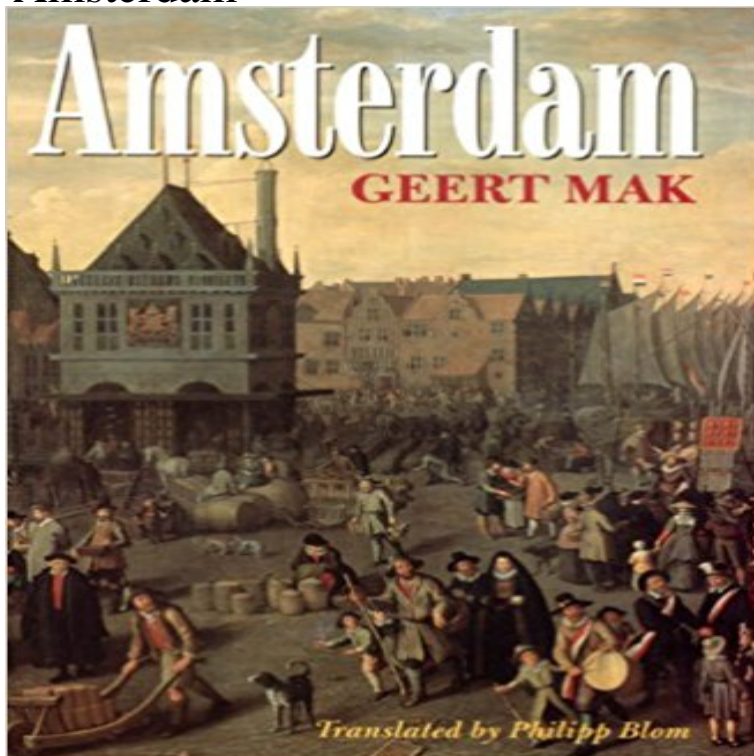


## Amsterdam



Cosmopolitan, stylish, even a little decadent, Amsterdam--the Venice of the North--is a city of legendary beauty. From a twelfth-century settlement of wooden huts at the mouth of the River Amstel, it had become by the late sixteenth century one of the great cultural capitals of Europe and a major financial center. In this gracefully written examination of Amsterdams soul--part history, part travel guide--the Dutch writer Geert Mak imaginatively depicts the lives of early Amsterdammers and traces the citys progress from a small town of merchants, sailors, farmers, and fishermen to a thriving metropolis. Maks Amsterdam is a city of dreams and nightmares, of grand civic architecture and magnificent monuments, but also of civil wars, uprisings, and bloody religious purges. In his delightfully instructive journey through the city and through time, Mak displays an eye for the bizarre and the unexpected: a Rembrandt sketch of a young girl executed for manslaughter; the shoe of a medieval lady unearthed during a remodeling project; a graffito foretelling the citys doom on the wall of a mansion, daubed by a deranged burgomaster with his own blood. Amsterdam remains a magnet for travelers from around the world, and this charmingly detailed account of its origins and its history through the present day is designed to help the reader step into daily life in a truly modern city.

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