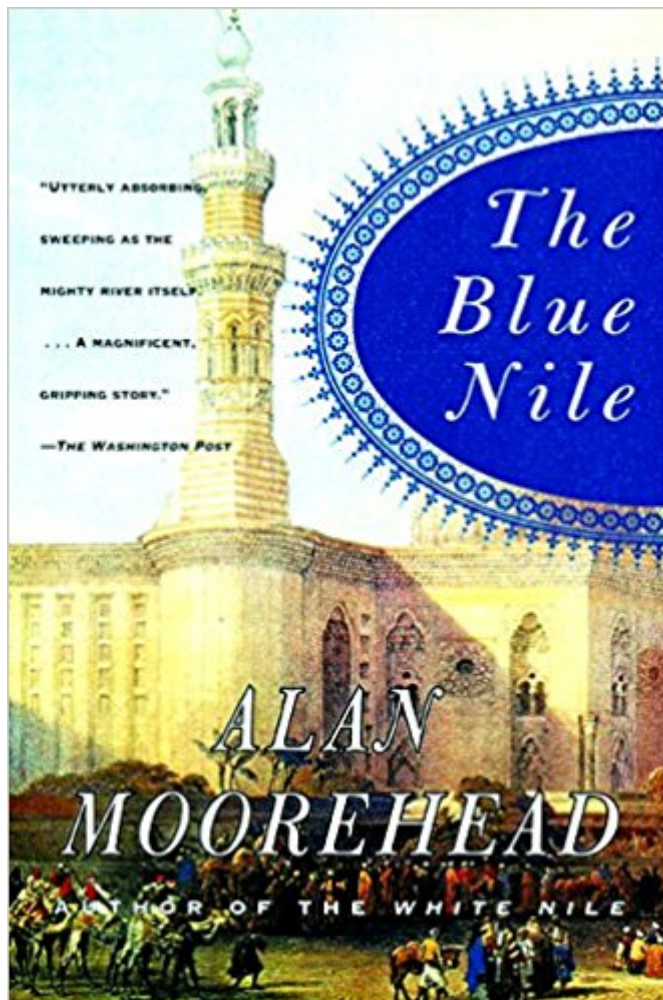


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The Blue Nile



Synopsis

In the first half of the nineteenth century, only a small handful of Westerners had ventured into the regions watered by the Nile River on its long journey from Lake Tana in Abyssinia to the Mediterranean-lands that had been forgotten since Roman times, or had never been known at all. In *The Blue Nile*, Alan Moorehead continues the classic, thrilling narration of adventure he began in *The White Nile*, depicting this exotic place through the lives of four explorers so daring they can be considered among the world's original adventurers -- each acting and reacting in separate expeditions against a bewildering background of slavery and massacre, political upheaval and all-out war.

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Customer Reviews

"AN EXCITING AND UNUSUAL BOOK". -- NEW YORK TIMES "A Masterpiece."--"Newsweek" "An Exciting and Unusual Book."--"New York Times" "Utterly absorbing, sweeping as the mighty river itself...A magnificent, gripping story."--"The Washington Post"

In the first half of the 19th century, only a small handful of Westerners had ventured into the regions watered by the Nile River on its long journey from Lake Tana in Abyssinia to the Mediterranean -- lands that had been forgotten since Roman times, or had never been known at all. In *The Blue Nile*, Alan Moorehead continues the classic, thrilling narration of adventure he began in *The White Nile*, depicting this exotic place through the lives of four explores so daring they can be considered among the world's original adventures -- each acting and reacting in separate expeditions against a

bewildering background of slavery and massacre, political upheaval, and all-out war.

Outstanding read about the history of a key region in the world. Very well written, with a host of fascinating characters and delightful expositions of little known but pivotal events (Napoleon's invasion of Egypt for instance), this (and its sister book) were an eye opener. This is the second book of two written by Mr. Moorehead about the Nile rivers. The first, *The White Nile*, covers about 1850 to 1890 or so, and *The Blue Nile* from 1650 to 1900. I have to mention that these are western-centric histories and now are quite dated (1962-65 or so) and there's probably quite a lot for the historian to quibble about. But for a general appreciation of the events surrounding western exploration and colonization, I can't think of a better read. Recommended.

I read the companion piece, *The White Nile*, some time back. *The Blue Nile* is a story, basically, of the three military actions that conquered the region of this tributary. There are also a few customary eccentric explorers thrown in. I wish some pictures of the ancient ruins mentioned throughout and of the tribesmen, cities, geography and even military forces mentioned had been included.

Two years after the success of "*The White Nile*" (1960), Moorehead spun further yarns of African adventurers and Nilotic history. This time the year span is from 1798 to 1858 and the location is on the Blue Nile, dealing with Sudan and Ethiopia. European exploration of this lesser but not least branch of the mighty river started further back in time because of its easier accessibility from the Red Sea coast. After a brief description of the ancient history and geography of the river, we meet Bruce, a Scottish explorer who despite his meticulous research and extraordinary scripts passed at his return home as a megalomaniac. Successive events find Napoleon's invasion accompanied by the savants and the destruction of the Mameluk rule that really represented the turning point of the modern history of the valley of the Nile. After Napoleon's departure the Turk Muhammad Ali regained power destroying a greater part of the Sudanese population. The last part of the book deals with King Theodore of Ethiopia, a mad chieftain that captured and held in ransom over 400 people for four years, and that was overcome by the British army. This book can be read alone or better as a sequel of "*The White Nile*". The narration is equally effective and the limits are those of a book written in the 1960's. The episodes are less dealing with only four major topics. I read the book in a day and half, considering it took me three days to read the "*The White Nile*". Now I have to look for further stories by this great writer.

This book is a fascinating history of a part of the world that in the 1800's was remarkably sought after. Especially in contrast to the marginalization of that region only 100 years later. The story is so well told, that one almost has a sense of suspense reading it. Also, the parallels to our own twenty-first century times were so apparent to me that I consider this one of those histories to which Seneca was referring when he so notoriously said that those ignorant of history are doomed to repeat it. The passages on British popular opinion of war with Egypt could have easily been applied to any number of more modern wars by simply changing the names. My wife and I read this book aloud to each other, and greatly enjoyed it. Looking forward to reading more by the same author. My copy was an old hardback from 's used section.

This is a book I reread (actually re-audit) every few years. It's an account of the astonishing true history of 19th century African exploration that inspired thousands of adventure and fantasy stories in the intervening years. It's also very timely. In its account of the great jihad of the Mahdi in the Sudan, and the feckless response of the West, it is easy to find echoes of ISIS.

This author's in depth descriptions and research we're seamless in their presentation and made me feel a part of his travel. And with today's internet access to place and people images truly made the history come alive.

I love reading history and fancy myself to be quite well read on a variety of historical topics, however I'm slightly embarrassed to admit that much of what I read in this book was completely new to me. This book deals with the Upper Nile region of Sudan and Central Africa, primarily in the latter half of the 19th century. Parts of the book dealing with Speke, David Livingstone and Henry Stanley were somewhat familiar to me, however historical characters such as Burton, Gordon, Emin, the Mahdi and various of the other Pashas and Khedives were new and absolutely fertile ground. This book is extremely well written and at almost all times captivating. The descriptions of the Sudd region of the Nile raised visions of Humphrey Bogart dragging the African Queen and Kathrine Hepburn through the reed choked channels of another African river. The chapters on the fall of Khartoum and the struggles of Emin in Equatoria were riveting. I highly recommend this book, if for no other reason than the fact that unless you are a student of central Africa, you have probably never been exposed to much of this history. For anyone seeking a more detailed treatment of specific African explorations, I recommend *Into Africa: The Epic Adventures of Stanley and Livingstone* by Martin Dugard. Another captivating read from this period would be King Leopold's

Ghost, dealing with colonization of the Belgian Congo.

This is a remarkable book, written by one of the best writers of the English language. His narrative is unique and upon reading the book you have a quite good perspective of Egypt and its surrounding territories. His description of the French intervention in Egypt is almost a documentary with vivid description and great illustrations and drawings. I also enjoyed immensely, his book Gallipoli for its his style and narrative.

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