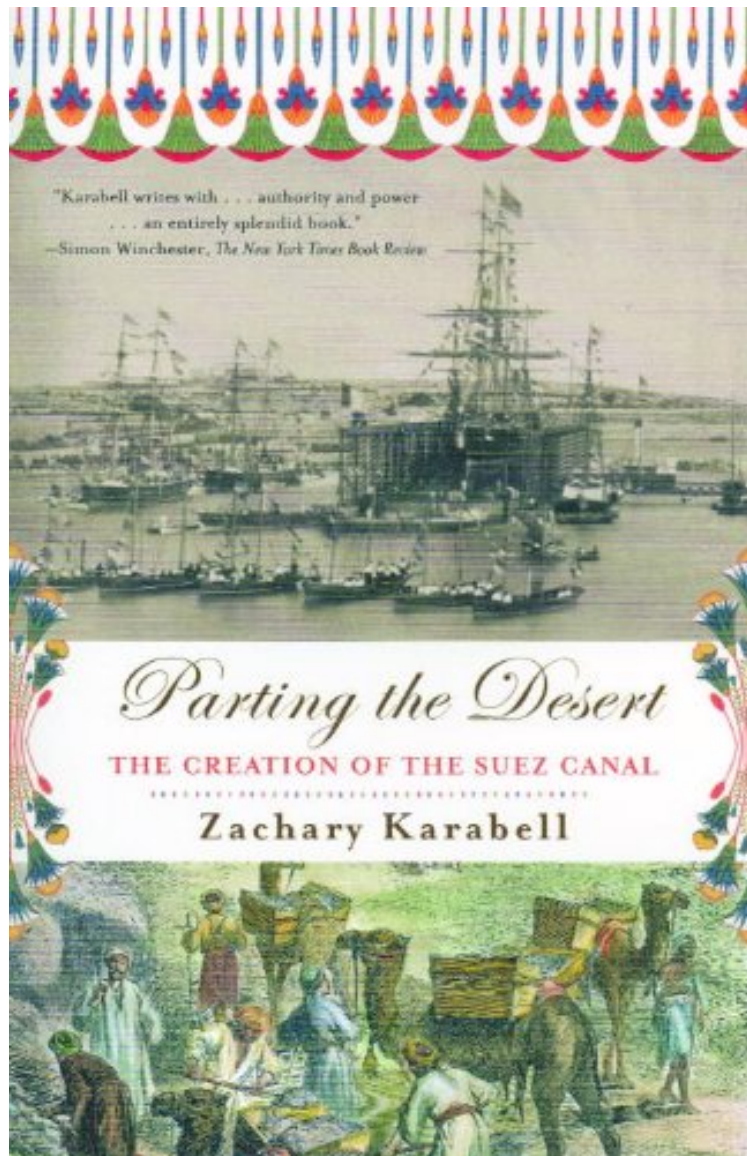


[Online library] Parting the Desert: The Creation of the Suez Canal

Parting the Desert: The Creation of the Suez Canal

Von Zachary Karabell

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Von Zachary Karabell : Parting the Desert: The Creation of the Suez Canal before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Parting the Desert: The Creation of the Suez Canal:

KundenrezensionenHilfreichste Kundenrezensionen0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. BrilliantVon M. Schweiger`Parting the Desert' by Zachary Karabell is the story a man (Ferdinand de Lesseps) who against all odds manages to successfully complete the technically most challenging and daunting project of his time - the Suez Canal. Born as the son of a diplomat he follows his father's footsteps and forges early ties with the Egyptian

Mohammad Said, son of the famous ruler of Egypt, Mohammad Ali Pasha. After becoming the scapegoat for failed French ambitions in Italy and retiring to the countryside, he returns to Egypt in 1854 and proposes the Suez Canal (an idea originally developed by Barthlemy-Prosper Enfantin) project to Mohammad Said and gains his immediate support. Lesseps starts his lobbying campaign in 1855 throughout Europe which culminates in a road show and subsequent rights issue in 1858 for the Suez Canal Company. Mohammad Said (Egypt) subscribes to 177.000 of the 400.000 shares issued since they cannot be placed elsewhere - the financial undoing for Egypt as it will turn out. (Forced) manual labour - the corvee - determines the work until 1863 when Said dies and is succeeded by an initially more frugal Ismail who renegotiates terms with Lesseps (which will cost Egypt dearly). From then on until its completion in 1869 machines determine the course of the project. Lesseps needs to overcome substantial opposition (Lord Palmerstone, Enfantin etc.) but benefits from his highly innovative marketing campaigns and lobbying activities (and his cousin, Eugenie de Montijo, spouse of emperor Napoleon III). The British - irony of history - become shareholders in and the largest beneficiaries of the Suez Canal Company in 1875, taking the shares from Ismail and later turn Egypt into a protectorate. It's not only the fascination of an enormous undertaking and a remarkable personality which make this book an excellent read but also the brilliant case study of the ingenious capital markets activities of Lesseps (rights issue with focus on a large free float, bond issue, road shows, presence at the precursor of the world fair in 1867 ...).

Kurzbeschreibung Award-winning historian Zachary Karabell tells the epic story of the greatest engineering feat of the nineteenth century--the building of the Suez Canal-- and shows how it changed the world. The dream was a waterway that would unite the East and the West, and the ambitious, energetic French diplomat and entrepreneur Ferdinand de Lesseps was the mastermind behind the project. Lesseps saw the project through fifteen years of financial challenges, technical obstacles, and political intrigues. He convinced ordinary French citizens to invest their money, and he won the backing of Napoleon III and of Egypt's prince Muhammad Said. But the triumph was far from perfect: the construction relied heavily on forced labor and technical and diplomatic obstacles constantly threatened completion. The inauguration in 1869 captured the imagination of the world. The Suez Canal was heralded as a symbol of progress that would unite nations, but its legacy is mixed. Parting the Desert is both a transporting narrative and a meditation on the origins of the modern Middle East. From the Trade Paperback edition. From Booklist *Starred * A middle-aged ex-diplomat rusticated in the French countryside hardly sounds like someone who could bring off an audacious feat of engineering, but such was the case with Ferdinand de Lesseps. Known to readers of David McCullough's classic *The Path between the Seas* (1977), de Lesseps later came to grief attempting to carve a canal through Panama. In depicting de Lesseps' glory days on the Suez Canal, Karabell proves just as able a raconteur as McCullough, as he thematically contrasts the dreams invested in the construction of the Suez Canal with its fading importance today. Long gone, Karabell notes, is a statue of de Lesseps that overlooked his creation; vanished, too, is the dreamy romanticism invested in all things Egyptian by French artistic and progressive thought in the first half of the 1800s. Although de Lesseps was fascinated with the exotic, Karabell appraises him as a salesman who viewed the canal as a way to etch his name in history. Because de Lesseps' personal connections to potentates were crucial to his success, Karabell amplifies his story with figures from the worlds of diplomacy, finance, and French and Egyptian societies. A brilliant narrative. Gilbert Taylor Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved Pressestimmen 'This fascinating book ... guides the reader admirably through the background to what was the world's greatest engineering project' -- Justin Marozzi, *Literary* 20030601 'Karabell has written an exceptional book, one of the best of its kind ... a splendid account of a great project' -- *Sunday Herald* 20030603 'Karabell writes with the authority and power of a gifted and fascinated Arabist ... This entirely splendid book now stands to remind us of [de Lessep's] remarkable vision and all that he created in consequence.' -- Simon Winchester, *New York Times* 20030701 'A concise and pleasantly digressive history ... a tale of colourful and clashing personalities' -- *The Economist* 20030614 'They did indeed part the desert, and their story cannot be told better than by this fine book' -- Andrew Roberts, *Sunday Telegraph* 20030601