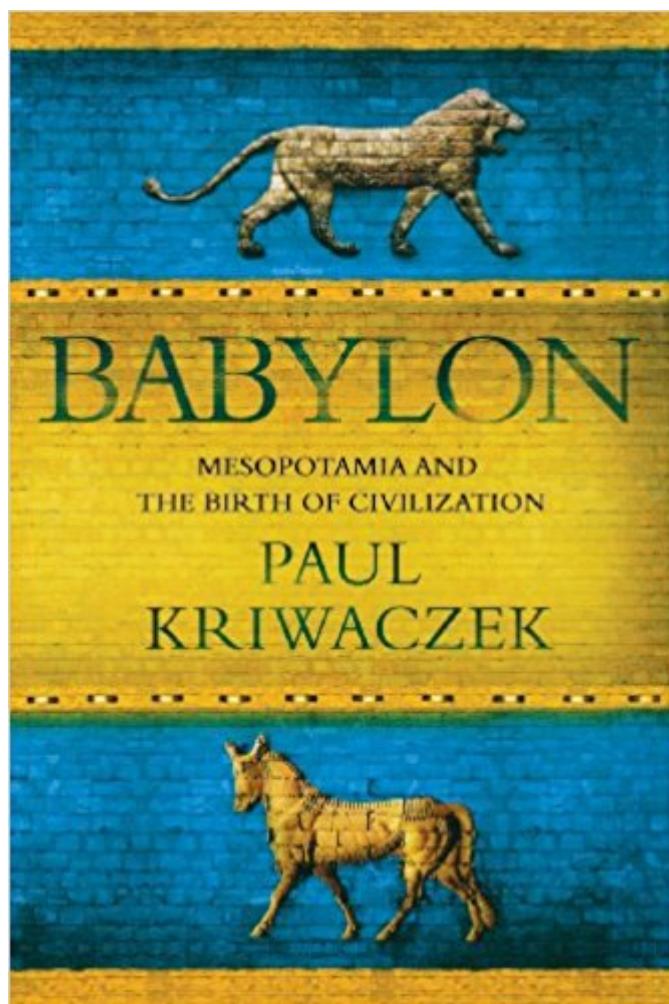


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# Babylon: Mesopotamia And The Birth Of Civilization



## Synopsis

Civilization was born eight thousand years ago, between the floodplains of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, when migrants from the surrounding mountains and deserts began to create increasingly sophisticated urban societies. In the cities that they built, half of human history took place. In Babylon, Paul Kriwaczek tells the story of Mesopotamia from the earliest settlements seven thousand years ago to the eclipse of Babylon in the sixth century BCE. Bringing the people of this land to life in vibrant detail, the author chronicles the rise and fall of power during this period and explores the political and social systems, as well as the technical and cultural innovations, which made this land extraordinary. At the heart of this book is the story of Babylon, which rose to prominence under the Amorite king Hammurabi from about 1800 BCE. Even as Babylon's fortunes waxed and waned, it never lost its allure as the ancient world's greatest city. Engaging and compelling, Babylon reveals the splendor of the ancient world that laid the foundation for civilization itself.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"The land extended and the people multiplied / The land was bellowing like a bull / The god was disturbed by their uproar / Enlil heard their noise / And addressed the great gods / 'The noise of mankind has become too intense for me / With their uproar I am deprived of sleep.'" This is the beginning of the explanation of the Great Flood of biblical recounting, found in an Akkadian writing dating to 1600 BCE. Apparently, the "real" reason for the flood (which was initiated by a minor god) was that humans were making too much noise! If you live in a modern city where everyone talks

loudly on phones that are arguably smarter than their owners to someone else while blithely ignoring their companions nearby, you may sympathize. This story is one of many to be found in Kriwaczek's book on the origin of Babylonian civilization, a dramatic human story unfolding from roughly 4000 BCE to the conquest of Babylon by the Persian emperor Cyrus in 539 BCE. While following Kriwaczek in this exploration you will glean here and there how life was in Ur, Babylon and other places that played a crucial role in human history. You will be surprised to find about the high degree of multicultural diversity of the Babylonian and Assyrian dominions, not to mention their practice of quite advanced forms of capitalism all those millennia ago (a capitalism that, interestingly, seemed to have had the same advantages and drawbacks of our own: it generated a vibrant economy, but it also increased inequality). Kriwaczek's writing is not always engaging, there are a bit too many parochial references to British archeologists and historians, and at times he tries too hard to describe local life at the time in a personalized way that surely relies more on imagination than on the actual record.

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