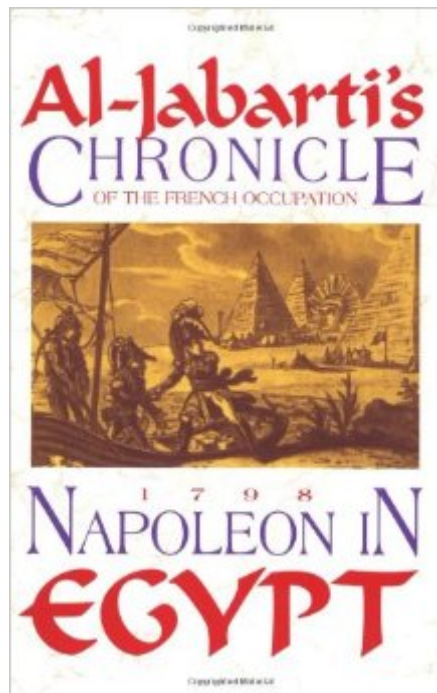


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Napoleon In Egypt: Al-Jabarti's Chronicle Of The French Occupation, 1798



Synopsis

An Arab view of a turning point in modern history. Napoleon's conquest of Egypt in 1798 was the first contact between a Western power with imperial goals and an "ancien regime" of an African society. This chronicle offers a combination of historical narration and reflection combined with daily observations about the atmosphere in Cairo and the mood among the local population. The author resents the French invasion, ridicules their claim to be a defender of the faith, rejects their belief in liberty and equality, despises their lack of morality and personal hygiene, but approves their efficiency, common loyalty and co-operation, and wonders at their technical and scholarly abilities.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The Chronicle of Al-Jabarti is an account of the first six months of Napoleon's invasion and occupation of Egypt 1798. Sheikh 'Abd Al-Rahman Al-Jabarti was an astronomer at Al-Azhar. As a member of the 'Ulama, Napoleon appointed him to the Diwan, or Grand Council, through which the French had hoped to govern Egypt. This allowed Al-Jabarti to compile a detailed chronicle of the French organization of administrative matters, the battles and the flight of the Mamluks to Upper Egypt and the Revolt of Cairo. Al-Jabarti left a valuable record of his impressions of the French in terms of their character and learning. With the possible exception of the very protracted Spanish Reconquista which ended with the fall of Granada in 1492, it had not been since the Crusades that a 'Western' power had attempted an invasion of a Muslim land on the scale and scope of Napoleon. The French General had also brought to Egypt an army of scholars from L' Academie whose purpose it was to study and record all possible aspects of interest, while also showing off European

science and learning. Louis Antoine Fauvelet de Bourrienne (Napoleon's private secretary) included in his Memoirs a brief account of the invasion of Egypt. A reading of both The Chronicle and the Memoirs provides an interesting insight as to how the Arabs and the French saw each other.

If you are interested in an Arab man's account of the actions of Napoleon's army in Egypt especially in cultural and political domains, then this book is the right one for you. I bought this book for my college final paper, but it was actually fun to read as well. I think this book is very relevant today too, with all the discussions regarding the West vs. the Arab East...Towards the end of the book, I got a sense that Al-jabarti did not completely despise the French after all, surprisingly...As I read this book, I felt as if I were back in time with all of them. The book is short and sweet, and a good read, even for non-history majors. Also, what is funny is that I purchased this book through one of 's sellers, but they LOST it in shipping, so I got a refund and managed to get a copy elsewhere...People should be wary of the independent booksellers on , because they don't seem that responsible when it comes to international shipping.

Oh, would some Power the gift give us,
To see ourselves as others see us;
It would from many a blunder
And foolish notion free us -- Robert Burns
We have a lot of histories of Napoleon in Egypt. Even more of the naval battle where Nelson came in. Here is a view of the invasion of Egypt left from the Egyptian side. His comments are rather surprising. It was very clear that the French military machine was vastly superior to the military forces then in Egypt. The French knowledge, science, technology was likewise admired by Al-Jabarti. On the other hand their claim to be the defender of the faith is obviously ridiculous, even though they did have a translation of the Koran. This particular edition of the book has been expanded in honor of Al-Jabarti's 250th birthday. The translation is by Shmuel Moreh of the Hebrew University, and Robert L. Tignor provides an introduction giving an overview of the events.

there are so many other books that cover this topic in a more enjoyable and comprehensive way.
not recommended.

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