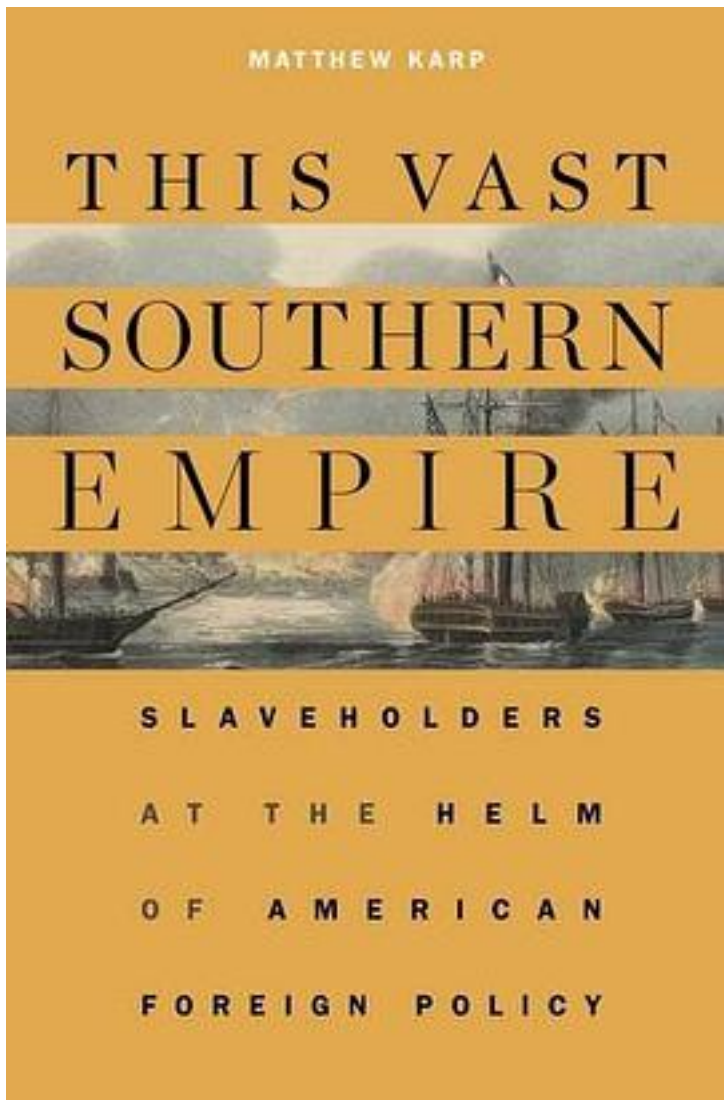


This Vast Southern Empire



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When the United States emerged as a world power in the years before the Civil War, the men who presided over the nation's triumphant territorial and economic expansion were largely southern slaveholders. As presidents, cabinet officers, and diplomats, slaveholding leaders controlled the main levers of foreign policy inside an increasingly powerful American state. This *Vast Southern Empire* explores the international vision and strategic operations of these southerners at the commanding heights of American politics.

For proslavery leaders like John C. Calhoun and Jefferson Davis, the nineteenth-century world was torn between two hostile forces: a rising movement against bondage, and an Atlantic plantation system that was larger and more productive than ever before. In this great struggle, southern statesmen saw the United States as slavery's most powerful champion. Overcoming traditional qualms about a strong central government, slaveholding leaders harnessed the power of the state to defend slavery abroad. During the antebellum years, they worked energetically to modernize the U.S. military, while steering American diplomacy to protect slavery in Brazil, Cuba, and the Republic of Texas.

As Matthew Karp demonstrates, these leaders were nationalists, not separatists. Their “vast southern empire” was not an independent South but the entire United States, and only the election of Abraham Lincoln broke their grip on national power. Fortified by years at the helm of U.S. foreign affairs, slaveholding elites formed their own Confederacy—not only as a desperate effort to preserve their property but as a confident bid to shape the future of the Atlantic world.

作者介绍:

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评论

作者以南部支持蓄奴的精英领导人为对象，以国际史为研究路径，分析他们的外交政策，反映他们的对奴隶制存续危机的想象，发现他们是具有国家主义和国际主义意识的群体，挑战了传统对南部狭隘的地方主义和州权的倡导者的观点。这些南部精英希望在西半球建立一个跨大陆的奴隶制帝国，扩大军事力量，保证奴隶制的安全。作者把物质权力运作和政治文化研究相结合，每一章都有相对集中的主题，总体不以时间为序，有极强的问题意识。最后以杜波伊斯在哈佛的演讲为结语，其对南部的解读分析十分精妙。

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书评

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