an earlier perspective on much of the same material. While lacking some of the resources currently available Moorhead's books are highly readable and entertaining. See also "Blue Nile" and "Cooper's Creek". For a more balanced (in my opinion) take on Livingstone see George Seaver's "David Livingstone: His Life and Letters" or Andrew Ross "Mission and Empire". If for no other reason, read "Explorers of the Nile" to gain a greater appreciation of John Hanning Speke.

Better if names geographically connected to today's named countries

Great!

Read this and ask yourselves if you would have done this for your country. The many things that you learn will push you to give this to a new generation to show that these people should be remembered for these times of improvement and the stopping of slavery. Today we watch an Africa falling apart and this book attempts to explain why this happened--the Brits, French and others left and order, justice and infrastructure fell apart. Read Michelle Wrong books for modern/ recent African tales.

I agree with the applause to this well researched and magnificent written history of the explorers of the Nile but it is important to add how the understanding of the present state of the affairs in the region could benefit a lot from a careful reading of this book. The essential mistakes appears so naturally that is a pity that some lessons are not learned by people now involved in former Yougoslavia, Ukraine, Syria not to mention many countries in Africa Tim Jeal made a fantastic job.

I have read Alan Moorehead's "The White Nile" and this is a good companion. Jeal had access to

more archival data than Moorehead which adds to the story. Has more history on some of the key players. Covers the "search" for the Nile focusing further south than Moorehead's book and does not include the adventures of Gordon and the Madhi.

This is a very good book covering known events in the various searches for the Nile as well as revealing many previously unknown things. For instance (spoiler alert!), having read several biographies of Burton, I had always viewed Speke as a bit of a fool and Burton as the true explorer. I now have to grudgingly view Burton as an opportunist and glory-seeker. Most of the book is very interesting, but can tend to drag on detail in some spots, most notably as we approach modern eras.

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