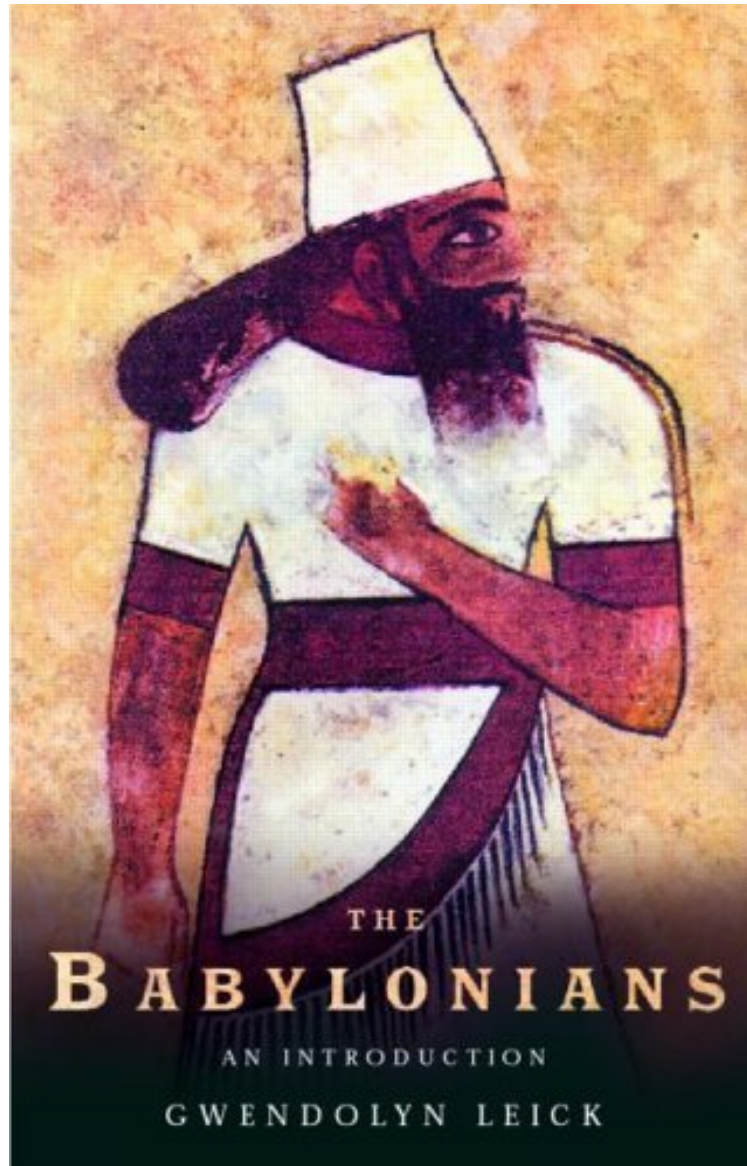


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The Babylonians: An Introduction (Peoples of the Ancient World)

Von GWENDOLYN LEICK

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KundenrezensionenHilfreichste Kundenrezensionen0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. A different eternal city...Von FrKurt MessickGwendolyn Leick, a lecturer and author of many books on the ancient Near

East, has written a very accessible and interesting book on the Babylonians here. Babylon has long been a place of mystery and enigmatic reputation. The biblical text often speaks in disparaging tones of the place, but in fact this text often disguises a respect for the power of the place. Alexander the Great recognised the power inherent in the major city, which was also home to one of the ancient wonders of the world. The real Babylon is not far from the modern city of Baghdad, between the great rivers Tigris and Euphrates. Leick begins with a discussion of the geographical setting of the city of Babylon and the more general geography of the Fertile Crescent, the area surrounded between and around the two great rivers that gave rise to the most ancient civilisation on earth. This area also included well-known cities of the ancient world, such as Ur, Uruk, Seleucia and Nineveh. She also discusses in her first chapter the early development of writing, which became a standard kind of script across many cultures, the cuneiform script. 'Literacy is one of the most defining characteristics of Mesopotamian civilisation. By the time the Babylonians first appear as a people, writing had been in use for at least two thousand years.' Leick begins the historical timeline with the Old Babylonian period, which begins with late Akkadian texts from the year 2000 BCE up until about 1600. Middle Babylonian runs roughly from 1600 to 1000, Neo-Babylonian from 1000 to 600, and Late Babylonian from 600 BCE to the beginning of the Christian/Common era. Leick prefers this arrangement to the more general archaeologist divisions of Bronze and Iron Ages (even including early, middle, late and other such modifiers) as the archaeological division 'does little to elucidate Babylonian historical or cultural development.' Leick puts Babylonia in a context of the more international setting (Egypt, Greece, Persia and other cultures), and looks at the internal structures, cultural developments and political shifts over time. She traces this history through to the bitter end, as Mesopotamia became a buffer state between the Parthians and Romans, too vulnerable to be reliable for trade and commerce, and ultimately abandoned for several centuries for the most part - by the time the Muslims returned to the area, many of the great ancient cities were buried beneath the sands. Later chapters develop the themes of society, religion, politics, and general cosmology of the Babylonians. There was a complex urban culture that coexists with rural, agricultural settings; there is a division and cooperation between temple and palace institutions. Leick also does an extended discussion of the 'everyday' things of life - clothing, dwellings, foodstuffs, cooking, medicine, etc., which she says 'characterises a people as much as their abstract ideas and social stratification.' This book is only intended as a primer; it has an eclectic collection of facts and topics selected rather as an ethnographic study. The intention here is to stimulate the reader toward further reading and research, and toward that end there is a very good bibliography. Leick includes endnotes and an index for better use in research; the index includes both an English and Sumerian/Akkadian listing. Leick's writing is certainly interesting and should stimulate those with an interest in this ancient but important people to pursue further reading, some of which may be other writing of Leick herself.

Kurzbeschreibung Gwendolyn Leick's approachable survey introduces the Babylonians, the people, the culture and the reality behind the popular myth of Babylon. Spanning some 1800 years in the history of the Babylonians, from the time of Hammurabi, famous for his Law-Code, to the time when Alexander's heirs ruled the Near East, Leick examines how archaeological discoveries and cuneiform tablets recovered from Babylonian cities allow us an impression of the Babylonian people and their society, their intellectual and spiritual preoccupations. Exploring the lives of kings and merchants, women and slaves, and the social, historical, geographical and cultural context in which their extraordinary civilization flourished for so many centuries, The Babylonians has provided scholars and students with a dazzling new insight into this fascinating world. Kurzbeschreibung Gwendolyn Leick's approachable survey introduces the Babylonians, the people, the culture and the reality behind the popular myth of Babylon. Spanning some 1800 years in the history of the Babylonians, from the time of Hammurabi, famous for his Law-Code, to the time when Alexander's heirs ruled the Near East, Leick examines how archaeological discoveries and cuneiform tablets recovered from Babylonian cities allow us an impression of the Babylonian people and their society, their intellectual and spiritual preoccupations. Exploring the lives of kings and merchants, women and slaves, and the social, historical, geographical and cultural context in which their extraordinary civilization flourished for so many centuries, The Babylonians has provided scholars and students with a dazzling new insight into this fascinating world. Synopsis For centuries, Babylon has been a symbol of the decadent city par excellence, signifying a deep mistrust of urbanization in general. In the Bible, the city has only negative connotations; and while later classical writers admired the city's size and splendour, they deplored some of its more unusual customs. Whatever the perspective taken, it was usual to take Babylon as standing for the whole of Mesopotamian civilization. The history of the Babylonians spans some 1800 years, from the time of Hammurabi, famous for his Law-Code, to the time when Alexander's heirs ruled the Near East. Archaeological discoveries and cuneiform tablets recovered from Babylonian cities allow us an impression of the Babylonian people and their society, their intellectual and spiritual preoccupations. Gwendolyn Leick's approachable survey introduces these people, the reality behind the popular myth of Babylon. She explores the lives of kings and merchants, women and slaves, and the social, historical, geographical and cultural context in which their extraordinary civilization flourished for so many centuries. Enjoyable and accessible, this is the ideal introduction to the Babylonians for both

students and the interested general reader.