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The Call of the Desert

Nicholas A. Biniaris

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History and fiction intertwine in this novel, introducing the reader to the background of the Near East, and the site of recent chaos. The historical battle of Yarmouk River comes alive between the Christian Byzantine Imperial Army and the new converts to Islam, the Arab warriors from the desert. They meet in an epic battle that will shape the destiny of this area to the present day. It is in the areas of Palestine and the Holy City of Jerusalem where the drama of 638 A.D takes place between the Caliph Omar and Patriarch Sofronios. A young monk is caught within the conflict, testing both his faith and his humanity.

Fast-forward to the present: Islamic terrorists have taken over Saudi Arabia. A possibly disastrous future emerges between a post-modern West and the intransigent warriors of a resurgent Islam, what has recently evolved as the terror of ISIS. This time though, the fight is also a matter of life or death for Israel. Conflicting political actors, from the USA and its political intrigues within the White House, to the EU and its fragmented political elite, to Russia, Israel, and Pakistan, all compete, planning either to resolve the crisis, or to bring the tragedy to a thundering bang. A Greek philosopher, his former beloved fianc? who is Jewish, and a Spanish [revolutionary-turned European bureaucrat] become entangled in the deadly web of history as it unfolds over existential fears, economic disaster and environmental catastrophe. Do they have the ability to choose their future, or has their destiny been written for them 1400 years earlier?

The reader will be at once entertained and educated. This book is a warning about the evils of war and blind hate-a hate stemming from traditions that have lost their spiritual substance but retained the mantle of past glory, transubstantiated into resentment and revenge. Time spent reading this book is time spent reflecting on events that affect all of us today, even if we are, still, far from the battlefield.

"This is a novel composed from various kinds of narratives. It interweaves different societies, religions, modern economy, technology, war and nature with the actions of historical personalities. The problems it brings out about the present and the future make it an indispensable reading for all".*Zephyros Kafkalides, historian, author*

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