

Cairo: City of Sand (Topographics)

Maria Golia

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Cairo is a 1,400-year-old metropolis whose streets are inscribed with sagas, a place where the pressures of life test people's equanimity to the very limit. Virtually surrounded by desert, sixteen million Cairenes cling to the Nile and each other, proximities that colour and shape lives. Packed with incident and anecdote Cairo: City of Sand describes the city's given circumstances and people's attitudes of response. Apart from a brisk historical overview, this book focuses on the present moment of one of the world's most illustrious and irreducible cities.

Cairo steps inside the interactions between Cairenes, examining the roles of family, tradition and bureaucracy in everyday life. The book explores Cairo's relationship with its 'others', from the French and British occupations to modern influences like tourism and consumerism. Cairo also discusses characteristic styles of communication, and linguistic mêmes, including slang, grandiloquence, curses and jokes. Cairo exists by virtue of these interactions, synergies of necessity, creativity and the presence or absence of power. Cairo: City of Sand reveals a peerless balancing act, and transmits the city's overriding message: the breadth of the human capacity for loss, astonishment and delight.



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