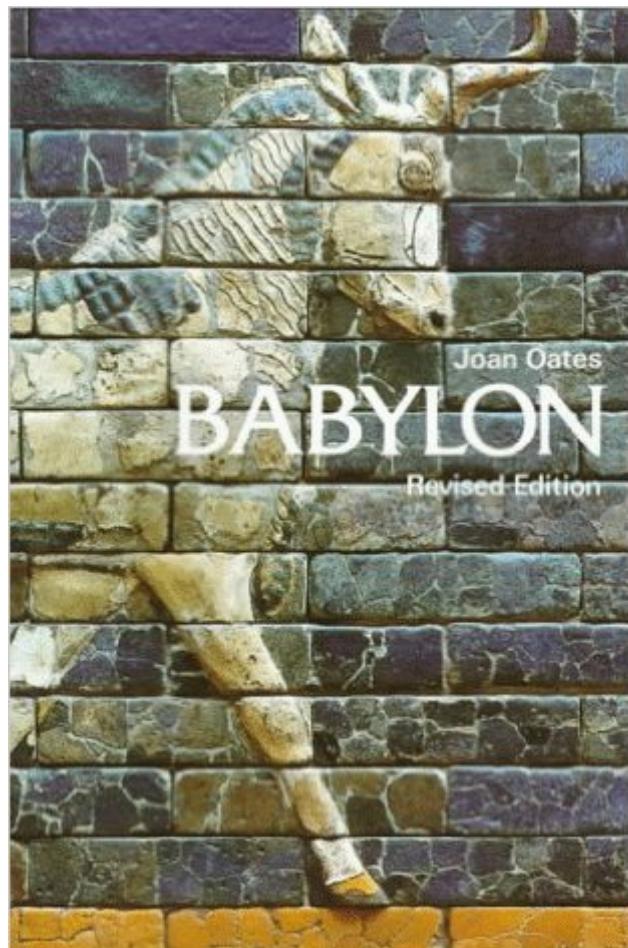


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Babylon



Synopsis

"Babylon the Great, Mother of Harlots and of the Abominations of the Earth": it is not easy for us to efface the lurid vision of Babylon conjured up by the author of the "Book of Revelations." But what is the true story of this ancient city, renowned for its Hanging Gardens - one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World - and notorious for the Jewish exile? In a highly acclaimed account, now brought up to date for the revised edition, Dr. Oates describes the rise of Babylon from Sargon of Agade to Hammurapi, the great law-giver under whom in the 18th century B.C. the city first attained pre-eminence. She charts its progress under his successors, its greatest period of empire during the reigns of Nebuchadnezzar and Nabonidus in the 6th Century B.C., and its decay and final abandonment as Persians and Greeks turned Mesopotamia into a battleground.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The poet Muriel Rukeyser said "the universe is composed of stories - not atoms", and you can't escape that with this book. "In Babylon" is filled with stories pulling you along, stories strung together in an unconventional way, the effect more like a densely woven mat than a pretty necklace. The theme is announced right on the dedication page: "Trees have roots. Jews have legs." MÃ¶rling's protagonist, writer of fairy tales Nathan Hollander, tells the story of his family, Jews, always on the way, traveling West. It begins with the clockmaker Magnus Levie, from the area bordering Poland and Lithuania, who starts his trek to the West in 1648, after finding the house of his uncle Chaim burned down by Cossacks, his uncle presumably murdered. After twenty years of wandering he shows up in Holland, in what is its prosperous Golden Age, and finds a welcome there

and a place to settle, and he assumes the name Hollander. The trek West is then interrupted for eight generations, all clockmakers in Rotterdam, physicists, engineers. Holland, poignantly characterized as the land of milk and butter, with its biblical echoes of "land overflowing of milk and honey", is almost the promised land, but not quite. In 1939 Nathan's dad, mom and uncle Herman set ship to America, to escape Hitler and the "Teutonic hordes", without being able to convince their parents to come with them. What I admire in MÃ¶ring's account of this history is that there is no trace of any attempt to evoke compassion, instead he leaves you with complete respect for how each of these people dealt with the circumstances they found themselves in.

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