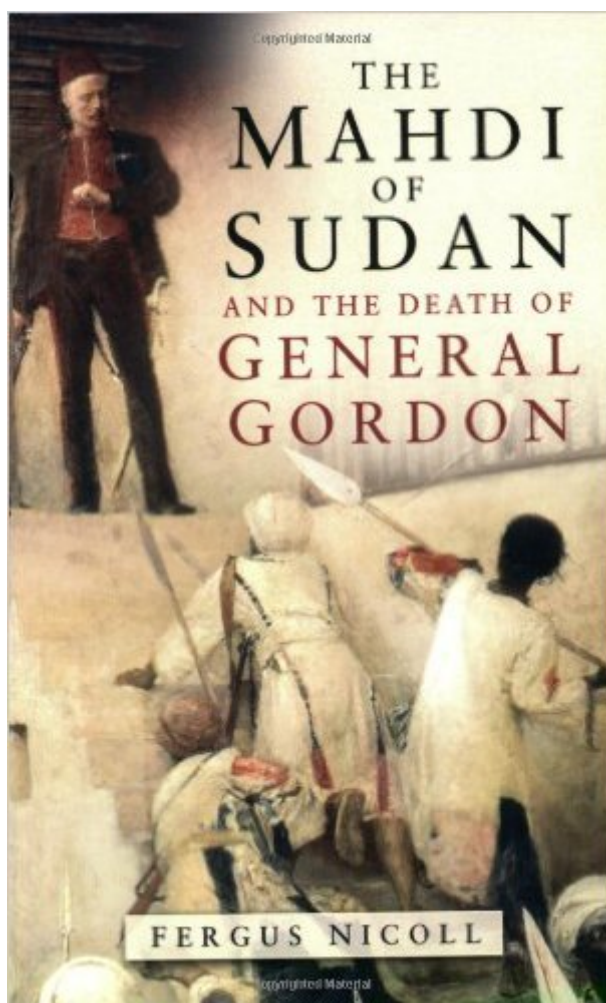


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The Mahdi Of Sudan And The Death Of General Gordon



Synopsis

On 26 January 1885, a Sudanese Islamic revolutionary army entered Khartoum. The slaughter continued from dawn until noon and involved the beheading of British officer General Charles Gordon. This event has often been explored in literature yet the focus has always been on General Gordon and the colonial viewpoint. This new biography recognises for the first time the Mahdi's role as the charismatic but flawed leader of a movement seeking to free his people. Nicoll discusses a range of issues, from taxation and the spread of militant Islamic influence along the pilgrim route from West Africa to Sufi dress code and the Nile boat-building industry, but it is the character of the Mahdi who remains at the book's core - the boat-builder's son who attempted to lead the Sudanese to independence.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I always approach a biography or a volume of history written by a Brit with great caution. The Brits always whine about "popularizing history," and then write the most dull, godawful books one can imagine. They seem to have a knack for terribly written history. Gibbon died a long time ago, and it has all been downhill ever since. Added to my worry about the book was the fact that the author worked for the BBC. I cannot think of a greater qualification for disaster, slanted history, and lack of objectivity than working for the BBC. There was a time when it had a serious news department, with serious reporters. But that was long ago. What you get from the BBC today is slanted rubbish, with a strong anti-American and anti-Western bias. Like Reuters, the BBC has become a cruel parody of itself. So with those two worries in mind, I decided to read the book about the Mahdi and

Gordon. Overall, I got a fairly pleasant surprise. The book is readable. It does not suffer from the British style of history, so you can actually read and enjoy it. A good start. The author also tries to tell the story of the Mahdi, with a certain degree of objectivity. And the Mahdi's story needs telling. He seems to be the forerunner of what we are facing today--Islamic fanaticism, and a charismatic figure to spur it on. Bin Laden and the Mahdi share many traits--some positive, most not. One can, with a certain degree of imagination, see the appeal of the two. They both put their money where their mouth is--and both show the power of example. I might not like the example, but you have to give them a certain degree of credit. By giving some credit, you see how they developed a following.

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