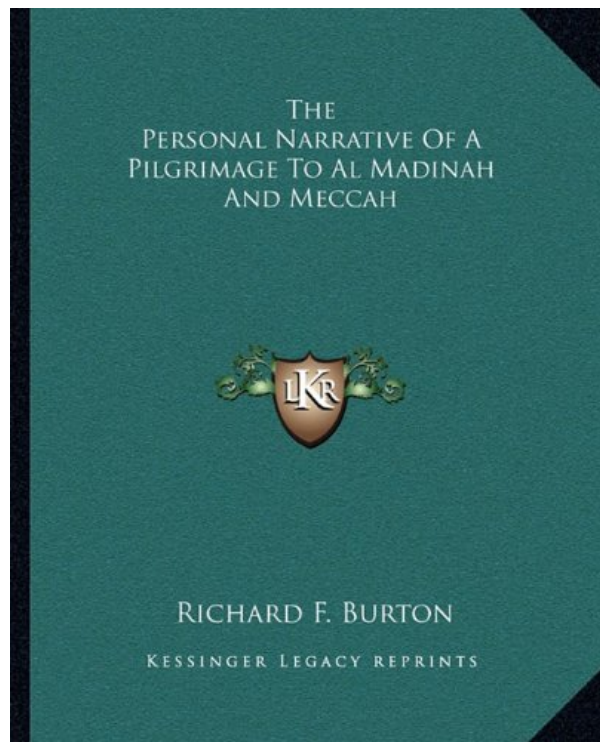
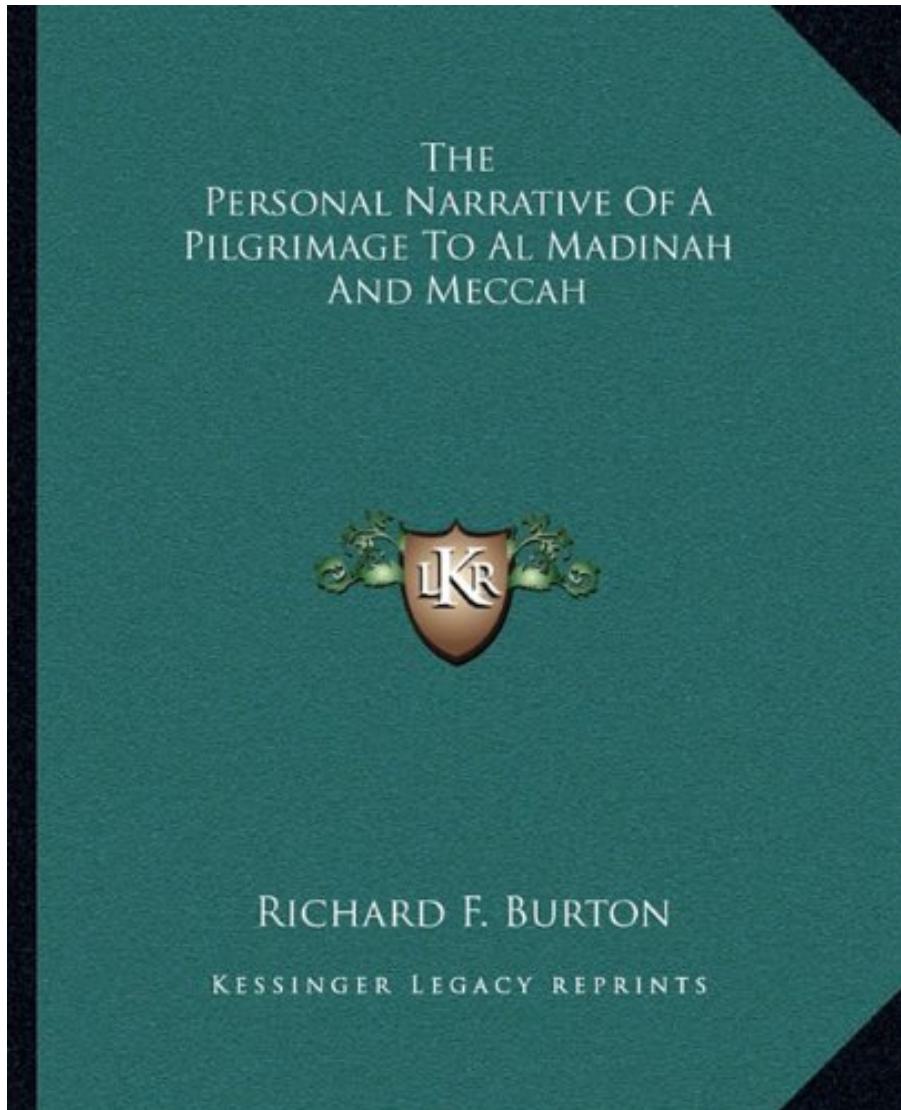


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Richard Francis Burton was an explorer, translator, writer, soldier, spy, fencer, and diplomat. He is most famous for his translations of One Thousand and One Nights and the Kama Sutra and for having been the first European to visit the Great Lakes of Africa. He traveled to Mecca in disguise and spoke nearly thirty languages. He died in 1890.

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- 330 pages

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### A Riot

By Thomas F. Ogara

It's hard to take Richard Burton seriously nowadays. His sardonic humor and his hilarious deadpan observations about Middle Eastern life sound more like a satire on Victorian attitudes than an actual travel story. And yet, underneath the veneer one sometimes catches a glimpse of sympathy and actual respect for the people he writes about.

Under the veneer, too, there is a hard core layer of reality, and a surprising number of his observations are true even today. The thing that gets me is that he was able to pull off the pilgrimage at all! As a sometime traveler and student of languages, I have been in situations where I have tried to pass for a native, and regardless of where you go it is a difficult act to pull off for more than five minutes. How Burton got all the way to Mecca without being stoned to death is beyond me.

Which makes it a good adventure story as well as good travel literature. One of the most enjoyable books I have ever read. I recommend it highly.

27 of 28 people found the following review helpful.

Classic adventure... and mostly true!

By J. Burgess

I confess: Richard F Burton is one of my heroes. In part, it's because much of my life has been spent in his traces, from India, through the Middle East, to Baltimore and the Great Plains.

He's simply a fabulous story-teller. Whether he's commenting on the sexual proclivities of the people of a region, their food, clothing, culture or religious practices, he's just fascinating.

This book really should not be sold separately from the second volume; they go together. That said, this is an excellent introduction to 19th C. Arabia. It's an Arabia that exists only in the minds of traditionalists--foreign or Arab--but it informs so much of how the Arabs see themselves that it's "must reading."

Burton was in his prime when he wrote this, before his misadventures in searching for the source of the Nile. His observations are acute; his writing clear. Make no mistake, Burton was a member of Victorian English society, even if he could laugh at the barriers of class when out of the country. His insights into Arabia, though, cast a very clear reflection of his upbringing, as well as the new sense of anthropological research he adds to the process.

53 of 61 people found the following review helpful.

bibliography & note

By Doug Anderson

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Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to El-Medinah and Mecca, 1855

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Wit and Wisdom from West Africa, 1865

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Two Trips to Gorilla Land, Congo, 1876

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The Gold Mines of Midian, 1878  
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The Kasidah, 1880  
Os, Lusiads, 1880  
Camoens: His Life and His Lusiads, 1881  
A Glance at the "Passion Play", 1881  
To the Gold Coast for Gold, 1883  
Kama Sutra, 1883  
The Book of the Sword, 1884  
Perfumed Garden, 1886  
1001 Nights, 1886-1888  
Iracema, 1886  
Priapea, 1890  
Marocco and the Moors, 1891  
Il Pentamerone, 1893  
The Carmina of Caius Valerius Catallus, 1894  
The Jew and the Gypsy, 1898  
Wanderings in Three Continents, 1901

It's my opinion that though he wrote an amazing number of books none of them are really 5 star classics though there are some flawed masterpieces in there. He just wrote too fast to care about polishing his works. As for racism, a charge that could be brought up against all Imperial Englishman, he is no doubt as guilty as his fellows. Not to excuse him for it but though writing within an Anglo tradition and to a strictly Anglo public he perhaps overstates his own Anglo bias just to assure his readers he has not gone native, a charge which would be ruinous to any career, military or literary. I won't try to convince you one way or the other but any man who learns another man's language and his religion and his literature and pays so much mind to him that he can even drink a glass of water using his exact manner is paying that man and his culture some kind of compliment. I won't pretend to understand what exactly Burton's motives were from one moment to the next and one adventure to the next but his relation to all these cultures certainly cannot be reduced to a one word description. Burton is a man of immense learning, his enthusiasms are infectious and his appetites as well as his humor are outrageous. With Burton you always get more than you bargained for, you get the country he is in and all manner of localised detail but also you get Burton, his way of writing, his manners, and his customs.

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