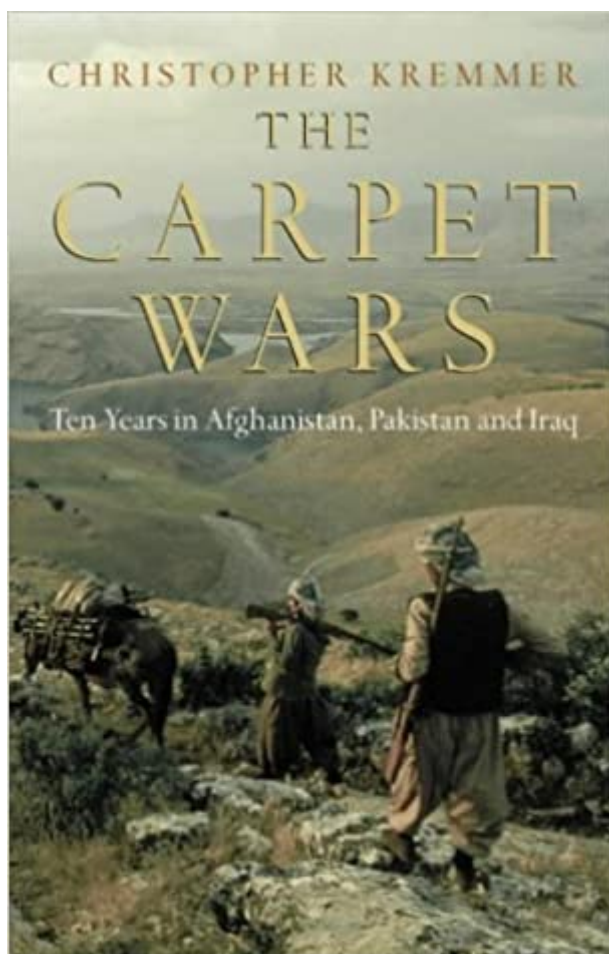


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The Carpet Wars - A Journey Across The Islamic Heartlands



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Customer Reviews

I really enjoy this book. The author presents the complex and intriguing culture contained in a specific context not many would use to describe the societal actions of Afghans. He presents the different tribal realities in a woven way; using the carpet trade. How has the trade impacted culture and how has the culture affected the trade? You can see the way the wars and conflict in Afghanistan since the Soviet invasion has affected and molded the carpet trade in the area; it's a very telling look at what is really going on. You need to read the book with a different approach; take in the how the trade has been affected to truly understand the insight the author is trying to provide. The author uses great words to describe what he sees. He uses a very colorful and telling narrative that pulls you along with his story. I recommend this book to the casual reader interested in different cultures, anybody interested in a first hand look at the carpet trade, and any one in the military who would be interested in getting a new perspective at the culture we are currently protecting and the enemy we are currently fighting.

I finished this book about six weeks ago, and I can't stop thinking about it. So often travel literature-type books by westerners in these kinds of far-off places can be either too clever, cynical or condescending at one end of the scale, or, at the other end too reverent, with a reverence that seems to really be an I-hate-where-I-am-from complex. Both extremes can get tiring pretty quickly. *The Carpet Wars* was exactly in the middle, and it was fascinating. It was extremely informative about the history, politics, religion and, yes, even the carpets of the region from Pakistan

to Iran. Carpets were merely the thread (so to speak) that held the several first-hand accounts of travels to the region. Kremmer is a master story teller, and very funny. Sometimes it was hard to tell what was more enjoyable, the story he was telling or the way he was telling it. His accounts of places with which he is very familiar are told in the rich tones of a deep affection. When he is in a new place, like Isfahan, the account is in the vivid colors of someone seeing something for the first time, creating some of the best travel essays I have ever read. Seven weeks ago, Isfahan was just an exotic name to me, now it's at the top of places I hope I can see before I die. It's hard to say what recommends this book more, the fact that it is thoroughly enjoyable, or deeply informative. I haven't read Mr. Kremmer's book about Laos, but it is probably pretty good. Books like *The Carpet Wars* don't stick with you so long by accident.

so many mixed emotions. Such a sad history of a fabulous area and Christopher transferred his love of the people, their carpets and their countries straight into my consciousness. I'm in total envy of his experiences.

Must for rug lovers

I love oriental carpets, thus the title grabbed my attention immediately. As I got into the book and realized that the carpets would be but a unifying element in this fine journalist's story of his ten years traveling in the ancient trade routes of the Middle East, I became engrossed in this unfinished history.

Arrived on time. Wonderful read!

I am writing this review while working in Kabul. Before Kabul I was in Dushanbe. The author tends to romanticize Afghanistan and mention (or gloss over) important subjects that he does not seem to understand or want to recognize. His section on Tajikistan introduces the reader to his meeting with Massoud (Lion of Panjshir and an ethnic Tajik). The author should have found another way to introduce his meeting with Massoud - a genuine hero to many Afghans as demonstrated by his posters on buildings, buses and cars in Kabul today. A careful reader will note that the author's tone and descriptions of Tajikistan and Dushanbe are not nearly as detailed (or romanticized) as the chapters devoted to Afghanistan. As a matter of fact, he portrays Tajiks as drunken, gambling clowns. I am embarrassed for my Tajik friends who live in Tajikistan and Afghanistan. There was

also a brief mention about the origin of some silver trinkets the author saw for sale in Iraq. A vendor told a BBC journalist that the silver items belonged to Iraqi Jews. The author goes on to discuss how Zionists, with the help of an agent, convinced Iraq to let Iraqi Jews move to Israel. The author, by putting quotes around the words "rescue operation" to describe the Iraqi Jewish exodus from Iraq, is implying that the 150,000 Jews who were in Iraq were never in danger. If the author wants to discuss these issues he should be fair and impartial. It is common knowledge that the Jews who fled Iraq and other Arab lands in the 1950s were forced to sell their property and assets at ridiculously low prices. The author could have mentioned this which is common knowledge to anyone interested in the history of the region, rather than calling into doubt the reason why the Jews of Iraq fled to Israel in the 1950s. An event that made many Arabs outside Palestine very rich. The brief stories about carpet buying are very interesting. The author should stick to these encounters.

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