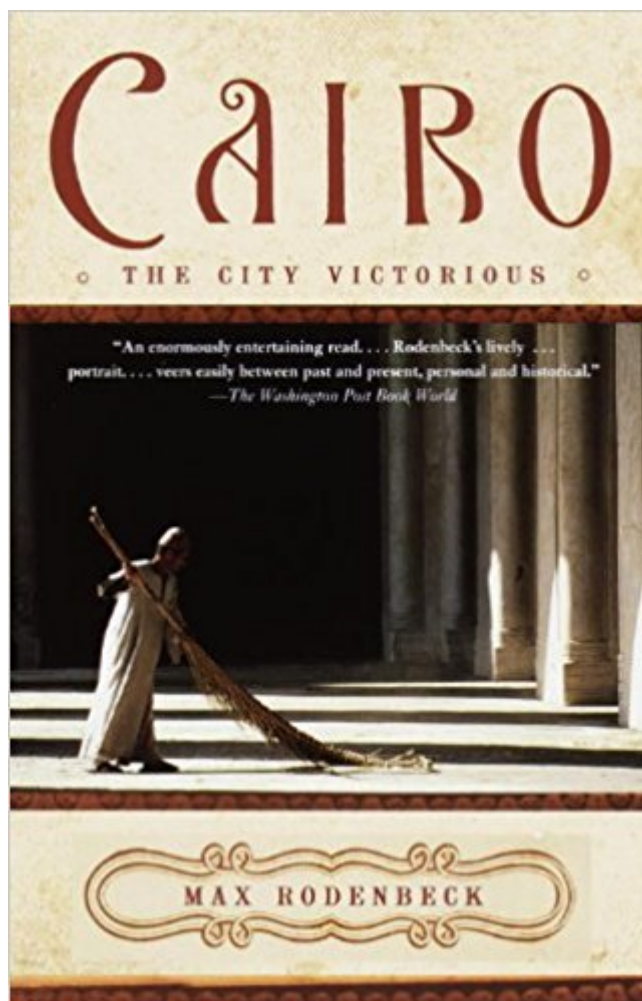


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# Cairo: The City Victorious



## Synopsis

From a noted journalist who has spent much of his life in Cairo, here is a dazzling cultural excavation of that most ancient, colorful, and multifaceted of cities. The seat of pharaohs and sultans, the prize of conquerors from Alexander to Saladin to Napoleon, Cairo--nicknamed "the Victorious"--has never ceased reinventing herself. With intimate knowledge, humor, and affection, Rodenbeck takes us on an insider's tour of the magnificent city: its backstreets and bazaars, its belly-dance theaters and hashish dens, its crowded slums and fashionable salons, its incomparably rich past and its challenging future. Cairo: The City Victorious is a unique blend of travel and history, an epic, resonant work that brings one of the world's great metropolises to life in all its dusty, chaotic beauty.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Every great city deserves a book like this one: a sweeping chronicle by an author whose motives mix passion and bewilderment. Over the course of four and a half millennia, Cairo has eluded all who would try to pin it down, reinventing itself time and again: "It has survived countless invasions, booms and busts, famines, plagues, and calamities." Author Max Rodenbeck, a correspondent for the Economist, moved to Cairo as a 2 year old, and has spent a good portion of his professional life working there. He finds himself repulsed by the crowds and pollution of a late 20th-century megacity, yet drawn by Cairo's ageless vibrancy. Cairo: The City Victorious combines wide-ranging history and first-person travelogue in an unconventional narrative that bounces easily from the present to the past and back again. ("If the story were to loop and tangle and digress," he writes,

"well, that too would be in the character of Cairo.") Immersed in Rodenbeck's prose, readers will find themselves feeling at home as they discover (or rediscover) this unique place, its pyramids, and its people. --John J. Miller --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

From the awesome artistic trove of its 5000-year-old civilization to the high-rise buildings that dominate the skyline today, Cairo is evoked in all its dizzying variety in this rich, surprisingly concise history. Rodenbeck, the Economist's Middle East correspondent, has lived in Cairo since childhood and is not shy to admit that he has, on occasion, fallen "out of love" with his chaotic, noisy adopted home?the largest city in Africa, the Mediterranean and the Islamic world. He's especially dismayed at the city's current past-obliterating rush toward the trappings of global capitalism. But he notes, with characteristic wryness, that "not one generation in Cairo's five millennia of incarnations had failed to whine about decline." Eleven loosely chronological chapters fuse history with a contemporary travelogue. These include looks at Cairo's most ancient known civilization, On (credited with creating the modern-day solar calendar), of which virtually nothing remains today; medieval Cairo, "a prosperous and astonishingly cosmopolitan trading society" boasting a legal system far more humanistic than its European counterparts; and British-occupied Victorian-era Cairo, a chic stop for tourist hordes. He also examines the influence of 20th-century rulers, from King Farouk's corrupt reign to Anwar Sadat's nationalistic (and decidedly not pan-Arab) vision. Finally, Rodenbeck explores Cairo's current identity crisis and flirtation with Islamic fundamentalism: even in this most tolerant and bawdy of cities (it is, after all, the "belly-dancing capital of the world"), women are likely to don "retro seventh century" robes for the streets. Rodenbeck's tour brings this and other such quintessential Cairene paradoxes into rare focus. Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Vividly written by someone who knows every nook & cranny; warts & splendor. Able to convey an astoundingly complex world in a riveting style

Fantastic Portrayal of Cairo, history and present. Intelligently written with tremendous insight of Egyptian psyche and language. Fascinating account of history focusing on social history, traditions, habits and customs. With Egypt's long history, the social history often takes back seat to major events, battles, temples and achievements. A huge amount of serious research and very savvy analysis of trends produced an excellent work that flows easily like reading an article on the pages of good newspapers yet has the backing of tremendous research of history. Sadly, however, there is

an over reliance on work and analysis of discredited Orientalists, but the author's clear love and understanding for Cairo has saved the work from being colored by the arrogance of the racist historians he relied heavily on.

Very enjoyable book with sufficient detail and a lively style. I would definitely recommend this book to anyone travelling to Egypt.

great city and its stories and history are fascinating, having lived there I can attest to its wonderful storied roads and lanes filled with mystery...the book brings it to life....

This is a generally well-written and decently translated history of the Egyptian capital. There is more information and detail than you want at times, but the personal stories and narratives compensate for the over verbiage. Worth reading if you're planning a trip to Cairo.

I'll be visiting Cairo next month so i wanted to read something about this city. The book is not bad when it comes to history. The author explains the political, economical and social changes with accuracy and insight. However he lets out, what i believe, important history about the city. He doesn't go into details regarding The Citadel or the islamic buildings in the city. He just mentioned them when it is relevant to the story he is telling. I felt that, as i was going to be a first time visitor to the city, i wasn't getting all the necessary info or inside scoop on the monuments, buildings and landmarks that makes Cairo a great city. I think the author falls short in this regard. But as an introduction to the city itself is very good and gives color to the account.

What a pleasure it was to read this book! Mr. Rodenbeck manages to cram a lot of fascinating information into just 267 pages. The book ranges over an enormous period of time, from the days of the pharaohs right up until the present. Obviously, in such a short book you can't go really in depth but somehow after you're done reading you feel that you really understand Cairo and the people who live there. I learned many interesting things. Did you know that a thousand years ago Cairo was full of apartment buildings that ranged from 7 stories up to possibly 14 stories high? The city was so small considering the size of the population that they had nowhere to go but up! Another fascinating fact was that when the pharaoh Cheops had his pyramid built at Giza the specifications called for 2.3 million stone blocks of an average weight of 2.5 tons to be used. In order for the pyramid to be completed during the 30 years of Cheops's reign this meant that a stone block had to be into place

every 2 minutes! I could go on and on. You learn something on every page: about the physical layout of the city and how it has changed over the centuries; its relationship to the Nile; the way the wealthy and the middle class and the poor live; the importance of Islam and the struggle to find a balance between religion and the secular world; about such leaders as Farouk, Nasser and Sadat; the occupation of Cairo by Napoleon and later on by the British. One of the best things about the book is that Mr. Rodenbeck does not let himself get in the way of this wonderful story. He describes the way things have been in the past and the way they are now and he doesn't preach or predict or otherwise feel the need to insert his ego into what he has written. This is really an excellent book!

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