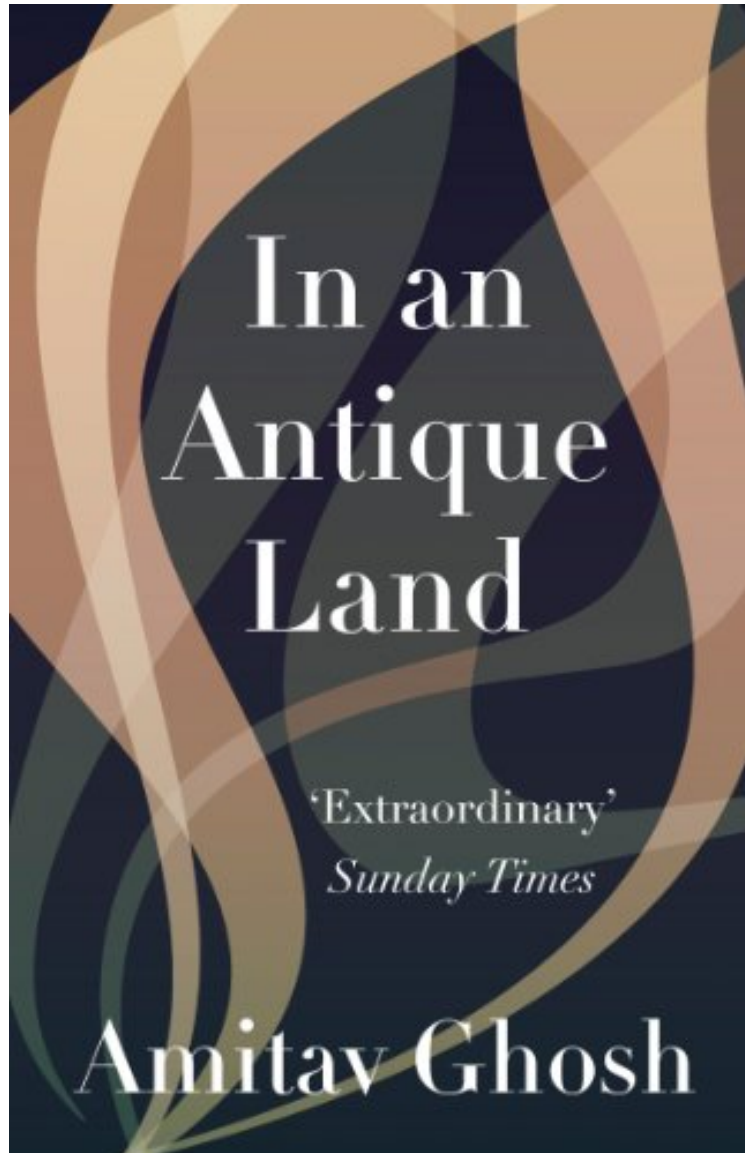


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In An Antique Land

Von Amitav Ghosh

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Von Amitav Ghosh : In An Antique Land before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised In An Antique Land:

KundenrezensionenHilfreichste Kundenrezensionen1 von 1 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. A journey into the past of Arabian-Indian relationsVon Roman NiesThe indian author came upon old manuscripts to traces of a juwish-arabian merchant of the 12nd century. He travelled into the Egypt of our days, takes residence in a small Arabian village, dives into the life of the locals and seeks fort he connection to the arabian middle ages with its

lively cultural and economic relations. Here the author tries to bring to a relationship the Arabian-Muslim and Indian-Hindu cultures, or rather make visible what was once related. A rare and strange undertaking! It is also laudable when somebody like Ghosh plies such a thing with such a fervour almost sacrificially. But for the author, himself a Hindu, it is only conclusive, after he had set this goal under the knowledge of the old manuscripts to explore the life story of the late merchant who swang between the worlds like the author himself. The reader follows, hears a lot about the life style and life philosophy of the Egyptian Fellas. The author disposes of sufficient humour to set skilfully counterpoints to the at that time fertile interactions of the cultures, because the Fellas regard the Indian culture as backward. But their arguments show their own backwardness. The author can even renounce to take a position himself. So striking is the credo of the Muslims a testimony of their ignorance and backwardness. Well done depiction of Egyptian village life! And even believable! But the uneducated of other cultural circles do not show more interests or understanding for the others. For this intra-cultural clash, as well sympathy-courtship for humanity in the social intercourse, the author pays a high expense. I doubt that so many people are interested to hear what a certain Jewish merchant in the 12th century in Mangalore, South India had to do and if his mistress did well. The subtitle "A journey into the past of the Orient" is correct, but awakens expectations that are not satisfied. The courtesy-book-recensions of certain magazines and newspapers are mere exaggeration. Widely the book is simply boring and this I say as somebody who has travelled a lot in the Orient and India. An example is when he explains the custom of burial. The Fellas ask him why the Indians burn theirs. He answers, he does not know, it is just the custom and it was already the custom before he was born. He had nothing to do with it! Typical Ghosh! He does not take a position when it comes to ideology. Only once he is drawn out when India is called backward. No, India is superior to Egypt, has more bombs etc. The idea for this book was good, the execution seems to be mostly not inspired. The book has to be for ingrained Orient-fans, - perhaps. At least the author seems to have researched very thoroughly. That deserves acknowledgement, but this is what a reader who does not want to read a novel expects. Well done is the passage about the possession of the Malabar coast by the Europeans. The Indians only had the choice between resistance and submission, cooperation was not offered to them. Incapable to compete in trade with only commercial means, the Europeans attempted to bring it under control with aggressions. They unleashed violence in dimensions unknown to the coast. Nothing much has changed one thinks rather often when reading the book. 2 von 3 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Incredible Von Ein Kunde This is a must read book. Ghosh somehow weaves together the history of Cairo, a traveling Jewish merchant, marginalization, the fate of 2nd world countries, and a diary of his time in Egypt-- and makes it really, lively, and relevant to anyone's life. and it is written in a lovely, lyrical style 1 von 2 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. It Shouldn't Work! Von Robert Simpson But it does! This book takes three part-stories, dry academic scholarship, adapting to life in a completely different culture and a slave in 12th century Egypt, that are each individually neither compelling nor fulfilling. Yet the sum of the three parts is both compelling and fulfilling. The narrative jumps from story to story skillfully, creating tensions in each story line that would otherwise be absent and drawing the reader onward. Amitav Ghosh is a wonderful writer of lyric descriptions and this book is lovingly filled with them, adding embellishments to the otherwise simple stories. Everything comes together to produce a book as good as his Shadow Lines.

Kurzbeschreibung In an Antique Land is a subversive history in the guise of a traveller's tale. When the author stumbles across a slave narrative in the margins of an ancient text, his curiosity is piqued. What follows is a ten year search, which brings author and slave together across 800 hundred years of colonial history. Bursting with anecdote and exuberant detail, it offers a magical, intimate biography of the private life of a country, Egypt, from the Crusades to Operation Desert Storm. From Publishers Weekly In a leisurely blend of travelogue, history and cross-cultural analysis, Indian writer Ghosh reconstructs a 12th-century master-slave relationship that confounds modern concepts of slavery. Abraham Ben Yiju, a prosperous Tunisian Jewish merchant based in medieval Cairo, resettled in Aden, then spent two decades on India's Malabar Coast, where he hired a slave or servant, probably of Indian origin, named Bomma. Bomma acted as Ben Yiju's business agent and made overseas trips for him. In medieval India and the Middle East, Ghosh points out, servitude was often a career opportunity, the principal means of recruitment into privileged strata of the army and bureaucracy. Researching in letters and documents in Egypt, where he lived for several years, Ghosh (The Shadow Lines) evokes a world of mud-walled houses and class warfare between Egyptian laborers and landowners. He also writes vividly of southern India, a tapestry of castes, cults and worship of spirit-deities. Copyright 1993 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Kirkus s An engrossing chronicle of historical detection smoothly integrated into a subtly shaped picture of village life in modern Egypt; by an Indian novelist (The Circle of Reason, 1986) of great sensitivity and power. Enrolled as a cultural-anthropology graduate student at the University of Alexandria, Ghosh settled in 1980 into the Egyptian farming village of Lataifa. Two years earlier, he had become interested in ancient manuscripts found in a storeroom of a tenth-century Cairo synagogue; included in the cache were letters from a Jewish trader, who mentioned his Indian slave. Intrigued, Ghosh pursued the identity of his 12th-century countryman. The author's findings about the daily activities of slave and master make fascinating reading (e.g., that the

slave represented his master in financial dealings), and alternating with this historical data are chapters detailing Ghosh's gradual assimilation into the life of Lataifa. His affectionate portraits of the villagers and of their often colorful idiosyncracies (for example, the complicated relationship between the Imam and his estranged first wife) attest to his perceptivity as a sympathetic observer of a rapidly changing society. In a particularly effective passage, he recounts his feelings when, after persistent questioning about his Hindu beliefs, he discovered in himself what he calls ``Indians' terror of symbols." And Ghosh is equally astute in detailing the changes wrought by young villagers' departures for jobs in wartime Iraq. While new homes, refrigerators, TVs, and electric generators proliferate, he says, the weakening of family and civic ties proves a high price to pay. Throughout, Ghosh writes with enormous lucidity and flashes of gentle humor, conveying in small and telling details the underlying suspiciousness and insecurity that pervade Egyptian society. Moving in its humanity, revealing in its analyses: an exceptionally satisfying work. --
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