# THE CAPE-TO-CAIRO DREAM A STUDY IN BRITISH IMPERIALISM

BY

LOIS A. C. RAPHAEL, A. M.

UBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN THE FACULTY OF POLITICAL SCIENCE COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

# ILLUSTRATED

NEW YORK 1936



CECIL JOHN RHODIC Drawing by the Duchess of Rutland, reproduced with the permission of The Rhodes Trustees

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THE MEMORY OF PARKER THOMAS MOON "What was attempted by Alexander, Cambyses, and Napoleon we practical people are going to finish."

CECIL RHODES.

## PREFACE

IN 1815, British interest in Africa aside from some settlements on the West Coast, centered around Cape Colony in the south and Egypt in the north. Between these two extremes stretched some four thousand six hundred miles of country unoccupied and largely unexplored by white men. By 1900, however, except for a block of German territory between the southern end of Lake Tanganyika and the first parallel of south latitude, British influence was paramount from Cape Town to Alexandria.

An essential feature of this expansion through the Dark Continent was the development of lines of communication. Distances in Africa are enormous. Roads, railways and the telegraph are of primary importance in opening up the country to commerce, trade and civilization. It is not surprising, therefore, that in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, people in England and in Africa began to talk about a transcontinental telegraph and a Cape-to-Cairo railway. Furthermore, clustering about the plans for the telegraph and the railway, there grew up more ambitious schemes. The promoters saw trading centers along the route developing into colonies and, finally, the colonies merging into a British empire from the Cape to Cairo.

It is the purpose of this study not only to trace the development of transcontinental telegraph and railway schemes but also the influence of the Cape-to-Cairo idea upon British expansion in Africa.

My attention has focussed upon the great diplomatic struggles over the partition of Africa in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. I have, however, attempted in the epilogue to round out the story and to sketch in lightly the history of recent developments along the Cape-to-Cairo route.

The political map of Africa changed rapidly during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The history of the period is complicated and crowded with events. In fact, so much was compressed into this short span of years and so much was happening simultaneously, that I have felt it would be confusing to follow a strictly chronological order. I have, therefore, treated the subject topically and geographically.

The history of British expansion along the Cape-to-Cairo route is so recent that many aspects of the story are controversial. It is still difficult to write an impartial and dispassionate history of that expansion. At this time, the most that can be done is to break paths for future work. Since I was primarily interested in British expansion, I have turned largely to British sources for my material and have approached the subject from that angle. My readers may not agree with my conclusions. I only hope that my errors in judgment and my shortcomings in respect of information may be of some value in provoking others to rectify and round out my narrative.

There is now an abundance of material available on British expansion in Africa and international rivalry along the Capeto-Cairo route. The problem of selection is becoming increasingly difficult. Nevertheless, although the material is so abundant, there are still important gaps some of which may be filled eventually by the further opening up of the archives in England, Italy, France and Germany. Furthermore, there is great need for more extensive and impartial biographies about outstanding leaders in the political and financial world of the day.

For the history of the early development of transcontinental railway and telegraph projects, I have turned chiefly to unpublished Colonial Dispatches kept in the Public Record

Office in London, to the published records of the Cape Legislature and to the files of South African newspapers in the British Museum. I have also found valuable pamphlet material in the libraries of the Royal Colonial Institute and the Royal Geographical Society.

The history of international rivalry along the Cape-to-Cairo route I have based upon *Die Grosse Politik*, the French Foreign Office *Documents Diplomatiques*, popularly styled "Yellow Books" and the collections of British documents contained in *Parliamentary Sessional Papers* and *British Documents on the Origins of the World War*.

A considerable number of memoirs and biographies threw light on various aspects of my subject. Of these, I found Dr. Leo Weinthal's four volume compilation on *The Story* of the Cape to Cairo Railway and River Route, 1887-1922, especially valuable because it contains short sketches by men who were actually engaged in the work of building the Capeto-Cairo line. I have used Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, British newspapers and periodicals in an attempt to evaluate the influence of the Cape-to-Cairo idea upon public opinion.

I am grateful for the kind assistance and cooperation of friends both in England and America and for the excellent facilities afforded me for study in the Public Record Office, the British Museum, the Royal Colonial Institute, the Royal Geographical Society, the British Museum and the Institute of Historical Research in London and in the Columbia University Library, the New York Public Library and the Library of Congress in America. Everywhere I have met with unfailing courtesy and helpfulness.

While in London, I was especially fortunate in having the advice and wise guidance of Professor Arthur Percival Newton, then Professor of Imperial History at Kings College and now Rhodes Professor of Imperial History at the University of London. I am greatly indebted to him for his counsel at the time and for his continued interest in my work.

I am indebted to Dr. F. G. Spurdle, History Master of Consett Secondary School, Durham for his painstaking and scholarly research on the subject of the Overland Telegraph.

Dr. R. I. Lovell of Harvard University kindly let me read his unpublished doctoral thesis, The Anglo-German Estrangement, 1894-1896.

To Professor Robert Livingston Schuyler, Professor of British Imperial History at Columbia University, I owe my first interest in British Imperialism. I am particularly pleased, therefore, that he has read my manuscript and offered many helpful suggestions.

Professor Barnouw, Queen Wilhelmina Professor of the Language and Literature of the Netherlands at Columbia University has also read the manuscript and I am grateful for his much needed and helpful criticisms.

Professor Parker Thomas Moon's book Imperialism and World Politics first aroused my interest in Cecil Rhodes and the Cape-to-Cairo idea. It provoked questions in my mind which led me on a search for answers into the history of British expansion in Africa. Professor Moon not only stimulated my interest in this subject but he has followed my work throughout. I owe much to his judicious guidance, and his comprehensive and masterly grasp of my subject. His searching comments constantly challenged me to greater efforts. I find it difficult to express my appreciation adequately for his helpfulness. For his sake, I wish this were a better book.

I owe much to the patience and helpful interest of my husband. Without his encouragement and continued cooperation, this book would never have been finished.

LOIS A. C. RAPHAEL

WASHINGTON, D. C. June, 1936.

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The map on "European Expansion in Africa, 1820 to 1936" was drawn on a eumorphic equal area projection with the kind permission of Mr. S. W. Boggs of the State Department, Washington, D. C.

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These appendices often contain valuable material for the history of railway development in the Colony. They include reports of select committees, the reports of railway managers, reports of surveys, etc.

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