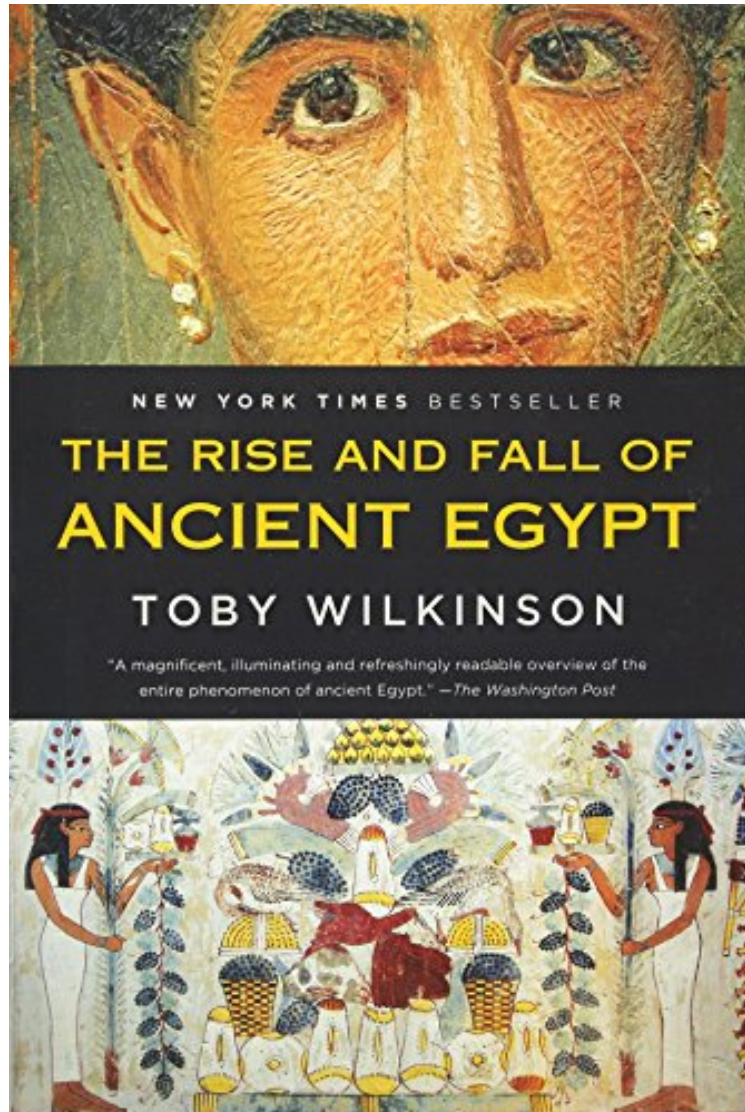


The Rise and Fall of Ancient Egypt

Toby Wilkinson

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NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLERMagisterial . . . [A] rich portrait of ancient Egypts complex evolution over the course of three millennia.Los Angeles Times NAMED ONE OF THE BEST BOOKS OF THE YEAR BY The Washington Post Publishers Weekly In this landmark volume, one of the worlds most renowned Egyptologists tells the epic story of this great civilization, from its birth as the first nation-state to its absorption into the Roman Empire. Drawing upon forty years of archaeological research, award-winning scholar Toby Wilkinson takes us inside a tribal society with a pre-monetary economy and decadent, divine kings who ruled with all-too-recognizable human emotions. Here are the legendary leaders: Akhenaten, the heretic king, who with his wife Nefertiti brought about a revolution with a bold new religion; Tutankhamun, whose dazzling tomb would remain hidden for three millennia; and eleven pharaohs called Ramesses, the last of whom presided over the militarism, lawlessness, and corruption that caused a political and societal decline. Filled with new information and unique interpretations, *The Rise and Fall of Ancient Egypt* is a riveting and revelatory work of wild drama, bold spectacle, unforgettable characters, and sweeping history. With a literary flair and a sense for a story well told, Mr. Wilkinson offers a highly readable, factually up-to-date account.The Wall Street Journal [Wilkinson] writes with considerable verve. . . . [He] is nimble at conveying the sumptuous pageantry and cultural sophistication of pharaonic Egypt.The New York Times

From Publishers WeeklyStarred . Cambridge University Egyptologist Wilkinson (*Lives of the Ancient Egyptians*) offers a revisionist view of the ugly life hidden by the splendors and dazzling treasures of pharaonic Egypt. He shows in rich detail that it was a brutal society where life was cheap, royal power absolute and established through fear and coercion. Wilkinson finds unequivocal evidence in royal tombs like that of First Dynasty king Djer (c. 2900 B.C.E.), surrounded by 318 buried retainers, probably victims of human sacrifice. Even if construction workers for Khufu's Great Pyramid at Giza ("the ultimate projection of absolute power") were reasonably fed and housed, they were virtual, if not literal, slaves, drafted to perform the perilous work. Later the fanatical, heretic king Akhenaten built a new model city with grand temples where mountains of food were offered to a sun god while his people were starving and severely overworked. The Ptolemies' punitive economic policies unleashed a peasants' revolt that fatally weakened their empire. This is a penetrating and authoritative overview of a violent ancient civilization often revered by contemporary scholars and enthusiasts. 24 pages of color photos; 44 bw photos; 12 maps. (Mar.) (c) Copyright PWxyz, LLC. All rights reserved.From BooklistEgyptologists constitute a relatively small subspecialty among professional historians. Perhaps that is why many express an almost fanatical devotion to and admiration for the culture of ancient Egypt. Wilkinson, an award-winning Egyptologist who teaches at Oxford, provides a fine single-volume history of ancient Egypt that covers more than 3,000 years, from prehistory to the Roman conquest. He uses a conventional chronological approach that inevitably uses archaeological sources to provide examples. Like his colleagues, Wilkinson expresses admiration for the continuity, stability, and relative harmony of pharaonic Egypt. Yet he is strikingly at odds with other Egyptologists in his efforts to present the darker side of Egyptian life. Egyptian rulers created and maintained the first true nation-state. As Wilkinson shows, however, the price of this stability was regimes based on fear, coercion, and, when deemed necessary, violent military suppression. This superbly written survey is ideal for general readers and likely to engender controversy among specialists. --Jay Freeman A magnificent, illuminating and refreshingly readable overview of the entire phenomenon of ancient Egypt.The Washington Post Magisterial . . . [A] rich portrait of ancient Egypts complex evolution over the course of three millennia.Los Angeles Times With a literary flair and a sense for a story well told, Mr. Wilkinson offers a highly readable, factually up-to-date account.The Wall Street Journal [Wilkinson] writes with considerable verve. . . . [He] is nimble at conveying the sumptuous pageantry and cultural sophistication of pharaonic Egypt.The New York Times Engrossing . . . Readers will find it hard to put down. . . . This book will serve as a standard for general readers and college students alike.Library Journal (starred review) Absolutely divine . . . a thorough, erudite and enthusiastic gallop through an astonishing three thousand years.The Sunday Times