



Babylon of Egypt: The Archaeology of Old Cairo and the Origins of the City (American Research Center in Egypt Conservation)

By Peter Sheehan

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This book presents a history of Old Cairo based on new archaeological evidence gathered between 2000 and 2006 during a major project to lower the groundwater level affecting the churches and monuments of this area of Cairo known by the Romans as Babylon.

Examination of the material and structural remains revealed a sequence of continuous occupation extending from the sixth century BC to the present day. These include the massive stone walls of the canal linking the Nile to the Red Sea, and the harbor constructed by Trajan at its entrance around 110 AD.

The Emperor Diocletian built the fortress of Babylon around the harbor and the canal in 300 AD, and much new information has come to light concerning the construction and internal layout of the fortress, which continues to enclose and define the enclave of Old Cairo. Important evidence for the early medieval transformation of the area into the nucleus of the Arab city of al-Fustat and its later medieval development is also presented.

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Editorial Review

Review

"Every so often a book comes on the market which is extraordinary, not only in production, layout, original photographs, plans and line drawings, but also in ground-breaking content. Peter Sheehan's *Babylon of Egypt* is one such book."--*Al-Ahram Weekly*

"A landmark study Highly recommended."--*Choice*

That Sheehan was obliged to operate on an essentially rescue-archaeology basis makes the long list of achievements documented in this book all the more remarkable. . . . Any research that broadens our archaeological purview of Egypt to include the brilliance of Egyptian history in the medieval period is a welcome corrective to Egyptological obsessions and lingering and still widespread Orientalist tropes that present Egyptian civilisation as having ended with the death of Cleopatra. In contrast, Sheehan's multi-periodic treatment of Babylon presents the Egyptian past as an accretion of human action and occupation in which each layer of human activity is contingent on and shaped by that which went before. John P. Cooper, *International Journal of Nautical Archaeology*

About the Author

PETER SHEEHAN directed the Old Cairo Archaeological Monitoring Project from 2000 to 2006 and has published a number of articles on the archaeology of the area. He is currently historic buildings manager for the Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture and Heritage.

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