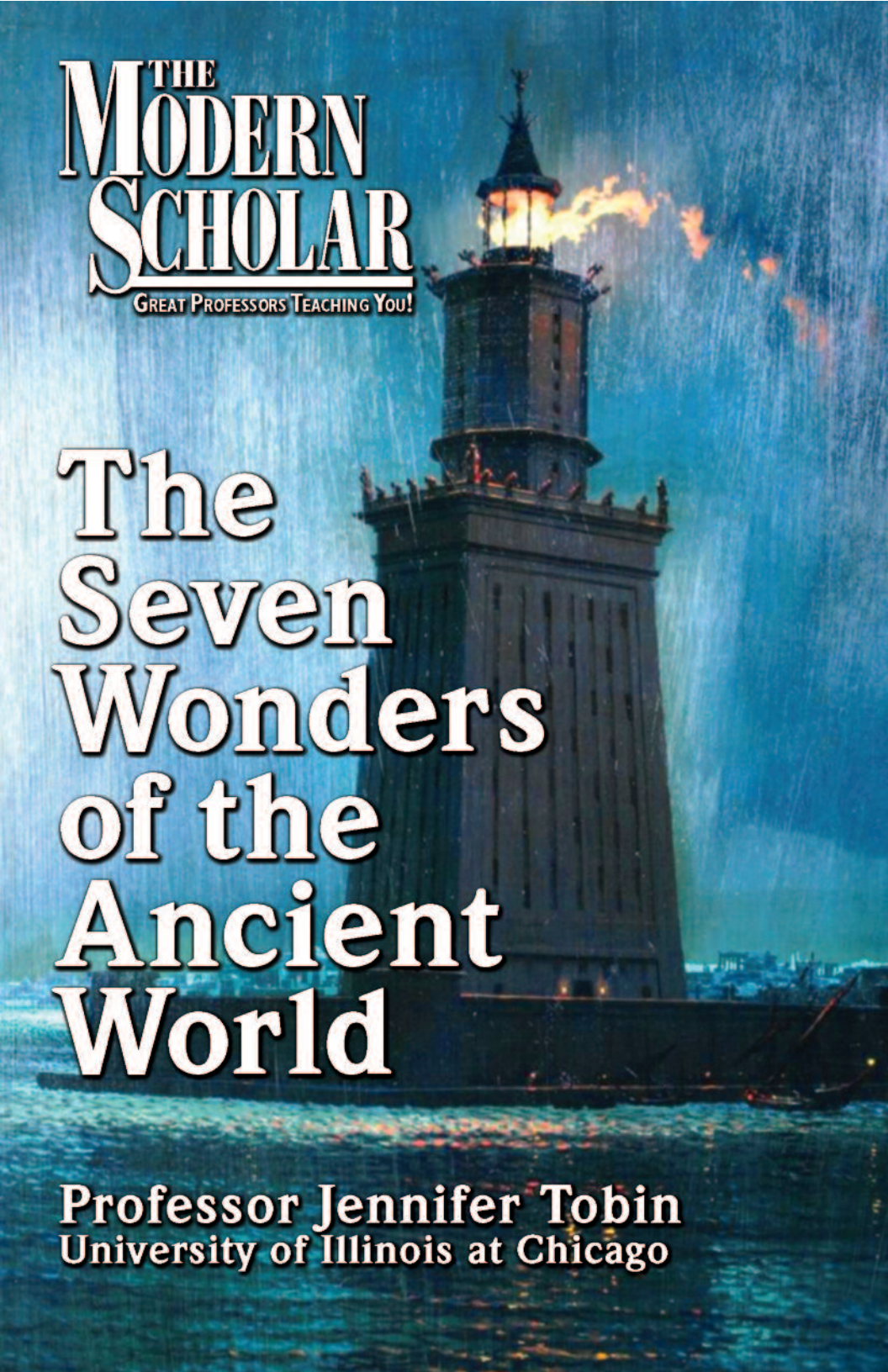
THE MODERN SCHOLAR
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The Seven Wonders of the Ancient World
Professor Jennifer Tobin
University of Illinois at Chicago

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Executive Editor
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Course Syllabus

The Seven Wonders of the Ancient World

Photo courtesy of Jennifer Tobin

About Your Professor

Jennifer Tobin

Jennifer Tobin is an associate professor of classical archaeology at the University of Illinois at Chicago, where she has taught since 1999. Professor Tobin is the author of *Black Cilicia: A Study of the Plain of Issus during the Roman and Late Roman Periods* (British Archaeological Reports, 2004) and *Herodes Attikos and the City of Athens: Patronage and Conflict under the Antonines* (J.C. Gieben, 1997). She has participated in excavations in Greece, Cyprus, and Turkey and leads educational tours of archaeological sites in and around the Mediterranean basin.

The only remaining of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, the Great Pyramids of Giza have inspired awe for nearly forty centuries.

Introduction

For millennia, humans have experienced a transformative sense of wonder when gazing at architectural achievements that seem to defy belief. Wonders such as the Colossus of Rhodes and the Hanging Gardens of Babylon appeared to so far surpass the understood limits of human capability that they couldn't help but cause people to marvel, and for reasons that are still being explored today, this capacity for awe is an inextricable component of the human experience.

While confined to the magical number of seven, the list of wonders has changed over time. As even the most stunning creations must someday crumble to dust, some of the original wonders now exist only in literature and in scant archaeological remains. Delving into history from a scholarly perspective, Professor Jennifer Tobin pulls a curtain back on the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World—and in so doing reveals much not only about these wonders but also about the peoples and cultures responsible for their creation.

Lecture 1

The Lists of Wonders

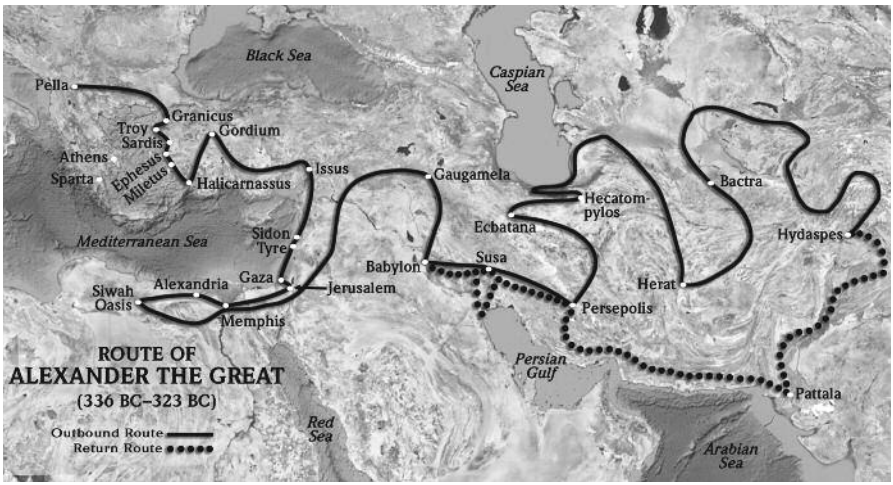
The Suggested Reading for this lecture is *The Seven Wonders of the Ancient World*, introduction, edited by Peter A. Clayton and Martin J. Price.

Although most people today are aware of the list of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, few can name all seven. Fewer still realize that the list was never static, even in antiquity. "Wonders" were added and detracted from the list depending on political expediency, religious affiliation, and personal taste. Although many lists existed from ancient and medieval times, these lists always limited the number to seven. From the earliest times this number has held great religious or talismanic significance, although the reason behind this is not clear. The list of Seven Wonders stands alongside lists such as the Seven Deadly Sins, the Seven Seas, the Seven Sages, the Seven Hills of Rome, and the seven days of the week. The "canonical" list of the Seven Wonders that we use today was actually drawn up in the sixteenth century by Dutch artist Maarten van Heemskerck, who produced a set of drawings of the Seven Wonders compiled from his perusal of ancient authors. His list contained two statues, the Zeus from Olympia and the Colossus of Rhodes; two sets of tombs, the Pyramids of Egypt and the Mausoleum of Halicarnassus; and several buildings, the Temple of Artemis at Ephesus, the Walls and Hanging Gardens of Babylon (counted as one "wonder"), and the Lighthouse of Alexandria. But it should be noted that never in antiquity did these particular seven stand together on a list of wonders. In this course we will first consider the list of van Heemskerck and then look at other ancient lists, examining what monuments were added or removed

over time and asking why some lose favor and others rise in the estimations of the Greek, Roman, and medieval list makers.

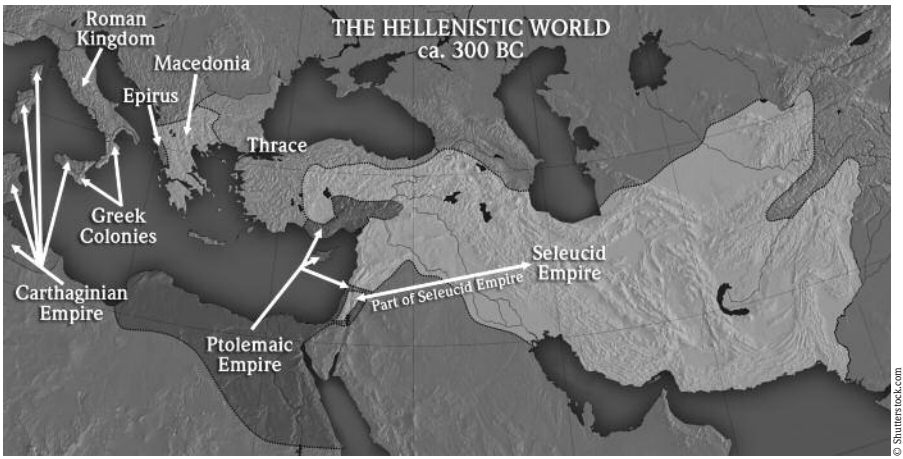
Indirectly, it was Alexander the Great who was responsible for the creation of the list of the Seven Wonders. When he crossed into Persian territory in 334 BC, he was invading an empire that stretched from the Aegean Sea to the Indus River, and from the Caucasus to the Sudan. By the time of his death in Babylon in 323 BC he had become master of all that territory, in addition to Greece and Macedonia, territory made up of a multiplicity of peoples: Persians, Babylonians, Egyptians, Syrians, Carians, and more. In order to maintain control over this diverse empire, Alexander had instituted a number of sometimes-controversial policies, including the adoption of Persian dress and customs, the encouragement of intermarriage between his soldiers and native women, and the education of Persian youths in Greek traditions. These practices troubled many of his Greek and Macedonian subjects, but they were rational steps toward ruling a multicultural empire. Less controversial was Alexander's habit of founding Greek-style cities in the East, usually named Alexandria after himself. These cities, stretching from Egypt to Afghanistan, were populated by Greek and Macedonian soldiers, their purpose to bring military security to the area. At the same time, however, they helped to Hellenize these regions, exposing the inhabitants to Greek language and customs. But these cultural transmissions traveled in two directions. Alexander's soldiers returned from the East bearing new technologies, customs, and religions. By conquering the Persian Empire, Alexander opened pathways between East and West that had hitherto hardly existed.

Historians call the three centuries following the death of Alexander the Hellenistic period, a time where the world of Greece (Hellas, populated by Hellenes) influenced and was influenced by societies of the East. It was a rich and prosperous period but one filled with violence. After Alexander's



death his empire could not hold. Several of his generals went to war with one another in hopes of establishing their own independent kingdoms out of the carcass of Alexander's empire. These Hellenistic kings not only competed on the battlefield; they vied with one another in the cultural arena as well, presenting themselves as patrons of the arts by supporting artists, philosophers, and scientists, and public facilities like temples, libraries, and museums. It is during this period that the first list of Seven Wonders arose.

The most stable of these Hellenistic kingdoms was founded by Alexander's childhood friend Ptolemy and centered in Egypt. Its capital was Alexandria, a city founded by Alexander the Great but developed by Ptolemy I (nicknamed Soter) and his son Ptolemy II (nicknamed Philadelphos). Together they created a Greek city on Egyptian soil, complete with a theater, agora, and gymnasium. They also created a library, the first public library of the ancient world, destined to become a great center of learning. It was the library's mission to collect copies of all works of science and literature from the known world. Legend has it that all ships entering the port of Alexandria had to relinquish any literary documents to the authorities. If the works were not already present in the library they would be copied onto papyrus rolls, which were then stored on the ever-growing library shelves. Not only works of Greek literature, science, and philosophy were collected, but also documents from the East such as astrological treatises from Babylon and histories from Persia. It was here that the first Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible was created. Because so many works needed to be organized and studied a coterie of librarians and professional scholars became attached to the library. These men shared a mania for organizing, cataloging, and making a display of knowledge. Many librarians became immensely famous, often poets and scientists in their own right. One of these was a man named Callimachus (ca. 305–240 BC) from the Greek city of Cyrene in North Africa. A prolific author, he wrote a work entitled "A collection of wonders in lands throughout the world." Sadly, the work itself



no longer survives, and no one knows the identity or the number of the wonders he dealt with. But the title hints at the nature of the work and the reason behind its creation. Callimachus may have felt the need to expand beyond his duties as cataloger of books to become a cataloger of wonders, some of which he would have known only from books. The fact that he listed wonders from "lands throughout the world" indicates he was looking at the world opened to the Greeks only after Alexander's conquest, which had taken place less than a century earlier. This brave new world wanted documentation.

From the second century BC comes our first actual list of Seven Wonders. The list survives as an epigram composed by a Greek poet, Antipater, from the city of Sidon (today located in Lebanon):

> I have gazed on the walls of impregnable Babylon, along which chariots may race, and on the Zeus by the banks of the Alpheus. I have seen the Hanging Gardens and the Colossus of Helios, the great man-made mountains of the lofty pyramids, and the gigantic tomb of Mausolus. But when I saw the sacred house of Artemis that towers to the clouds, the others were placed in the shade, for the sun himself has never looked upon its equal outside Olympus.
>
> ~Antipater, *Palatine Anthology*, IX, 58

Antipater's list includes the Walls of Babylon but not the Lighthouse of Alexandria (which first appears on a list of the sixth century AD). This same list is credited to another ancient author, Philo of Byzantium, either writing in the third century BC or, more likely, in the fourth century AD. His descriptions of the wonders on his list will be studied in coming lectures, but for now it is interesting to look at his introduction:

> Everyone has heard of each of the Seven Wonders of the World, but few have seen all of them for themselves. To do so one has to go abroad to Persia, cross the Euphrates River, travel to Egypt, spend time among the Elians in Greece, go to Halicarnassus in Caria, sail to Rhodes, and see Ephesus in Ionia. Only if you travel the world and get worn out by the effort of the journey will the desire to see all the Wonders of the World be satisfied, and by the time you have done that you will be old and practically dead.
>
> Because of this, education can perform a remarkable and valuable task; it removes the necessity of travel, displays the beautiful and amazing things in one's very own home, and allows one to see those things with one's mind if not with one's eyes.
>
> ~Philo of Byzantium, *On the Seven Wonders*, Introduction

The goal of this course is the same as Philo's, to educate armchair travelers in their own homes and to encourage them to imagine these wonders with their mind's eye.

FOR GREATER UNDERSTANDING

Questions

1. When was today's "canonical" list of Seven Wonders drawn up?
2. How did a listing of Seven Wonders come about? Which historical figures were most influential in this process?

Suggested Reading

Clayton, Peter A., and Martin J. Price, eds. *The Seven Wonders of the Ancient World*. Reprint ed. New York: Routledge, 1990.

Other Books of Interest

Romer, John, and Elizabeth Romer. *The Seven Wonders of the World: A History of the Modern Imagination*. New York: Barnes & Noble Books, 2005.

Recorded Books

Fox, Robin Lane. *Alexander of Macedonia: The World Conquered*. The Modern Scholar Series. Prince Frederick, MD: Recorded Books, 2010.

Websites of Interest

The *Researching Ancient Wonders: A Research Guide* website by Professor Tim Parkin (University of Canterbury, New Zealand) provides a bibliography of each of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World and links to Internet resources about them. — http://web.archive.org/web/20041011114644/http://www.clas.canterbury.ac.nz/wonders.html

Lecture 2

The Great Pyramids at Giza, Part One

The Suggested Reading for this lecture is *The Seven Wonders of the Ancient World*, chapter 1, edited by Peter A. Clayton and Martin J. Price.

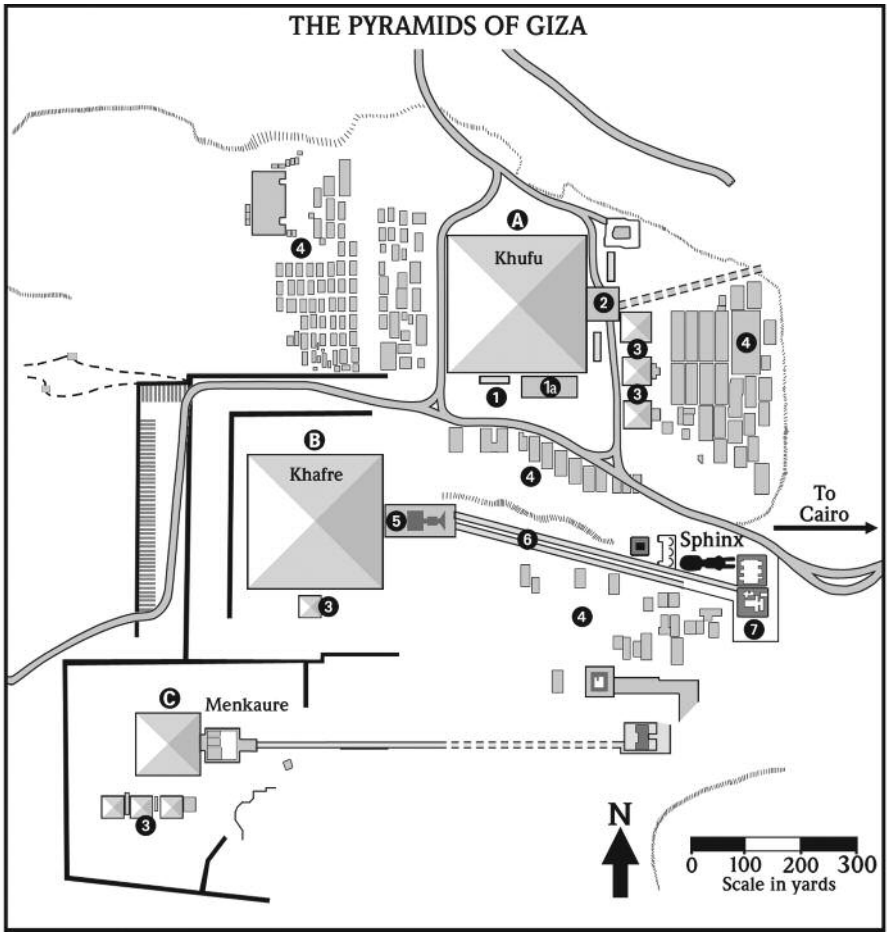
Most people today can list the Pyramids among the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, but what may not be clear is which pyramids; over one hundred are known from Egypt. Antipater in his list of wonders is vague, marveling at "the huge labor of the sheer Pyramids." Later authors Philo of Byzantium, Diodorus Siculus, and Strabo agree, however, that the pyramids that excited such admiration are those located west of the ancient city of Memphis, on what is called the Giza Plateau. Here, during the twenty-sixth and twenty-fifth centuries BC, three monumental tombs were constructed, each for a Pharaoh, and all of which were destined to be counted among the Seven Wonders.

The Pyramids of Giza are the culmination in pyramid design, the origins of which reach back to around 2630 BC, when the architect Imhotep created an innovative tomb for his king, Pharaoh Djoser, at a cemetery at Saqqara. For centuries royalty had been buried in what archaeologists call mastaba tombs, large, rectangular structures that sat over a burial chamber and encased other rooms designed for the worship of the deceased and for the storage of goods for the afterlife. Imhotep was inspired to enhance his Pharaoh's mastaba tomb by stacking smaller rectangular forms above the initial structure, creating a stepped pyramid of six layers measuring nearly two hundred feet high. The next century witnessed further innovations in pyramid design. A pyramid associated with the Pharaoh Huni (ca. 2599–2575 BC) initially had the layered form like Djoser's, but later the steps were filled in with masonry, creating a pyramid with smooth faces. Huni's son, Snefru (2575–2551 BC) was the first to build a "true" pyramid, one whose sides were designed to be sheer. His initial attempt, at Dahshur, is a pyramid today referred to as the Bent Pyramid, because the slope of the tomb begins at the steep angle of fifty-five degrees but shifts halfway up to the gentler angle of forty-three degrees. The reason for the change is not

known, but it indicates a trial-and-error approach to pyramid building. Snefru actually built a second pyramid at Dahshur, the so-called Red Pyramid, created with the less challenging angle of forty-three degrees used on the upper portion of the earlier tomb. It is the son of Snefru, Khufu (or Cheops in the Greek version of his name), who benefited from these earlier forays into pyramid construction. Around 2550 BC his architects began the largest pyramid ever constructed. When complete it stood nearly five hundred feet tall with a base measuring over seven hundred fifty feet square. Its sheer sides had an angle of fifty-one degrees. It is thought that 2.5 million limestone blocks were used in its creation, many weighing around 2.5 tons. It is not surprising that this building was deemed a wonder in antiquity and still is today.

Khufu chose a new site for his pyramid, the plateau of Giza. The foundations of the pyramid were cut into the limestone bedrock, and the position of the tomb, like all pyramids, was oriented to the cardinal points (north, south, east, and west), based on the observation of the sun and stars. The interior stones of the pyramid were of local limestone quarried on the spot, while the exterior was encased in Tura limestone, a much finer material brought by boat from a distance of about ten miles. In medieval times, this high-quality stone was stripped from the pyramid and used in the construction of buildings in Cairo, which is why today the sides of Khufu's pyramid appear uneven.

The interior arrangement of the pyramid betrays design changes that occurred during construction. No other pyramid has such a complex interior. Like all pyramids, the entrance was on the north face. A sloping passageway led through the pyramid to an underground chamber, evidently the room initially designated for the burial chamber. But this room was never completed. A second chamber, located higher up within the body of the pyramid, was also accessed from the passageway leading to the subterranean room. This so-called Queen's Chamber was also never completed. From its level, however, an ascending corridor, known as the Grand Gallery, led to the actual burial chamber. The Grand Gallery, one hundred fifty-eight feet long and twenty-eight feet high, had walls of polished limestone blocks that were placed closer and closer together at the walls' upper reaches to form a pointed, or corbelled, vault. At the top of the gallery was the burial chamber, whose walls were created from pink granite brought from the quarries at Aswan, some six hundred miles away. Inside the chamber was a sarcophagus, also of granite, which today lies empty, looted in antiquity. It measures several inches larger than the door leading into the chamber, indicating that the burial chamber was built around the sarcophagus. The ceiling of the burial chamber is flat but the region directly above it contains five low compartments, stacked one above the other, designed to deflect the weight of the pyramid's superstructure from the hollow burial chamber. On the wall of the uppermost chamber is a graffito naming Khufu, the only



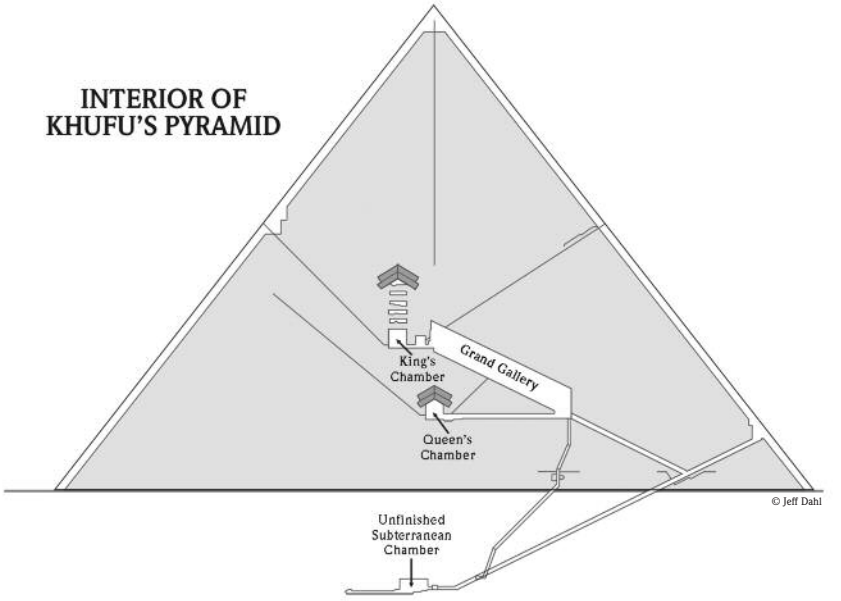
Source: Clayton, Peter A., and Martin J. Price. *The Seven Wonders of the Ancient World*. New York: Routledge, 1990.

1 Boat pits
1a Boat Museum
2 Mortuary Temple of Khufu
3 Pyramids of Khufu's Queens
4 Mastabas of the fourth and fifth dynasties
5 Mortuary Temple of Khafre
6 Causeway
7 Valley Temple of Khafre (granite temple)
A Entrance to Pyramid of Khufu
B Entrance to Pyramid of Khafre
C Entrance to Pyramid of Menkaure

place where the Pharaoh's name appears within his pyramid. Two narrow shafts lead from the burial chamber to the outside of the pyramid. Initially interpreted as air ducts, they are now believed to have been aligned with stars that held importance within the Egyptians' cosmography, and perhaps were there to help the Pharaoh's soul ascend to the heavens.

Although the interior arrangement of Khufu's pyramid has long been known, there is much discussion today, as in antiquity, of how the building was constructed. Although it was once believed that slaves built the pyramid, now it is known that the workers were paid, housed, and fed at government expense. Some were full-time laborers who lived in a village set up near the pyramid, but others were seasonal workers, farmers conscripted to work when the Nile was in flood, when the river escaped its banks and brought water bearing rich soil to the fields, making farming impossible. But how were the large blocks moved in an age where there were no winches or cranes? Most scholars agree that the blocks were dragged into position on sledges over ramps of earth, most likely ones that twisted around the pyramid. The Greek historian Herodotus, writing two thousand years after the building of Khufu's pyramid, claimed it took twenty years to construct. Since Khufu seems to have ruled around twenty-three years, this estimate could be close to the truth.

Khufu's pyramid was designed to hold his remains, but it did not function in isolation. Like other pyramids, it was part of a complex that contained a temple on its east face (conventionally called a mortuary temple), from which stretched a roofed causeway leading eastward to a second shrine, called the Valley Temple because of its proximity to the Nile Valley.



Smaller tombs of his relatives and courtiers also surrounded Khufu's pyramid, as well as three small pyramids, tombs for his wives. The pyramid of Khufu, often called the Great Pyramid at Giza, was a fitting monument to the divine pharaoh, whose well-being meant the health of Egypt.

The King's Chamber

An image of the red granite sarcophagus located at the west end of the King's Chamber in the Great Pyramid.

Khufu's descendents, Khafre and Menkaure, respectively, built the other two pyramids at Giza. The pyramid of Menkaure, Khufu's grandson, was relatively small, standing just over two hundred feet tall, but the pyramid of Khufu's son, Khafre, was as impressive a tomb as his father's. Khafre's pyramid is slightly smaller than Khufu's, with a base measurement of seven hundred five feet on each side. It is ten feet shorter than its mighty predecessor, but it looks taller because it was founded on a higher position on the plateau. Today Khafre's pyramid is easy to distinguish from Khufu's because some of the original Tura limestone casing is preserved at its apex. The interior arrangement is much simpler than in Khufu's pyramid, with a single interior burial chamber, although Khafre's pyramid has two separate entrances in the north face. Like Khufu's pyramid, Khafre's tomb also comprised a mortuary temple, causeway, and valley temple, the latter being extremely well preserved. The most famous element of the tomb complex, the Sphinx, thought to be a portrait of Khafre, is curiously not mentioned by the later Greek and Roman authors, and it never appeared on the list of Seven Wonders.

Khafre's pyramid and the Great Sphinx

FOR GREATER UNDERSTANDING

Questions

1. Why do the sides of Khufu's pyramid appear uneven?
2. How does Khafre's pyramid compare to Khufu's?

Suggested Reading

Clayton, Peter A., and Martin J. Price, eds. *The Seven Wonders of the Ancient World*. Reprint ed. New York: Routledge, 1990.

Other Books of Interest

Romer, John, and Elizabeth Romer. *The Seven Wonders of the World: A History of the Modern Imagination*. New York: Barnes & Noble Books, 2005.

Recorded Books

Darnell, John C. *Conflicts That Shaped Pharaonic Egypt*. The Modern Scholar Series. Prince Frederick, MD: Recorded Books, 2010.

Websites of Interest

1. The PBS television program *NOVA* provides an "online adventure" with short videos and related information about the pyramids at Giza. — http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/pyramid
2. Author Franz Löhner's *Building the Great Pyramid* website provides details of his theory of how the pyramids were constructed. — http://www.cheops-pyramide.ch/pyramid-building.html

Lecture 3

The Great Pyramids at Giza, Part Two

The Suggested Reading for this lecture is *The Seven Wonders of the Ancient World*, chapter 1, edited by Peter A. Clayton and Martin J. Price.

The Pyramids of Giza have enjoyed more notoriety than any other of the Seven Wonders. In part this is because they always have been visible, from the time of their building to the modern day. Also, millennia after their creation, when valid information on their construction was no longer available, the sheer size of the pyramids encouraged speculation on how and why they were built. Myths developed to help explain their grandeur, tales inevitably influenced by later societies' values. Among the Greeks, Romans, Christians, and Muslims, the story of the pyramids has been retold and recast to suit each society's needs and tastes.

Over two thousand years after their construction the Greek historian Herodotus visited the pyramids at Giza. Herodotus came to Egypt from Athens as a student of history, one fascinated by the ways of the Egyptians. In his day, the mid-fifth century BC, Athens dominated the Mediterranean, while Egypt was a land of limited political importance, revered for the strangeness and antiquity of its culture. It is through the writings of Herodotus, considered the Father of History, that we have a window into later Greek attitudes toward the pyramids and those who made them. A local priest guided Herodotus around Giza, much the way a guide would take a tourist around the pyramids today. Perhaps in response to the grand scale of the Great Pyramid at Giza, by the fifth century BC the prevailing tradition painted its builder, Khufu, as a tyrant. As Herodotus tells it he "brought the people to utter misery. For the first he shut up all the temples, so that none could sacrifice there; and next, he compelled all the Egyptians to work for him." Herodotus also introduces a theme that in later times was associated with the pyramids, that of prostitution:

> And so evil a man was Cheops [Khufu] that for lack of money he made his own daughter to sit in a chamber and exact payment (how much, I know not; for they did not tell me this). She, they say, doing her father's bidding, was minded to leave some memorial of her own, and demanded of everyone who sought intercourse with her that he should give one stone to set in her work; and of these stones was built the pyramid that stands midmost of the three.
>
> ~Herodotus, *The Histories*, Book II, 124–134

According to Herodotus's informants, Khafre (whom he calls Chefren) was as bad as his father. But the third builder at Giza, Menkaure (whom Herodotus calls Mycerinus) was a nobler leader by far:

> The next king of Egypt, they said, was Cheops' son Mycerinus. He, being displeased with his father's doings, opened the temples and suffered the people, now ground down to the depth of misery, to go to their business and their sacrifices; and he was the justest judge among all the kings. . . . This king too left a pyramid, but far smaller than his father's. . . . Some Greeks say that it was built by Rhodopis, the courtesan, but they are in error.
>
> ~Herodotus, *The Histories*, Book II, 124–134

It is evident that in Herodotus's time there was an assumption that the builders of such huge tombs must have done so through enslaving a populace. The smaller size of Menkaure's pyramid evidently signaled that he was a more benevolent ruler. For a Greek like Herodotus, these suppositions would have struck a chord; the idea of a huge tomb was entirely alien in the Greek world and therefore easily interpreted as wasteful.

The notion of the cruelty of the builders of the large pyramids contrasted with the nobility of the king who built the small pyramid is also found in the works of several authors of the Roman period. Strangely, the connection with prostitution also continues. Strabo (*Geography*, 17.33), writing in the first century BC, provides the story, dismissed by Herodotus, that Menkaure's pyramid was associated with a prostitute. According to him, the smallest of the three pyramids at Giza was called the "Tomb of the Courtesan," because one day when a wise king (Menkaure?) was pronouncing judgments out of doors, an eagle let fall in his lap a sandal it had

Menkaure's Pyramid, Giza, Egypt

snatched from a courtesan named Rhodopis. In a twist on the Cinderella story, the king, intrigued by the beauty of the shoe, demanded that its owner be brought to him. Consequently, he fell in love with the girl and married her. When she died he built the pyramid to house her remains. Pliny the Elder (*Natural History*, Book XXXVI, xvi.76), writing in the mid-first century AD, conflates the two prostitute stories, Herodotus's tale of Khufu's daughter and Strabo's story of Rhodopis, relating that Rhodopis (who he says was the lover of the fable writer Aesop) built the pyramid for herself, out of money she earned as a prostitute. He admits that the pyramids are impressive but notes that his "amazement is all the greater when we reflect that such wealth was acquired through prostitution."

In general, although the pyramids were considered wonders, the Romans also disapproved of them, seeing them as a wasteful drain on resources, created to enslave the populace and to aggrandize their builders at the expense of their successors. Pliny the Elder exemplifies this opinion:

> In Egypt too are the pyramids, which must be mentioned, if only cursorily. They rank as a superfluous and foolish display of wealth on the part of the kings, since it is generally recorded that their motive for building them was to avoid providing funds for their successors or for their rivals who wished to plot against them, or else to keep the common folk occupied. Much vanity was shown by these kings in regard to such enterprises.
>
> ~Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, Book XXXVI, xvi.76

It is possible that Pliny was comparing these monuments to the tombs constructed for the leaders of his world, the Roman Emperors. During the first century AD the cremated remains of the emperors were housed within a single structure in Rome, an impressive but not ostentatious building. But some Roman emperors were known for wasteful extravagance, including Nero, under whose rule Pliny lived.

By the fourth century AD, with the advent of Christianity, a new interpretation of the pyramids prevailed, that they were not tombs at all but were the "Granaries of Joseph." This notion was inspired by the story in Genesis in which the Israelite Joseph interpreted the dream of Pharaoh, which warned of a coming famine. The Egyptian king asked Joseph to oversee the creation of granaries to store grain against starvation. The fact that Christians could interpret pyramid-shaped buildings as grain silos reflects how strongly they viewed the world through the lens of their faith. The association with Joseph continued well into the medieval period. An English knight, Sir John Mandeville, visited the pyramids in the fourteenth century and had this to say:

> Now I will speak of another thing that . . . that is, the granaries of Joseph, that he caused to be made to keep the grains against the dear years. And they be made of stone, full well made of masons'

> craft; of the which two be marvelously great and high, and the others be not so great. . . . And some men say that they be sepultures of great lords that were sometime, but that is not true . . . for ye may well know that tombs and sepultures be not made of such greatness, nor of such highness, wherefore it is not to believe that they be tombs or sepultures.

The connection with Joseph was so strong that even when Sir John was told that the pyramids were tombs, he refused to believe it, for who in the fourteenth century would build such structures to house the dead?

A Muslim tradition transmitted by Abu'l Hasan Ali al Mas'udi, writing ca. AD 1000, provides yet another reading of the pyramids. A king of Egypt living three hundred years before the Flood learned of the coming cataclysm through a dream. Accordingly, he ordered the pyramids to be constructed, buildings that would survive the deluge. In them he placed the bones of his ancestors as well as his kingdom's treasures. He also ordered the priests to fill the pyramids with written accounts of all the knowledge of Egypt.

> The passages were filled with talismans, with idols and with the writings of the priests, containing all manner of wisdom, the names and properties of medical plants and the sciences of arithmetic and of geometry; that they might remain as records, for the benefit of those who could afterwards comprehend them.

Although pure fantasy, the tradition of the pyramids as being the repository of ancient and arcane wisdom influenced European attitudes toward the pyramids from the seventeenth century and to some degree is still with us today.

The Great Sphinx before excavation, ca. 1880s.

FOR GREATER UNDERSTANDING

Questions

1. Why have the Pyramids of Giza received more notoriety than any other of the Seven Wonders?
2. What was Pliny the Elder's view of pyramid building?

Suggested Reading

Clayton, Peter A., and Martin J. Price. *The Seven Wonders of the Ancient World*. Reprint ed. New York: Routledge, 1990.

Other Books of Interest

Romer, John, and Elizabeth Romer. *The Seven Wonders of the World: A History of the Modern Imagination*. New York: Barnes & Noble Books, 2005.

Recorded Books

Johnston, Susan A. *Myths and Mysteries in Archaeology*. The Modern Scholar Series. Prince Frederick, MD: Recorded Books, 2010.

Websites of Interest

1. The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago features the *Giza Plateau Mapping Project* directed by Professor Mark Lehner. The project is "dedicated to research on the geology and topography of the Giza Plateau, the construction and function of the Sphinx, the Great Pyramids, the associated tombs and temples, and the Old Kingdom town in the vicinity. — http://oi.uchicago.edu/research/projects/giz
2. The *Independent* newspaper's (London) website provides an article from August 2010 entitled "Robot to Explore Mysterious Tunnels in Great Pyramid," which describes an ongoing project between Egypt's Supreme Council of Antiquities and a robotics team from Leeds University. — http://www.independent.co.uk/news/science/robot-to-explore-mysterious-tunnels-in-great-pyramid-2046506.html

Lecture 4

The Walls of Babylon

The Suggested Reading for this lecture is *The Seven Wonders of the Ancient World*, chapter 2, edited by Peter A. Clayton and Martin J. Price.

The earliest surviving lists of the Seven Wonders place two of them in Babylon: the magnificent walls that encircled the city and the miraculous gardens that seemingly hung in midair. Babylon was a place of mystery for the Greeks, a city in distant Mesopotamia that few Hellenes visited. Since the time of the great lawgiver King Hammurabi (eighteenth century BC), Babylon had served as a regional and religious capital. When Alexander conquered Mesopotamia in 331 BC he favored Babylon as the administrative center of his eastern empire. In 323 BC, he died there, in the throne room constructed by his famous predecessor King Nebuchadnezzar. This king, who ruled from 604 to 562 BC, was responsible for the walls and gardens that later generations found so remarkable.

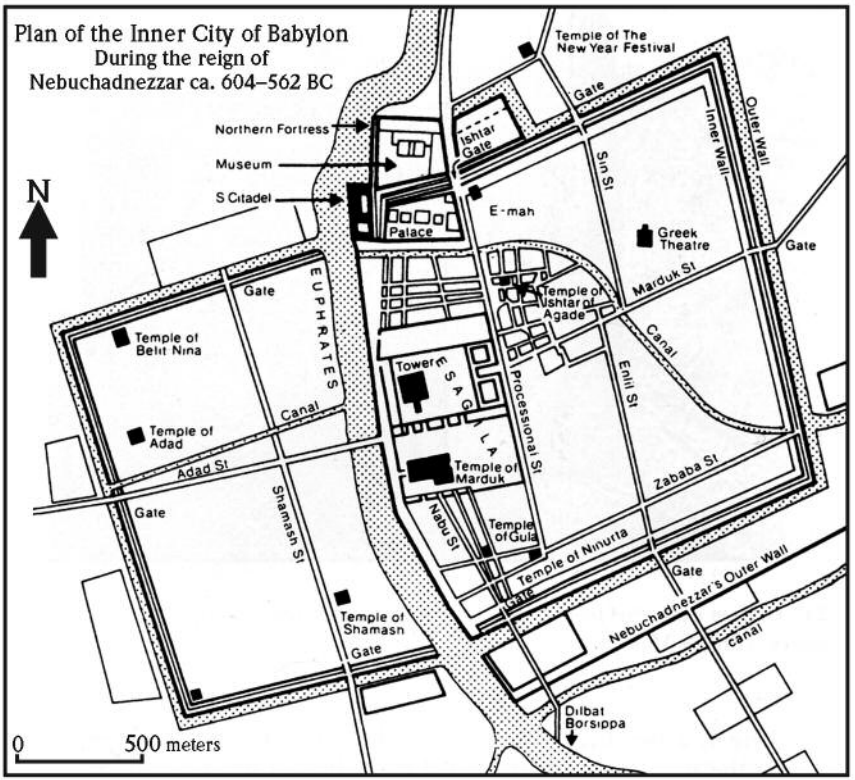
Throughout much of the second millennium BC, Babylon was the capital of a large empire that controlled much of Mesopotamia. During the first millennium, however, Babylon's power waned, chiefly due to the aggression of the Assyrians, a people native to the uplands of the Zagros Mountains to the north. Beginning in the ninth century BC the Assyrians began to forge an empire, which over the next two centuries would encompass regions today located in Iraq, Syria, Palestine, Israel, Jordan, Egypt, and eastern Turkey. The Assyrian Empire was the largest ever known in the ancient world. Babylon and its adjacent region, known as Babylonia, was reduced to a puppet kingdom, but one that was prone to disobedience. In 691 BC, the Babylonians ousted their pro-Assyrian king, which prompted the leader of the Assyrian Empire, Sennacherib, to besiege the city. The siege of Babylon lasted fifteen months and at the end the victorious Sennacherib razed the city, destroying homes and temples alike. Although his successor King Esarhadden rebuilt portions of the city, the Babylonians continued to resent and resist Assyrian rule.

In 626 BC, a native Babylonian named Nabopolassar seized the throne of Babylon and united Babylonia under his rule. Then, allied with a nomadic people known as the Medes, he overthrew the Assyrian Empire. With his victory Babylon inherited many of the lands held by the Assyrians, including Mesopotamia, Syria, and Egypt, founding what scholars today call the Neo-Babylonian Empire. Nabopolassar began to rebuild Babylon, but it was his son and successor Nebuchadnezzar who aggrandized the city, making it a worthy center for a new empire.

Nebuchadnezzar's first step was to complete the new fortification walls of Babylon, which had been begun by his father. He recorded the following:

> In order to strengthen the defenses of Esagila [the city god] that evil and the wicked might not oppress Babylon, which no king had done before me, at the outskirts of Babylon to the east I put about a great wall. Its moat I dug and its inner moat-wall with mortar and brick I raised mountain-high. About the sides of Babylon great banks of earth I heaped up. Great floods of destroying waters like the great waves of the sea I made to flow about it; with marsh I surrounded it.
>
> ~Stephen Langdon, *Building Inscriptions of the Neo-Babylonian Empire*, (1905) 85

Although much of Nebuchadnezzar's description exaggerates his enterprise, excavations conducted at the beginning of the twentieth century by a German team led by Robert Koldewey have uncovered a section of his wall along the eastern side of the city. The wall was built in three sections: an inner wall of sun-dried mud brick, seven meters thick; a middle, slightly thicker wall, also of mud brick and located twelve meters from the inner one; and an outer wall, of baked brick, three meters thick and lying against



Source: Clayton, Peter A., and Martin J. Price. *The Seven Wonders of the Ancient World*. New York: Routledge, 1990 (After J. Oates).

a broad moat that ran around the circuit of the wall. The spaces between the three walls were filled with layers of stony rubble that supported a broad roadway running along the top of the enceinte. High towers existed at intervals. Because only the eastern sections of the foundations of Nebuchadnezzar's wall were excavated, the upper portions being lost, its precise length and height are not known. Later Greek and Roman authors agree that the length of the city walls was about forty-one miles and the height of the walls reached some eighty feet. The authors differ as to the width of the wall, however. Herodotus, writing in the fifth century BC, claims that a four-horse chariot could easily turn around on the roadway that ran along the top of the wall, while Strabo, writing in the first century BC, says that the walls were so broad that two four-horse chariots could pass one another. According to Philo of Byzantium, four four-horse chariots could drive alongside each other.

Although the archaeological remains make it clear that the walls were erected during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar in the early sixth century BC, many later Greek and Roman authors ascribe the building of the walls to Semiramis, a legendary queen of Assyria. Numerous tales surround this figure. The product of a Syrian fish goddess and a mortal man, she was exposed at birth, but rather than die she was fed and sheltered by doves. Eventually a shepherd discovered her and adopted her as his own. Later, her great beauty brought Semiramis to the attention of the Assyrian king Ninus, whom she married. They soon had a son and when the Assyrian king died, he left Semiramis in control of his empire. According to the Roman author Diodorus Siculus, Semiramis's "nature made her eager for great exploits." Consequently she conquered numerous nations, including Egypt, Libya, and Ethiopia, and fought battles in India. The ancient authors present her as a great warrior, fearless in battle and clever with tactics, but also sexually insatiable. Fearful that marriage might undermine her power, she selected the most handsome soldiers in her army to sleep with and once done with them she would have them executed. When she died after forty-two years of rule she was worshipped as a dove goddess.

Curiously, Semiramis is also accredited with being a great builder. Legends claim she founded several cities in Asia, including Babylon. According to the Greek tradition, she not only built the walls of Babylon, but also a fine bridge over the Euphrates, one that measured three hundred feet long and thirty feet wide. This bridge was considered a "wonder" by many later authors because even though its pylons were laid in the sandy river bottom, the bridge nevertheless could withstand the rushing current of the river. Also in Babylon she was said to have built a tall temple to the god Belus, a building perhaps identifiable and known as the Ziggurat of Babylon, excavated by Koldewey in the early twentieth century. Tales record that Semiramis constructed two palaces, one of which possessed a circuit wall decorated with colored tile depicting wild animals. The description sounds

very like the walls that run along the so-called Ishtar gate and portray lions, dragons, and other creatures in molded glazed bricks.

Although the buildings at Babylon that the Greeks associated with Semiramis actually did exist, most of them were constructed by Nebuchadnezzar in the sixth century BC. It is possible that Semiramis was a real person, however. In the Assyrian annals there is listed a woman named Sammuramat, who lived in the late ninth century BC and who was married to King Shamshi-Adad V. When her husband died Sammuramat ruled as queen for some fifteen years until her son Adad-nirari III came of age. Assyrian official documents indicate that throughout the reign of her son (from 810 to 783 BC) Sammuramat shared the rule. Little is known of Sammuramat's activities but it is unlikely that she waged the wars ascribed to Semiramis. The myths that the Greeks associated with this historical figure no doubt reflect their general ignorance of the region, as well as their discomfort with the idea of a powerful female leader. Although the ancient world is filled with stories of power hungry and sexually voracious queens, such as Cleopatra, Semiramis is unique in that she was also associated with the nobler art of building, and she was admired for architectural achievements that were considered to be Wonders of the World.

A replica of Babylon's Ishtar Gate was reconstructed at the Pergamon Museum in Berlin, where it is on display.

FOR GREATER UNDERSTANDING

Questions

1. What lands did the Neo-Babylonian Empire comprise?
2. What was the legend of Semiramis's birth?

Suggested Reading

Clayton, Peter A., and Martin J. Price. *The Seven Wonders of the Ancient World*. Reprint ed. New York: Routledge, 1990.

Other Books of Interest

Romer, John, and Elizabeth Romer. *The Seven Wonders of the World: A History of the Modern Imagination*. New York: Barnes & Noble Books, 2005.

Websites of Interest

Brown University and the Joukowsky Institute for Archaeology Classroom provides an article entitled "Babylon: The Archaeology of Mesopotamia," which features information on the ancient city and its structures. — http://proteus.brown.edu/mesopotamianarchaeology/1310

Lecture 5

The Hanging Gardens of Babylon

The Suggested Reading for this lecture is *The Seven Wonders of the Ancient World*, chapter 2, edited by Peter A. Clayton and Martin J. Price.

Although some ancient sources associate Semiramis with the Hanging Gardens, more often their creation is attributed correctly to Nebuchadnezzar, the Babylonian king who ruled from 604 to 562 BC. As mentioned in the previous lecture, Nebuchadnezzar's father, Nabopolassar, with the help of the Medes, overthrew the Assyrian Empire, which had maintained a stranglehold throughout Mesopotamia. After Nabopolassar's death, Nebuchadnezzar expanded the new Babylonian Empire by conquering regions along the Mediterranean littoral, including portions of Phoenicia (modern Lebanon), Egypt, and the small kingdom of Judah. He destroyed the capital city of Jerusalem and brought the Jewish population back to Babylonia as captives (585 BC). There are few contemporary documents from Babylon that describe Nebuchadnezzar's reign. He is, however, mentioned in the Hebrew Bible, especially in the Book of Daniel, where the prophet Daniel, displaced to Babylon, served as dream interpreter to the king. According to the Book of Daniel, Nebuchadnezzar was punished for his pride and driven crazy, spending seven years living like an animal in the wild, before he was returned to power after praising the Hebrew God. Although most scholars doubt the historicity of this event, the Book of Daniel does correctly associate Nebuchadnezzar with the building of Babylon. In Book 4, Chapter 28, the king says: "Is this not magnificent Babylon, which I have built as a royal capital by my mighty power and for my mighty majesty?"

No monument from Babylon reflects Nebuchadnezzar's power and majesty more than the famed Hanging Gardens. Strangely, there are no references to the Gardens in Babylonian records, but several Greek and Roman authors inform us that Nebuchadnezzar built them to please a woman called Amytis, his Median wife. Such a marriage alliance is plausible; the Babylonians and the Medes were close allies during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar. Evidently the woman missed the highlands of Media, and Nebuchadnezzar created the Hanging Gardens to remind her of home.

The importance of the garden within Mesopotamian culture is clear. From the Annals of the Assyrian king Ashurnasirpal II, who ruled from 883 to 859 BC, comes the following description of a garden he built in his royal city of Nimrud:

> From lands in which I traveled, and the mountains I have passed I saw and I collected: cedar, cypress, box, prickly cedar, myrtle, juniper, almond, date palm, ebony, sissoo, olive, tamarind, oak, terebinth, nuts, ash, firs, nightshade.

> The canal water comes flowing down from above to the gardens of pleasure. The pomegranate trees are clothed with clusters of fruit like vines, and enrich the breezes in the garden of delights. Ashurnasirpal gathers fruit continuously in the garden of joys like someone who is starving.

A relief from the Assyrian city of Nineveh depicts a later Assyrian king, Assurbanipal, in his royal gardens, represented as a hill with trees, stone gazebos, and a stream running through.

Similarly, the Greek author Xenophon reports a meeting during the early fourth century BC between the Spartan general Lysander and a Persian prince, known as Cyrus the Younger:

> Lysander was amazed at the paradise: the trees were so beautiful—they were planted at even intervals, their rows were perfectly straight, and all the angles were just right—and as they walked, different sweet smells accompanied them. In his amazement at all these things he said, "I am truly amazed at all these things, Cyrus, because of their beauty. But I am more struck by the man who measured out and arranged each tree for you." Cyrus was pleased at the compliment and replied, "I did all the measuring and arranging, Lysander, and I also did some of the planting." Lysander looked at Cyrus and saw the beautiful clothes he was wearing, and noticed his perfume and the necklaces and anklets and jewelry he was wearing, and said, "What do you mean, Cyrus? Did you really plant any of these trees with your own hands?" Cyrus replied, "Does that surprise you, Lysander? I promise you, by the Sun god, that, when I am fit and well, I never sit down for dinner until I have sweated from some military or agricultural exercise, pursuing some highly honored activity."
>
> ~Xenophon, *Oeconomicus* iv, 21–24

Assyrian wall relief from the palace of Assurbanipal at Nineveh, ca. 640 BC, showing part of a royal garden.

Clearly gardening was a royal pastime in the ancient Near East. The encounter between Lysander and Cyrus took place in a garden, although Xenophon uses the Persian word "paradise," meaning "walled enclosure" or "cultivated area." Today we associate the word with a utopian existence, and in the Judeo-Christian tradition, with the Garden of Eden. It is no surprise that in many early traditions, the Garden of Eden was located near Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar's garden was part of a long tradition, but its unique appearance accorded it a place among the Seven Wonders. Perhaps the clearest account of the Gardens come from Philo of Byzantium:

> The so-called Hanging Gardens with its plants above the ground grows in the air. The roots of trees above form a roof over the ground. Stone pillars stand under the garden to support it and the whole area beneath the garden is occupied with engraved bases of the pillars. Individual beams of palm trees are in position, and the space separating them is very narrow. The wood from palm trees is the only kind of wood which does not rot. When they are saturated and under great pressure, they arch upwards and nourish the capillaries of the roots [of the vegetation], and admit into their own crevices roots that are not their own. On top of these beams a great amount of earth is poured to quite a depth. On top grow broad-leaved trees and garden trees, and there are varied flowers of all kinds—in short everything that is most pleasing to the eye and most enjoyable. . . . From above, aqueducts carry in running water: along one way the stream follows a wide downhill course, along the other way the water runs up, under pressure, in a screw; the necessary mechanisms of the contraption make the water run round and round in a spiral. The water goes up into many large receptacles and irrigates the whole garden.
>
> ~Philo of Byzantium, *On the Seven Wonders*, 1, The Hanging Gardens

Diodorus Siculus's account is also valuable:

> The appearance of the whole resembled that of a theater. When the ascending terraces had been built, there had been constructed beneath them galleries which carried the entire weight of the planted garden and rose little by little one above the other along the approach; and the uppermost gallery, which was fifty cubits high, bore the highest surface of the park, which was made level with the circuit wall of the battlements of the city.
>
> ~Diodorus Siculus, Book II, 7–10

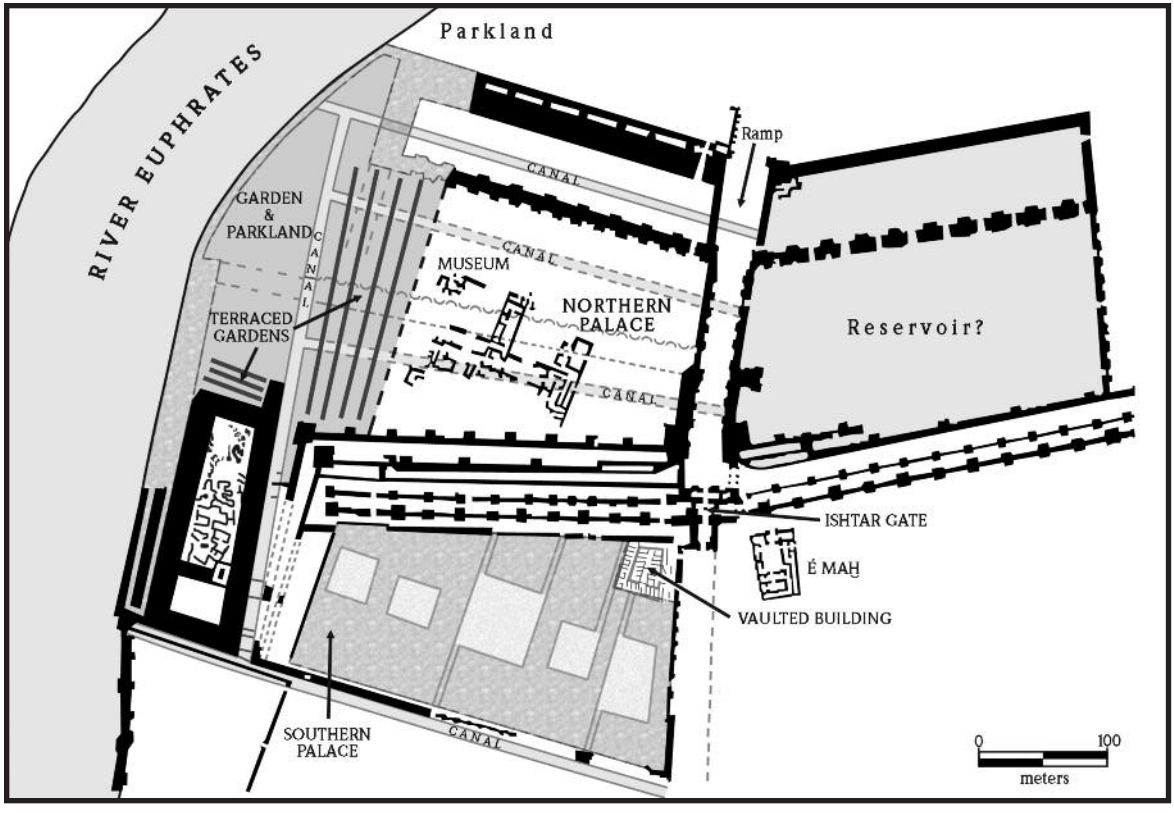
The authors were in agreement that the Hanging Gardens supported trees of all kinds, especially fruit trees that blossomed and gave fruit as they would in a traditional orchard. They also agree that the gardens were somehow supported on upright pillars that both created graduated terraces on which the plants could grow, as well as underground passageways where one could

find shade and from where one could see the roots of the trees. Finally, the gardens were located near the Euphrates and watered by means of a mechanical contraption that brought water up from the river below.

When Robert Koldewey began excavating Babylon he looked for archaeological remains that matched these descriptions. He discovered a structure, which he named the Vaulted Building, with thick walls that looked as though they could have supported vaults on which the Hanging Gardens could have stood. He interpreted the narrow spaces between the walls as galleries, in accordance with the literary descriptions. Koldewey's tentative identification of this building with the Hanging Gardens initially was widely accepted, although its location, embedded within the Southern Palace, far from the Euphrates, did not match the location described in the literary sources. Furthermore, discovered within one room of the Vaulted Building was an archive of cuneiform tablets dating to the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, some of which listed rations to be distributed to foreign exiles held in Babylon, among them King Jehoikim of Judah. Scholars now identify Koldewey's Vaulted Building as a well-constructed storeroom.

Because there is no mention of the Gardens in contemporary Babylonian sources, and because Koldewey's Vaulted Building proved an unlikely candidate for the structure, many scholars have concluded that the gardens were a myth—that they never actually existed. A recent suggestion, however, made by an Iraqi scholar named Dr. Mu'ayyad Damerji may identify the remains of the Gardens. On the western side of the Northern Palace, adjacent to the city walls and the Euphrates, were excavated several massive walls, running parallel to one another. These walls could conceivably have formed a series of low terraces, resembling a theater, with galleries underneath and gardens above, close to the city wall and the Euphrates. This may well be all that remains of the marvelous Gardens Nebuchadnezzar built for his homesick wife.

Illustration of how the Hanging Gardens may have appeared by Robert J. Koldewey, a German archaeologist who excavated Babylon from 1899 to 1917.



Source: Wiseman, D.J. *Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon*. Schweich Lectures of the British Academy, 1983. London: British Academy, 1991 (1985).

A reconstruction of the proposed location of the Royal (Hanging) Gardens at Babylon as described by archaeologist Donald J. Wiseman in *Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon*, 1983.

FOR GREATER UNDERSTANDING

Questions

1. What story is related of Nebuchadnezzar in the Hebrew Bible?
2. What do scholars now make of Koldewey's Vaulted Building?

Suggested Reading

Clayton, Peter A., and Martin J. Price. *The Seven Wonders of the Ancient World*. Reprint ed. New York: Routledge, 1990.

Other Books of Interest

Romer, John, and Elizabeth Romer. *The Seven Wonders of the World: A History of the Modern Imagination*. New York: Barnes & Noble Books, 2005.

Wiseman, Donald J. *Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon*. Schweich Lectures of the British Academy, 1983. London: British Academy, 1991 (1985).

Websites of Interest

The *Times* of London provides an article from November 2008, entitled "Babylon: Myth and Reality at the British Museum," which describes a traveling exhibit about ancient Mesopotamia shown in Berlin, Paris, and London. The article also details some of the tragic losses of ancient artifacts and relics as a result of looting during the war in Iraq. — http://entertainment.timesonline.co.uk/tol/arts_and_entertainment/visual_arts/article5108383.ece

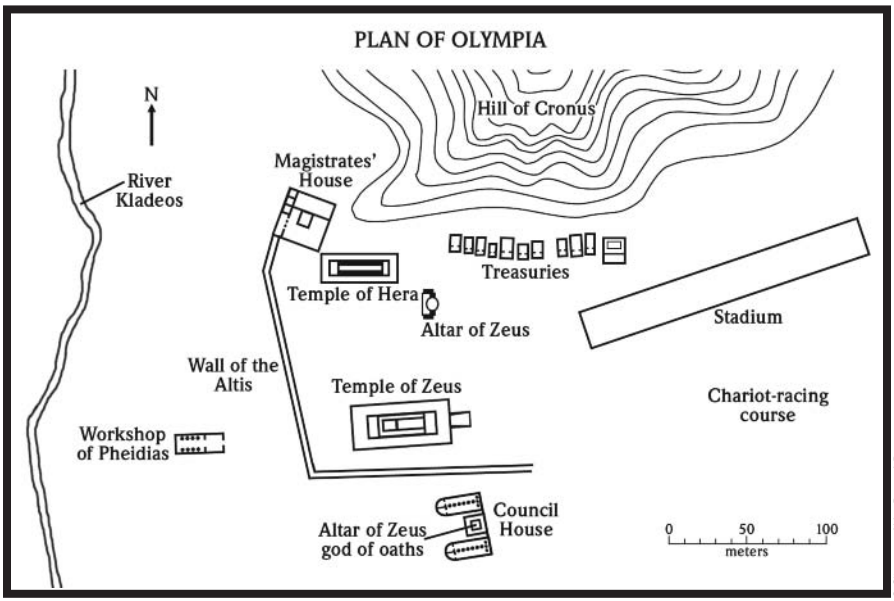
Lecture 6

The Statue of Zeus at Olympia

The Suggested Reading for this lecture is *The Seven Wonders of the Ancient World*, chapter 3, edited by Peter A. Clayton and Martin J. Price.

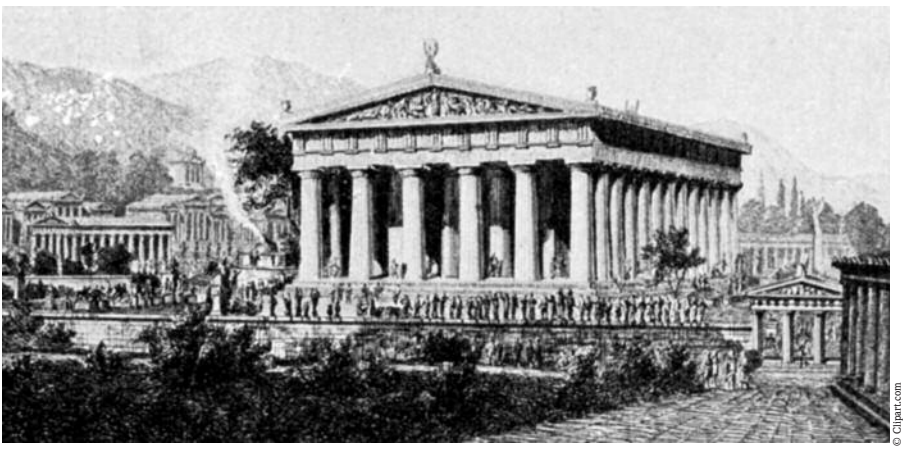
The region of Greece known as the Peloponnesus (the island of Pelops) hangs to the south of the Greek mainland, attached by the narrow Isthmus of Corinth. The rugged Arcadian Mountains that occupy the center of the region make travel within the Peloponnesus difficult even today. On their western slopes, however, the Arcadian mountains roll gently toward the sea. Here, in a plain created between two rivers, the Alpheus and the Cladeus, is Olympia, a sanctuary, or sacred zone, devoted to the worship of the god Zeus. According to Greek tradition, in 776 BC the Olympic Games were founded here, competitions in which the best athletes of the Greek world would vie in honor of the king of the gods. In the fifth century BC, the greatest sculptor of the day, Pheidias, created a statue of Zeus for Olympia, a statue that was ranked among the Seven Wonders.

Olympia has been excavated almost continuously since the 1820s, chiefly by German teams. They have demonstrated that from the eighth century BC onward the focus of worship in the sanctuary was a huge open-air altar, a massive mound of ash and animal bone—remains of innumerable sacrifices to Zeus. Although a temple was constructed in honor of Zeus's wife



Hera at the beginning of the sixth century BC, it wasn't for another century that a temple was built for Zeus. This temple, erected by the neighboring city of Elis from spoils of war, was under construction from 470 to 456 BC. Designed by a local architect named Libon, the temple was a fairly conventional building of the Doric Order. It was greatly embellished with sculpture, however. The metopes over the two porches portrayed the twelve Labors of Heracles, the heroic strongman who, according to one ancient tradition, was the founder of the Olympic Games. The pediment above the western porch displayed a battle between Greeks and Centaurs, a wild scene of violence: manes, tails, and hooves intertwining with arms and drapery. Over the eastern porch of the temple was a scene depicting a horserace between King Oinomaos and the hero Pelops. The prize was the hand of the king's daughter Hippodameia. Pelops, for whom the Peloponnesus was named, was victorious, but not without resorting to some trickery. The temple was impressive enough to be listed as one of the Seven Wonders during the Roman period.

Temples in the Greek world served several functions. Unlike a church, synagogue, or mosque today, religious ceremonies did not take place within the temple, but outside, around the altar, which usually was located to the east of the building. Worshippers entered a temple to offer prayers and deposit gifts to the god, and they could stand in admiration before a manifestation of their deity, a statue of their god. Today archaeologists refer to such statues as cult statues, because they were the focus of prayer and devotion. It is interesting to note that the Temple of Zeus at Olympia stood completed for some twenty-five years before it received a cult statue. When one was finally installed, however, it was considered the greatest cult statue ever created.



A sketch of the Temple of Zeus at Olympia, ca. early twentieth century.

The statue of Zeus became one of the Seven Wonders because of its size, the materials from which it was made, and above all, the fame and talent of its sculptor. The artist hired to create the statue was an Athenian named Pheidias, who was flush from his work on the sculptural decoration of the great temple of Athena in Athens, the Parthenon. Not only did he oversee the hundreds of sculptors who worked on the reliefs and statues decorating the temple, he was also responsible for the cult statue of Athena. This statue stood in the inner chamber, or cella, of the temple and was chryselephantine—created from gold and ivory. Pheidias had devised a method of creating colossal statues of these costly materials, by building a wooden armature that formed the core of the statue. Thin plates of gold forming the drapery were hung on the inner framework, as were thin sheets of ivory, which made up the fleshy parts of the statue. In this way, limited materials were used to their greatest effect.

Pheidias had been hired in Athens by the great statesman Pericles, a personal friend. A promoter of democracy as well as imperialistic policies, Pericles was a controversial figure, popular among the Athenian masses but hated by some of the elite. Because of his grassroots popularity, those who wished to attack him chose to do so by taking on those close to him, including Pheidias. First he was accused of pocketing some of the gold designated for Athena's statue, but Pheidias proved his innocence by removing the gold drapery from the statue and weighing it, demonstrating that all the metal was accounted for. Then he was accused of portraying himself and Pericles in a battle scene that decorated Athena's shield. Since this was a cult statue, including live people on any part of the image was a great impiety. According to legend, Pheidias was found guilty of the crime and was exiled from Athens. Fortunately he was invited to Olympia to create another cult statue, that of Zeus.

No trace of the Zeus statue survives today, although archaeologists have a fairly good idea of its appearance based on coin representations and literary descriptions. The king of the gods was depicted sitting on a throne. Like the Athena statue, Zeus was chryselephantine, so his drapery, which wrapped over his left shoulder and across his lap and over his legs, was of gold. His arms, feet, chest, and face were of ivory. Pausanias, a travel writer of the second century AD, provides a description of the statue:

A statue of a seated Zeus is depicted on the reverse side of an imperial Greek coin from Elis.

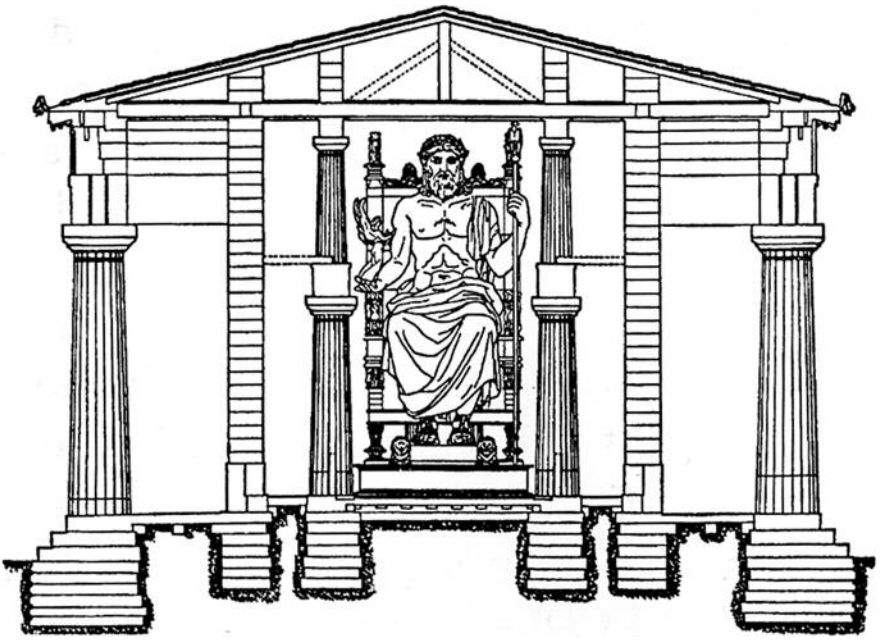
> On his head lies a sculpted wreath of olive sprays. On his right hand he holds a figure of victory made from ivory and gold. . . . In his left hand the god holds his scepter inlaid with every kind of metal, and the bird perched on the scepter is an eagle. The sandals of the god

are made of gold, as is his robe, and his garments are carved with animals and with lily flowers. The throne is decorated with gold and with precious stones, with ebony and with ivory.

~Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, Elis I, XI, 1–2

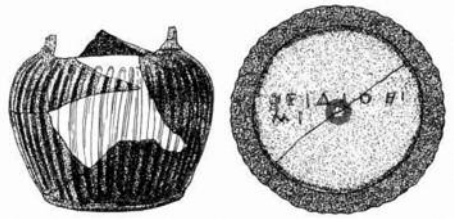
The statue was huge, measuring nearly forty feet high, and filled the cella of the temple. One visitor, the geographer Strabo, observed rather critically that the head of Zeus reached the rafters of the temple and if he were to stand up he would go through the roof. But other observers noted that there was more to the statue than size and costly materials. The Roman statesman Cicero said that Pheidias "had a vision of beauty in his mind so perfect that concentrating on it he could direct his artist's hand to produce a real likeness of the god." In other words, Pheidias had captured the essence of the greatest of all the gods.

In 1959, a German team excavated a small church at Olympia, which sat on top of an earlier structure, a building reputed to have been the workshop of Pheidias. To their delight they uncovered debris from the creation of the Zeus statue: fragments of ivory, metal, glass, tools, and terracotta molds for the golden drapery. But the most exciting discovery was the base of a broken jug, a simple object but on its underside were scratched the words *Pheidio eimi*: "I belong to Pheidias."



Pheidias's Zeus in the temple at Olympia.

The fate of Pheidias is unclear. According to one tradition he returned to Athens after the completion of the Zeus statue and was executed. As for the statue itself, it was well maintained for centuries, the ivory was treated with olive oil to keep it from cracking in the Mediterranean heat, and when necessary, noted artists helped with minor repairs. In the first century AD, the Roman Emperor Caligula sent workmen to dismantle the statue to bring it to Rome. Legend has it that the statue came to life, emitted cackles of laughter, and scared the crew away. Three centuries later, however, the statue suffered a different fate. In 391 AD, the Roman empire was, for the most part, Christian, although there were some who still worshipped the old gods. Emperor Theodosius I decided to put an end to polytheism and issued an edict closing all temples and ending all pagan festivals. All activities at Olympia came to an end, including the Olympic Games, a competition that had lasted for over one thousand years. Shortly thereafter the statue of Zeus was dismantled and moved to Constantinople, now the capital of the Roman world. It stood as a magnificent oddity in a palace on the shores of the Bosphorus until the building was destroyed by fire in AD 462. The wooden armature and ivory burned, the gold melted; so ended the statue that stood for over eight hundred years.



A sketch made directly from the remaining piece of jug showing ownership by Pheidias.

FOR GREATER UNDERSTANDING

Questions

1. What purpose did temples serve in the Greek world?
2. What was Cicero's opinion of Pheidias's Zeus statue?

Suggested Reading

Clayton, Peter A., and Martin J. Price. *The Seven Wonders of the Ancient World*. Reprint ed. New York: Routledge, 1990.

Other Books of Interest

Romer, John, and Elizabeth Romer. *The Seven Wonders of the World: A History of the Modern Imagination*. New York: Barnes & Noble Books, 2005.

Websites of Interest

Anistoriton provides an article from March 2004, entitled "Pheidias Workshop and the Statue of Zeus at Olympia" by Elia Delaporta, PhD (editor). — http://www.anistor.gr/english/enback/a041.htm

Lecture 7

The Temple of Artemis at Ephesus, Part One

The Suggested Reading for this lecture is *The Seven Wonders of the Ancient World*, chapter 4, edited by Peter A. Clayton and Martin J. Price.

When Antipater described the Seven Wonders, he considered the Temple of Artemis at Ephesus the most impressive of them all:

> I saw the wall chariots drive along at lofty Babylon, and the statue of Zeus by the Alpheios, and the Hanging Gardens, and the Colossus of Helios, and the huge labor of the sheer Pyramids, and the enormous tomb of Mausolus. But when I saw the palace of Artemis, stretching as far up as the clouds, the rest faded into insignificance, and I said "Look, apart from Olympus, the Sun has not yet looked on anything that compares with this."
>
> ~Antipater, *Palatine Anthology*, IX, 58

What he called the "palace" of Artemis was the largest temple ever constructed, actually the largest building in the Greek world. But the goddess for whom it was built was only superficially Greek, having her origins in the ancient traditions of the east. According to legend, colonists from Athens arrived on the west coast of Turkey, a region known as Asia Minor, around 1000 BC and founded the city of Ephesus. They encountered a native population who worshipped a mother goddess called Kybele. The Greeks recognized similarities between Kybele and their own goddess Artemis and what ensued was a meshing of the two deities. Over time the worship of the goddess spread throughout the Mediterranean, but Ephesus remained the center of her cult. Here were constructed a series of magnificent temples, which were counted among the Seven Wonders.

Two views of a model of the Temple of Artemis from the Museum of Efes, Turkey.

The sanctuary of Artemis is located in a low, marshy region outside the city of Ephesus. The British archaeologist John Turtle Wood discovered the sanctuary in 1870, after searching for it for nearly a

decade. He excavated for four years, digging through eight meters (about twenty-four feet) of soil to reach traces of the temple. In the 1960s, an Austrian team resumed Wood's investigations and work continues today. Excavation has uncovered three temples, all superimposed on one another. The earliest was a small temple, or *naiskos*, of the seventh century BC. Above that was discovered a mighty temple of the sixth century BC, which was destroyed by fire in the fourth century BC. This temple was rebuilt shortly after its destruction. When the initial list of the Seven Wonders was created in the second century BC this last temple was visible, but for many ancient commentators on the wonders, it was its predecessor that inspired awe and amazement.

The earlier temple was begun about 570 BC. The architects were Chersiphron of Crete and his son Metagenes, as well as a man named Theodorus who had recently completed an enormous temple dedicated to Hera on the island of Samos. Many stories surround the construction of the temple, chiefly focusing on the genius of Chersiphron but also highlighting how the goddess herself intervened to ensure its completion. One concerns the materials used for the building. Most temples of the sixth century BC were constructed of limestone, but Chersiphron wanted the Temple of Artemis built from marble, the strongest and most beautiful stone available. Unfortunately there were no quarries in the vicinity, which meant that the marble would have to be brought from a distance at great expense. As it happened, a shepherd in the hills above the sanctuary of Artemis was watching two of his rams butt heads, when one missed his opponent and struck a rock with his horn. The stone fractured, exposing shining white

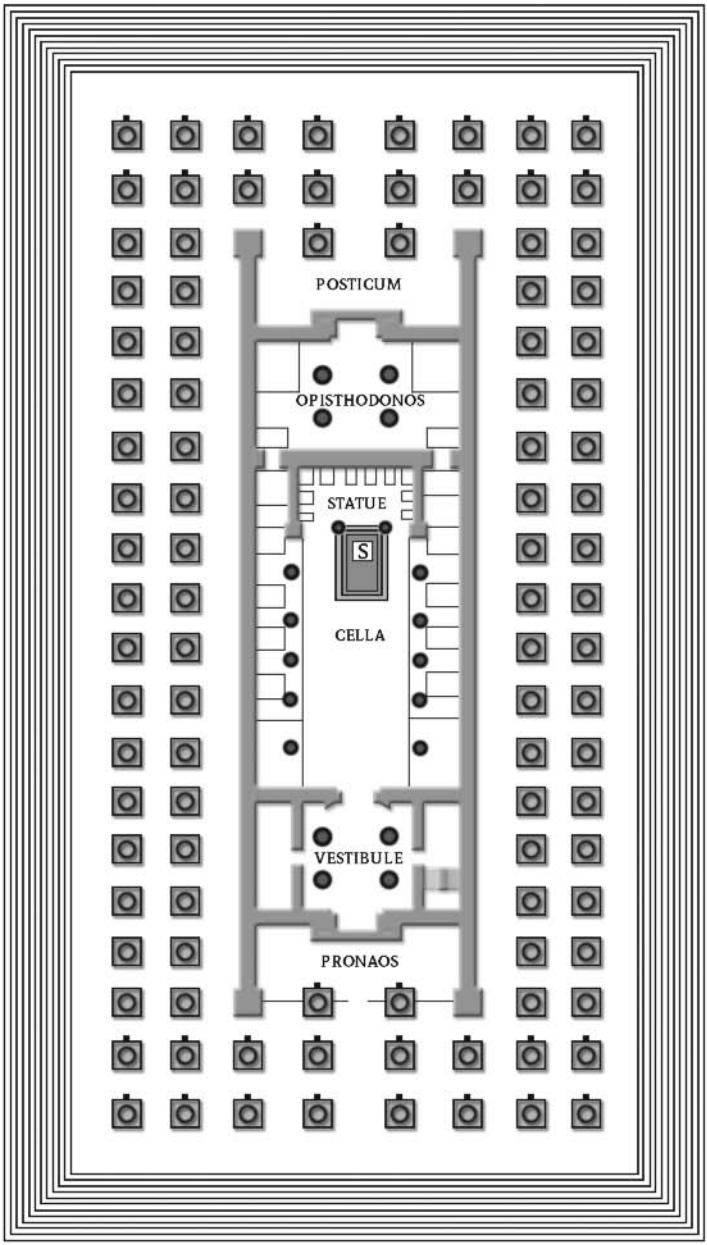
A recent photograph of the site of the Temple of Artemis at Ephesus, near present-day Selçuk, Izmir Province, Turkey.

marble. The shepherd ran to town clutching the stone chip. Chersiphron and the elders of Ephesus interpreted the discovery of a local source of marble as divine intervention. Another legend focused on the problems the location of the temple posed. The temple's position was determined by the placement of the first, seventh century BC temple to the goddess, which happened to be within a marshy landscape. Chersiphron was faced with the problem of building a huge marble temple on swampy, unstable ground. Legend has it that Chersiphron underpinned the temple foundations with a layer of charcoal topped by one of sheepskin, to help soak up the damp. Although the story sounds fanciful, excavation has uncovered a thick black layer beneath the foundations of this temple, perhaps traces of charcoal.

Ten years after Chersiphron began work on the temple, King Croesus of Lydia, a non-Greek kingdom, conquered Ephesus and the other Greek cities on the west coast of Asia Minor. Rather than curtailing the temple construction, Croesus, a Hellenophile, donated money toward its completion. With the financial support of this foreign king the finished temple was the largest structure in the Greek world, measuring fifty-five by one hundred fifteen meters, roughly the size of an American football field.

Most Greek temples face eastward, toward the rising sun, but the Temple of Artemis at Ephesus opened to the west. This feature seems to be connected with the local goddess Kybele (who had been united with Artemis), a mother goddess associated with birth but also with death. Thus her temples often face the setting sun, symbolic of passing into the afterlife. The plan of the temple consisted of a deep porch that led into the cella, where the image of the goddess stood. The temple comprised over one hundred marble columns; eight stood within the porch, while eighty or more formed a double row encircling the cella. The height of the columns is not known, but in the later temple they stood sixty feet tall. They followed the Ionic order of architecture, with capitals formed with elegantly curved volutes and bases consisting of a square plinth supporting a low, round element, the scotia. Some columns, however, were decorated with life-size figures in relief, depicting priests in procession. Many of these columns were inscribed with the name of Croesus, the king who donated money for the temple's completion, and some bore the names of the architects, Chersiphron, Metagenes, and Theodorus.

The architect Chersiphron was faced with the dilemma of how to place the stone superstructure, or architrave, into position atop the high columns. The Roman author Pliny the Elder relates how he developed an ingenious means to achieve this feat. He built ramps of sandbags leading up to the tops of the columns, over which pieces of the architrave were hauled into position. The difficulty lay in how to lower them into place, but Chersiphron deftly managed this by releasing sand from the lowest bags of the ramp, allowing the architrave to gently settle on its columnar supports. However, Chersiphron ran into trouble when he tried to position



Public Domain/After a drawing by John Turtle Wood, 1877

TEMPLE OF ARTEMIS AT EPHESUS

the lintel over the door, a seemingly insoluble problem that nearly drove the architect to suicide.

> But the greatest difficulty was encountered with the lintel itself when he was trying to place it over the door; for this was the largest block, and it would not settle on its bed. The architect was in anguish as he debated whether suicide should be his final decision. The story goes that in the course of his reflections he became weary, and that while he slept at night he saw before him the goddess for whom the temple was being built: she was urging him to live because, as she said, she herself had laid the stone. And on the next day this was seen to be the case. The stone appeared to have been adjusted merely by dint of its own weight.
>
> ~Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, Book XXXVI, 95

The temple stood for nearly two hundred years. In July 356 BC, an arsonist set fire to the temple, destroying it. The event coincided with the birth of Alexander the Great. A story later circulated that Artemis, a goddess involved with childbirth, had been unable to protect her temple because she was busy attending the birth of the great conqueror. Certainly we shall see that Alexander felt a deep connection to this temple.

FOR GREATER UNDERSTANDING

Questions

1. What challenges were posed by the location of the Temple of Artemis?
2. What difficulty nearly drove Chersiphron to suicide?

Suggested Reading

Clayton, Peter A., and Martin J. Price. *The Seven Wonders of the Ancient World*. Reprint ed. New York: Routledge, 1990.

Other Books of Interest

Romer, John, and Elizabeth Romer. *The Seven Wonders of the World: A History of the Modern Imagination*. New York: Barnes & Noble Books, 2005.

Websites of Interest

The *Livius* website features an article entitled "Artemis of Ephesus" that describes the original statue of Artemis and compares it to the later copy. — http://www.livius.org/ei-er/ephesus/ephesus_artemis.html

Lecture 8

The Temple of Artemis at Ephesus, Part Two

The Suggested Reading for this lecture is *The Seven Wonders of the Ancient World*, chapter 4, edited by Peter A. Clayton and Martin J. Price.

The Temple of Artemis at Ephesus, constructed in the sixth century BC, burned to the ground in 356 BC. The wooden beams of the roof as well as the costly weaving and flammable gifts for the goddess stored within the temple gave ample fuel for the fire, whose heat shattered the columns and cracked the marble foundations. The fire was no accident but an act of arson. A man named Herostratus set it with the hope of gaining eternal fame through this wanton act. Although the Ephesians put him to death and pronounced a death penalty on anyone who uttered his name, Herostratus was ultimately successful in his gambit for immortality, as his mention here illustrates. At the time that the temple burned, Ephesus and the other towns on the west coast of Asia Minor were in the hands of the Persians. As mentioned in the last lecture, the event occurred on July 21, the night of Alexander the Great's birth, and later traditions claim that the temple's destruction was a harbinger for the devastation that Alexander would wreak on the Persian Empire.

Slowly the people of Ephesus began to rebuild the temple. It was still under construction when the twenty-two-year-old Alexander visited Ephesus in 334 BC. Fresh from the first of many military victories over the Persians, he had just liberated the Greek cities of Asia Minor from their Persian overlords. Alexander keenly felt a connection with the temple whose destruction coincided with his birth, and he was eager to show himself as a generous benefactor. He offered to pay for the completion of the temple, but curiously, the people of Ephesus refused his support. It would appear that the Ephesians did not want to replace the domination of the Persians with the domination of the young Macedonian king. Their flattering excuse was to tell Alexander, who even as a young man had some pretensions toward divinity, that it would not be fitting for one god to build a temple for another god. The sophistry did not satisfy Alexander, who demanded that he be paid the taxes the Ephesians had been giving the Persians. In turn, Alexander dedicated the money to the building of the temple.

The new temple was built along the same lines as the older one. Once again it was of marble and once again it was one of the largest temples ever constructed. This temple stood on a high platform, however, comprising thirteen steps. As with the predecessor, the one-roomed cella faced westward and was surrounded by a forest of columns. According to Pliny the Elder, thirty-six of these were ornately carved and at least one was created by Scopas, the artist who was partially responsible for the sculpture of

another wonder, the Mausoleum of Halicarnassus. Excavations have uncovered part of one sculpted column drum, which depicted the god Hermes conducting a figure into the afterlife. Even in the new temple the worship of Artemis involved an aspect of death.

A sculpted column drum from the fourth-century BC temple at Ephesus.

Coins minted in the Roman period depicting the western façade of the temple show a building of the Ionic order standing on a many-stepped platform. Between the columns is an image of the statue that stood within the cella. In his list of the Seven Wonders, Antipater called the temple the "palace of Artemis," and in antiquity it was believed that a temple served as a home (or palace) for the deity worshipped inside. It was thought that the deity actually could inhabit the statue housed there. The image shown on the coins matches those of statues of the goddess excavated at Ephesus and elsewhere. Artemis as she was worshipped at Ephesus had a unique appearance. She is shown with a rigid stance, legs together and arms slightly outstretched. From her hips down her gown clings to her legs and is decorated with images of wild and mythical animals: griffins, sphinxes and sirens, lions, deer, and bees. These creatures must reflect aspects of her cult, which honors Artemis as a controller of animals and (combined with the local goddess Kybele) as a being from the exotic East. On her upper body she wears a pectoral with dozens of globular objects hanging from it. Archaeologists first identified these as breasts, but more recent scholarship prefers to see them as bull testicles. The testicles are a symbol of fertility, appropriate to a mother goddess, but there is an undercurrent of violence. Priests of Kybele were ritually castrated and adherents of the cult of this mother goddess habitually bathed in bulls' blood.

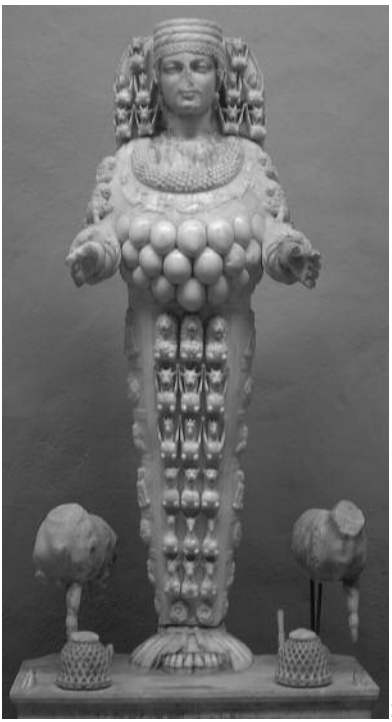
Roman coin minted in Ephesus, depicting the Temple of Artemis.

The most famous incident involving Artemis of Ephesus was when Saint Paul visited the city in the mid-first century AD. Alarmed at his success in making converts, the silversmiths who made their living creating small images of the goddess began a riot against the apostle. Only the protection of the Roman governor saved Paul from being lynched. But with the advent of Christianity Artemis's days were numbered. In the AD 262, an invading

troop of Goths sacked the sanctuary and badly damaged the temple. Some minor repairs were undertaken immediately thereafter, but in 401 Saint John Chrysostom, the archbishop of Constantinople, led a mob to dismantle the temple.

A visit to the Temple of Artemis today is something of a disappointment. Although the subject of several excavations conducted over the past century and a half, there is little to see. The swampy conditions with which Chersiphron grappled in the sixth century BC have taken over the site. Marble column drums sit marooned in pools of water. Ducks paddle over the flooded cella and turtles sun on the blocks half exposed from the muddy earth. One lone column stands, re-erected in modern times to mark the location of the once great building. It no longer supports an architrave, but a nest built by an opportunistic stork. Most of the blocks of the temple were taken away long ago, chiefly to build the massive church of Saint John constructed in the sixth century on a hill just above the temple. Although reusing blocks from an abandoned building was a practical means of keeping down building costs, in this instance there was a symbolic quality to the absorption of the blocks of the temple within the structure of the church.

But some scholars do not see Christianity as totally obliterating the cult of Artemis. Artemis and her local counterpart Kybele were mother goddesses, and even though violent and frightening at times, the mother goddess was greatly beloved. It is perhaps no accident that in Christian times Ephesus became the center for the adoration of the Virgin Mary. It was believed that Saint John brought Mary to Ephesus after the crucifixion of Jesus. There she lived into her old age and from there ascended into heaven. Although the great Temple of Artemis was no more, it is possible that the long-standing affection the Ephesians held for their mother goddess was wholeheartedly transferred to another female figure, the mother of God.



Artemis of Ephesus

A first-century AD Roman copy of the cult statue of the Temple of Artemis at Ephesus. The statue is on display in the Museum of Efes, Turkey.

FOR GREATER UNDERSTANDING

Questions

1. What were Alexander the Great's connections to the Temple of Artemis?
2. Why might devotion to the Virgin Mary have taken such strong hold in Ephesus?

Suggested Reading

Clayton, Peter A., and Martin J. Price. *The Seven Wonders of the Ancient World*. Reprint ed. New York: Routledge, 1990.

Other Books of Interest

Romer, John, and Elizabeth Romer. *The Seven Wonders of the World: A History of the Modern Imagination*. New York: Barnes & Noble Books, 2005.

Websites of Interest

The University of Chicago *Temple of Artemis* website provides a further description of the site and focuses on information about its destruction. — http://penelope.uchicago.edu/~grout/encyclopaedia_romana/greece/paganism/artemis.html

Lecture 9

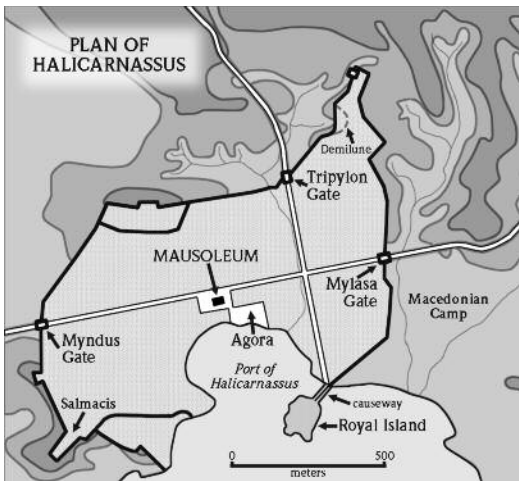
The Mausoleum at Halicarnassus, Part One

The Suggested Reading for this lecture is *The Seven Wonders of the Ancient World*, chapter 5, edited by Peter A. Clayton and Martin J. Price.

Located in the southwest corner of Turkey is the bustling harbor of Bodrum, a popular resort town that boasts the largest outdoor disco in the Mediterranean. Up the hill from the harbor, tucked away among white houses draped with pink bougainvillea lies the scant remains of the Mausoleum. In antiquity Bodrum was the site of the city of Halicarnassus, a city that once served as the capital of a region known as Caria. The Carians were a non-Greek people native to Anatolia (ancient Turkey), with their own language, customs, and pantheon of gods. Halicarnassus, however, located on the coast, enjoyed an infiltration of Greeks and Greek culture. Perhaps the most famous Greek from Halicarnassus was the historian Herodotus, who, as we have seen, described the Pyramids of Giza and the Walls of Babylon.

During the early fourth century BC Caria, like the rest of Anatolia, was part of the Persian Empire. This huge, multicultural state, stretching from India to the Aegean, was too unwieldy to rule directly from the distant capital of Persepolis, so governors, or in Persian, satraps, were set up to rule regions of the empire. In Caria, a local dynast named Hecatomnus was named to this post, and for the next seventy years he and his descendants (the Hecatomnids) controlled Caria. Except for forwarding taxes to the Persian king in Persepolis and providing men and arms in wartime, the Hecatomnids were virtually independent rulers of a small kingdom.

Hecatomnus was succeeded by his son Mausolus, who ruled from 377 to 353 BC. His first action as satrap was to move the capital from the inland city of Mylasa to the small harbor town of Halicarnassus. To create a city worthy of his perceived greatness he transferred the populations of six outlying towns to the new capital, swelling the population five times. Halicarnassus still had a sizeable Greek community, and it would



The plan of the city of Halicarnassus during the fourth century BC.

appear that Mausolus desired his new capital to become a Greek-type city. His architects laid out a new grid system of broad streets, interrupted from time to time by wide plazas. A market was constructed, as well as a theater and a temple to the Greek god Ares. On a promontory jutting into the sea, where the Crusader castle of Saint Peter now sits, an impressive palace of brick, faced with shining white marble, was built. At the heart of the city, however, stood a grandiose tomb designed to hold the remains of the Carian dynast Mausolus, a building that came to be known as the Mausoleum, the "place of Mausolus."

The Roman author Pliny, writing in the first century AD, provides our most complete description of the building, which he mentions in the context of a discussion of great sculptors of the fourth century BC:

> The contemporaries and rivals of Scopas were Bryaxis, Timotheus, and Leochares, whom we must discuss along with him because together with him they worked on the carvings of the Mausoleum. This is the tomb that was built by Artemisia for her husband Mausolus, the governor of Caria who died in the second year of the 107th Olympiad (352–349 BC). These artists were chiefly responsible for making the structure one of the Seven Wonders of the World. On the north and south sides it extends for sixty-three feet, but the length of the façades is less, the total length of the façades and sides being four hundred forty feet. The building rises to a height of twenty-five cubits and is enclosed by thirty-six columns. . . . The east side was carved by Scopas, the north by Bryaxis, the south by Timotheus and the west by Leochares; and before they completed their task, the queen died. However, they refused to abandon the work without finishing it, since they were already of the opinion that it would be a memorial to their own glory and that of their profession; and even today they are considered to rival each other in skill. With them is associated a fifth artist. For above the colonnade there is a pyramid as high again as the lower structure and tapering in twenty-four stages to the top of its peak. At the summit there is a four-horse chariot of marble, and this was made by Pythis. The addition of this chariot rounds off the whole work and brings it to a height of one hundred forty feet.
>
> ~Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, Book XXXVI, iv, 30

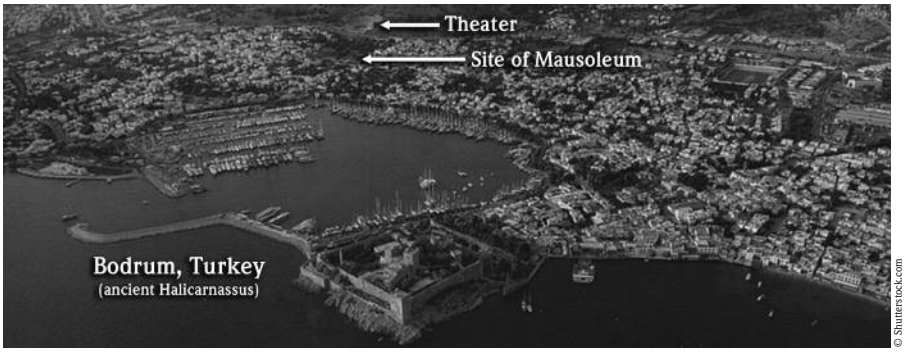
Pliny's testimony provides the valuable information that Mausolus died before his tomb was completed, and that it was left to his wife, Artemisia, to finish the project. It is interesting to note that the Hecatomnid Dynasty, like the Egyptian pharaohs, practiced intermarriage. Artemisia was therefore Mausolus's full sister as well as his wife. She appears to have been devoted to him. When he died and was subsequently cremated and placed in his tomb, legend has it that Artemisia saved some of his ashes in order

to drink a spoonful of them in her wine every night. Evidently she did so until her own death two years later.

The description of the Mausoleum provided by Pliny the Elder makes it clear that the greatness of the building lay in the sculpture that decorated it. Mausolus hired the four leading sculptors of the fourth century to work on his tomb: Scopas, Bryaxis, Timotheus, and Leochares. All were from Greece and all had built (or were going to build) their reputations on other monuments there. Scopas had been architect and sculptor on the temple of Athena Alea at Tegea in the Peloponnesus and had also worked on the fourth century BC Temple of Artemis at Ephesus. Timotheus and Bryaxis had both crafted famous statues of the healing god Asclepius. Leochares would later create gold and ivory statues of the family of Alexander the Great at Olympia. To have one of these men provide sculpture for a building was an achievement—to have all four was truly remarkable. If we can believe Pliny's testimony, the sculptors themselves recognized that they were creating a masterpiece. Even when Artemisia died they continued to embellish the building for the sake of their reputations.

The Mausoleum stood virtually intact until the thirteenth century, when it was felled by earthquake. In the fifteenth century, the Crusader Knights of Saint John built the Castle of St. Peter on the promontory where once stood Mausolus's palace, incorporating many architectural fragments from the Mausoleum into its walls. In the sixteenth century, knights of the same order, desiring to enhance the castle's fortifications, returned to the site of the Mausoleum to quarry out more stone. An eyewitness to the events, a French knight reported the following:

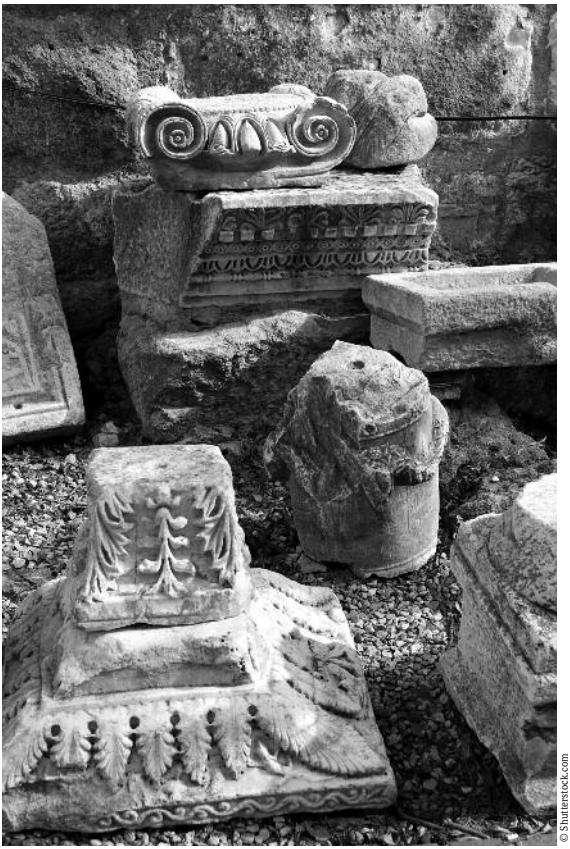
> After four or five days, having laid bare a great space one afternoon, they saw an opening as into a cellar. Taking a candle, they let themselves down through this opening, and found that it led into a fine large square apartment, ornamented all around with columns of marble, with their bases, capitals, architrave, frieze, and cornices, engraved and sculpted in half-relief. The space between the columns



An aerial view of modern Bodrum, site of the Mausoleum of Halicarnassus.

was lined with slabs and bands of marbles of different colors, ornamented with moldings and sculptures, in harmony with the rest of the work, and inserted in the white ground of the wall, where battle-scenes were represented sculptured in relief. Having at first admired these works, and entertained their fancy with the singularity of the sculpture, they pulled it to pieces, and broke up the whole of it, applying it to the same purpose as the rest. Beyond this apartment, they found a very low doorway, which led into another apartment, serving as an antechamber, where was a sepulcher, with decorated column tops and a tympanum of white marble, very beautiful, and of marvelous luster. For want of time, they did not open this sepulcher, the retreat having already sounded. The day after, when they returned, they found the tomb opened, and the earth all around strewn with fragments of cloth of gold, and spangles of the same metal, which made them suppose that the pirates, who hovered along this coast, having some inkling of what had been discovered, had visited the place during the night and had removed the lid of the sepulcher. It is supposed that they discovered in it much treasure.

Thus in the sixteenth century the tomb of King Mausolus was looted, the burial chamber having lain undisturbed for nearly two thousand years.



Fragments of ornamental marble that once decorated the Mausoleum at Halicarnassus and was later incorporated into building elements at the Castle of Saint Peter by the Knights of Saint John.

FOR GREATER UNDERSTANDING

Questions

1. What is Artemisia purported to have done with her husband's ashes?
2. Where did the greatness of the Mausoleum lie?

Suggested Reading

Clayton, Peter A., and Martin J. Price. *The Seven Wonders of the Ancient World*. Reprint ed. New York: Routledge, 1990.

Other Books of Interest

Romer, John, and Elizabeth Romer. *The Seven Wonders of the World: A History of the Modern Imagination*. New York: Barnes & Noble Books, 2005.

Websites of Interest

The University of Chicago provides the full version of W.R. Lethaby's *The Tomb of Mausolus* (1908), including his detailed illustrations. — http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Gazetteer/Places/Europe/Turkey/_Periods/Greek/_Texts/LETGKB/Mausoleum*.html

Lecture 10

The Mausoleum at Halicarnassus, Part Two

The Suggested Reading for this lecture is *The Seven Wonders of the Ancient World*, chapter 5, edited by Peter A. Clayton and Martin J. Price.

In the 1840s the British ambassador to Constantinople, Lord Stratford de Radcliffe, came into possession of some sculpted reliefs that had been found built into the walls of houses at Bodrum, the tiny fishing village that once was Halicarnassus. These he sent to the British Museum in London. Ten years later Charles Newton, working on behalf of the museum, began investigating Bodrum in the hope of finding more sculpture. Newton was well aware of the passage in Pliny and knew the importance of finding more statues. By the nineteenth century, however, the actual location of the Mausoleum within Halicarnassus/Bodrum was unknown. Wandering through the houses and gardens of the fishing village, Newton came across mounds of ancient rubble at a place where earlier travelers had reported seeing some column drums. Upon excavation he discovered fragments of sculpture that correctly convinced him that he was at the Mausoleum. Most of the sculpted pieces were quite fragmentary, but at the northern end of the area he came down upon a thick layer of toppled blocks and sculpture that were still in good condition.

Newton found three sizes of freestanding sculpture. One colossal group, measuring approximately one and two-thirds life-size, depicted individuals engaged in various activities, such as religious sacrifice and hunting. Here Mausolus and his sister/wife Artemisia may have been portrayed. Another group, approximately one and one-third life-size, appears to represent ancestors of Mausolus, while a third life-size set depicts Greeks fighting Persians. This last is a standard theme in the repertoire of Greek sculpture and does not seem to represent an actual battle between Mausolus and his Persian overlords. In addition, Newton found statues of lions, guardian animals that often graced tombs in antiquity. Since their discovery scholars have been puzzled by the fact that the backs of these felines were inscribed with one or another Greek letter: either a "P" or "L." The most recent interpretation is that these letters stand for the colors (P for *porphyros* [red] and L for *leukos* [white]) that the lions were painted. Like all Greek sculpture, bright polychromy once enhanced the marble figures from the Mausoleum.

The most arresting figure discovered by Newton is the statue identified as Mausolus. Measuring approximately eighteen feet tall, the satrap stands enveloped in thick drapery. His long ropy hair falls down his back and his heavy beard and mustache partially obscure his fleshy lips. Deep-set eyes stare out from beneath a heavy brow. This image of a powerful dynast has been called the first realistic portrait of the ancient world. Associated with

the Mausolus portrait is the statue of a woman, also heavily draped, with an ornate hairstyle. She has been tentatively identified as Artemisia, although her face no longer survives.

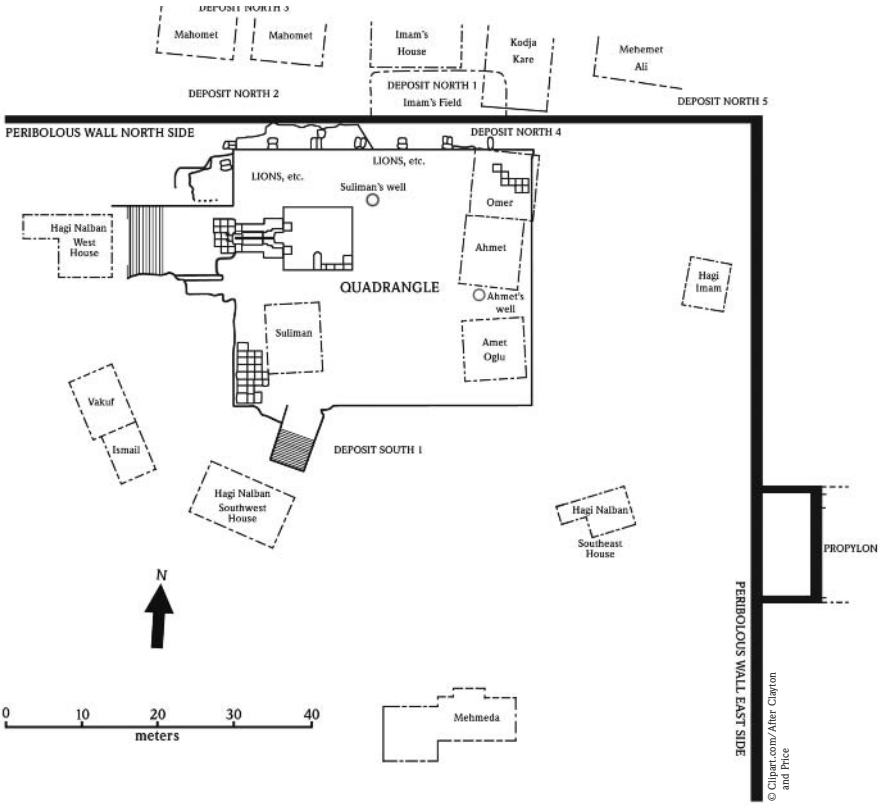
In addition to these statues the Mausoleum was also decorated by a series of sculpted friezes. Some were excavated by Newton while others were found reused as building blocks within buildings of Bodrum. Even the Castle of Saint Peter incorporated fragments of bas-relief into its walls. The reliefs represented three themes, all typically found on Greek temples. One was the age-old battle of the sexes: Greeks versus Amazons, those warrior women from the East. Another depicted Greeks fighting Centaurs, the half-men–half-horse creatures that represented the forces of chaos to the Greeks. The third scene was of racing chariots, perhaps a reference to funeral games for Mausolus. According to Pliny, each of the four great sculptors who worked on the Mausoleum was responsible for a different side of the building. Unfortunately earthquakes and the hand of man have made it impossible to identify specific sculpture with a specific location on the tomb. Nevertheless, scholars of the nineteenth century spent much energy trying to associate sections of reliefs and pieces of sculpture with each of the four sculptors named by Pliny. In general this has proved fruitless.

Since the rediscovery of the Mausoleum and until recent times many archaeologists have proposed hypothetical reconstructions of the Mausoleum, all presenting various arrangements of the three basic architectural elements known to have made up the building: podium, colonnade, and pyramidal roof. Because this information was based on literary testimonia that could be interpreted in various ways,

Statues believed to represent Mausolus (right) and his wife Artemisia (left) discovered in Bodrum by British archaeologist Charles Thomas Newton during his excavations in 1856–1857.

these reconstructions often disagreed with one another, particularly when it came to the overall proportions of the elements. Some argued for a high podium and low roof; others favored a rather squat podium and lofty roof. Between 1966 and 1977, however, a Danish team under the direction of Kristian Jeppesen returned to Newton's excavations with the aim to better understand the architecture of the building. The results of his project provide a good indication of the appearance of the tomb.

The Mausoleum stood within a broad rectangular precinct that appears to have been the site of an ancient cemetery, predating the time of Mausolus. The Mausoleum itself was rectangular in plan, the shorter sides at the east and west measuring one hundred feet in length and the north and south sides measuring one hundred twenty feet in length. The lowest element of the tomb was a tall podium of solid masonry, measuring some sixty feet in height. Above it was a colonnade of thirty-six columns, running around all four sides of the building, which excavation has demonstrated was in the Ionic order. These columns supported a pyramidal roof made up of twenty-



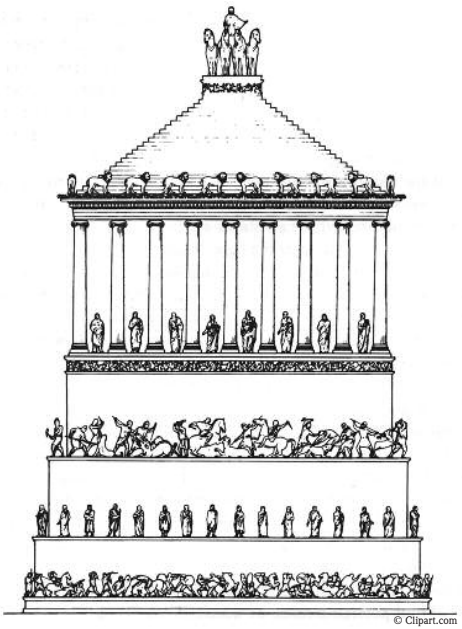
A plan of the Mausoleum at Halicarnassus based on the nineteenth-century discoveries of Charles Newton and the more recent findings by Kristian Jeppesen.

four receding steps, which in turn was crowned by a quadriga, or four-horse chariot. The whole structure stood one hundred forty feet tall.

On the western side of the tomb a staircase led into the subterranean burial chamber, sunk deep below the ornate tomb building. The chamber was not located in the center of the structure, but beneath the northwest corner, probably to confuse tomb robbers. Little remains of the room seen by the knights in the sixteenth century, but when the Danish team began careful excavation of this area, they came across a deposit that dated to the time of Mausolus's funeral. At the foot of the staircase that led down to the burial chamber the Danes discovered offerings left for the dead king: the bones of five oxen, two calves, twenty-five sheep or goats, eight lambs or kids, three cocks, ten hens, eight pigeons, and twenty-six hens' eggs, in addition to seventeen alabaster jars for ointment. The Mausoleum was not only a glorious monument to the dead king but a center for worship of this man who created a superhuman structure.

The Mausoleum was admired and imitated by the Romans. By the reign of Augustus in the later first century BC, the word "mausoleum" had come to describe an impressive tomb. Augustus's own tomb in Rome was called a mausoleum, although it bore no resemblance to the building in Halicarnassus. In Mylasa, a city located inland from Halicarnassus, a wealthy inhabitant constructed a smaller version of the Mausoleum of Halicarnassus sometime in the second century AD. This tomb, virtually intact, is invaluable for our understanding of the appearance of Mausolus's tomb. It too comprised three elements—podium, columns, and pyramidal roof—but it was constructed on a much smaller scale than Mausolus's tomb.

Some Romans, however, saw the Mausoleum as a symbol of human vanity. The satirist Lucian, writing in the second century AD, created an imaginary dialogue between Mausolus and the Greek philosopher Diogenes of Sinope, a man famed for the simplicity of his lifestyle. In it, Diogenes gently scolds the dynast:



A modern reconstruction of the Mausoleum at Halicarnassus as suggested by Geoffrey B. Waywell, 1988.

Diogenes: Why, Carian, are you so proud, and expect to be honored above all of us?

Mausolus: Firstly, Sinopean, because of my royal position. I was king of all Caria, ruler also of part of Lydia, subdued some islands, too, and advanced as far as Miletus, subjugating most of Ionia. Moreover, I was handsome and tall and mighty in war. But, most important of all, I have lying over me in Halicarnassus a vast memorial, outdoing that of any other of the dead not only in size but also in its finished beauty, with horses and men produced most perfectly in the fairest marble, so that it would be difficult to find even a temple like it. Don't you think I've a right to be proud of these things?

Diogenes: Of your royal position, you say, and your beauty, and the weight of your tomb?

Mausolus: Good heavens, yes.

Diogenes: But, my handsome Mausolus, the strength and the beauty you mention aren't still with you here. If we chose a judge of beauty, I can't say why your skull should be thought better than mine. Both of them are bald and bare, both of us show our teeth in the same way, and have lost our eyes, and have snub noses now. Perhaps your tomb and all that costly marble may give the people of Halicarnassus something to show off, and they can boast to strangers of the magnificent building they have, but I can't see what good it is to you.

~Lucian, *The Dialogues of the Dead*, 29

As was the case with the pyramids, some Romans viewed the Mausoleum with distaste—not because the building was unimpressive, but because such a huge monument for one man seemed terribly wasteful. Nevertheless, the Mausoleum was destined to remain on the list of wonders for the next one thousand years.

One of the better-preserved lions recovered from the Mausoleum site on exhibit at the British Museum.

FOR GREATER UNDERSTANDING

Questions

1. What three themes were represented in the sculpted friezes from the Mausoleum?
2. What was discovered at the foot of the stairs leading down to the Mausoleum's burial chamber?

Suggested Reading

Clayton, Peter A., and Martin J. Price. *The Seven Wonders of the Ancient World*. Reprint ed. New York: Routledge, 1990.

Other Books of Interest

Romer, John, and Elizabeth Romer. *The Seven Wonders of the World: A History of the Modern Imagination*. New York: Barnes & Noble Books, 2005.

Websites of Interest

The *Livius* website article "The Mausoleum of Halicarnassus" includes several images of statues and fragments found at the site in Turkey. — http://www.livius.org/ha-hd/halicarnassus/halicarnassus_mausoleum.html

Lecture 11

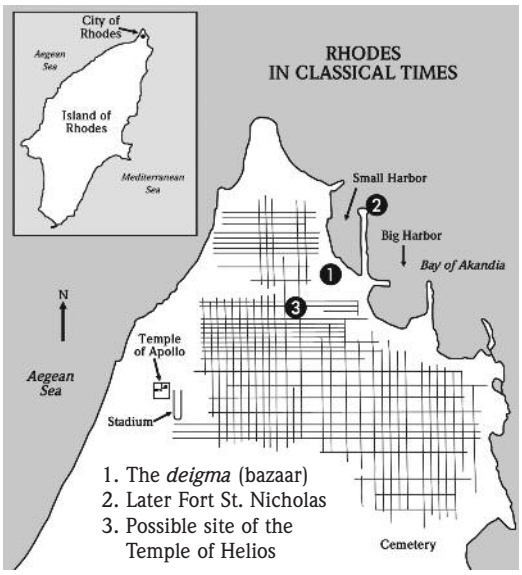
The Colossus of Rhodes

The Suggested Reading for this lecture is *The Seven Wonders of the Ancient World*, chapter 6, edited by Peter A. Clayton and Martin J. Price.

According to myth the sun god Helios fell in love with a beautiful nymph named Rhoda. Together they had seven sons who became the first inhabitants of the island that saw their birth, an island that came to be called Rhodes. The significance of this whimsical tale is that the connection of the sun god with Rhodes reaches far back in antiquity. When the Rhodians created a colossal statue to celebrate their survival of a long siege, the subject was their patron deity Helios.

The island of Rhodes, located off the southwestern coast of Turkey, has always occupied a strategic location along major sea-lanes leading south and east to Cyprus and Egypt, and north and west to the Ionian coast and Greece. As a consequence, several cities on the island developed as important trading centers. In 408 BC, however, in order to enhance commercial prospects, the three major cities of the island united to form a republic, and they created a new capital city at the north end of the island. This city, called Rhodes, was exceptionally well suited as a trade center with two harbors, one devoted to commerce and the other to ship building.

During the fourth century BC the fledgling Republic of Rhodes enjoyed little independence, first coming under the direct control of the Persians and then being ruled by the satrap Mausolus of Caria. As part of the Persian Empire, Rhodes sided against Alexander the Great when he invaded the region in 334 BC; indeed, one of the Macedonian's most formidable opponents was a sea captain from Rhodes named Memnon. When Alexander died in Babylon in 323 BC,



The city of Rhodes in Classical Times showing the possible site of the Temple of Helios. Inset: The Island of Rhodes showing the location of the city.

Rhodes was finally at liberty and began a policy aimed at developing as a mercantile center. To do so, the Rhodians forged a strong trade agreement with the new Ptolemaic kingdom of Egypt. Unfortunately, this alliance dragged Rhodes into a political struggle between the Ptolemies and the new king of Asia Minor, Antigonus the One-Eyed. In 305 BC Antigonus demanded that Rhodes join him in a war against Egypt. The Rhodians refused and in retaliation Antigonus sent his son Demetrius Poliorcetes ("besieger of cities") to attack the town of Rhodes. What ensued was a yearlong siege that pitted a single city against an able general with some four hundred ships, forty thousand soldiers, and state-of-the-art siege equipment. Supported by Egypt and their own courage and tenacity, the Rhodians held out against Demetrius, who eventually gave up. Through negotiations a mutually beneficial agreement was brokered whereby Rhodes promised to give military aid to Antigonus against all enemies except Egypt. The island could continue to trade with the Ptolemies.

When Demetrius abandoned his attack on the city of Rhodes he left behind the siege equipment that had proved so ineffective. The Rhodians sold it and with the proceeds erected a votive statue, as a gift to Helios, a thank offering for their salvation. An inscription, whose text survives in a medieval anthology, is thought to have come from the base of the statue:

> To you, Helios, yes to you the people of Dorian Rhodes raised this colossus high up to heaven, after they had calmed the bronze wave of war, and crowned their country with spoils won from the enemy. Not only over the sea but also on land they set up the bright light of unfettered freedom.
>
> ~*Palatine Anthology*, vi, 171

The statue was a monument to freedom, set up to honor the patron deity of the island, Helios. The inscription calls the statue a colossus, a non-Greek word from Asia Minor that originally merely meant statue. Because the colossus created in Rhodes was of great size and became famous, the word *colossus* came to stand for all huge statues.

Unfortunately little is known about the appearance of the Colossus. Ancient sources report that it was over one hundred feet tall and was created from bronze. It stood only fifty-six years before collapsing in the earthquake of 226 BC. Even in its broken state the Colossus was considered a wonder. According to Pliny the Elder (*Natural History*, Book XXXIV, 39–42), "even lying on the ground it is a marvel. Few people can make their arms meet around the thumb of the figure." Pliny goes on to describe the ruins of the Colossus: "where the limbs have been broken off enormous cavities yawn, while inside are seen great masses of rock with the weight of which the artist steadied it when he erected it. It is recorded that it took twelve years to complete and cost three hundred talents."

The artist in question was Chares of Lindus (a town on the southern coast of Rhodes), who was a pupil of Lysippus, the court sculptor of Alexander the Great. Philo of Byzantium (writing either in the third century BC or the fourth century AD) describes Chares's method of construction:

> A base of white marble was laid down, and on this he first set the feet of the Colossus up to the ankle-bones. . . . The ankles had to be cast on top and, just as happens in building houses, the whole work had to rise on top of itself. And for this reason, in the case of other statues, artists first make a mold, then divide it into parts, cast them, and finally put them all together and erect the statue. But the artist of the Colossus cast the first part and then molded the second part on the first and, when the second part had been cast in bronze, built the third part on top of that. He used the same method of construction for the remaining parts. . . . When the casting had been done on the earlier worked parts, the intervals of the bars and the joints of the frame-work were taken care of, and the structure was held steady with stones that had been put inside. So that throughout the construction he might retain his conception unshaken, he continually poured an immense mound of earth round the finished parts of the Colossus, hiding what had already been worked on underground, and carried out the next stage of casting on the flat surface of what was underneath.
>
> ~Philo of Byzantium, *On the Seven Wonders*, 4, The Colossus at Rhodes

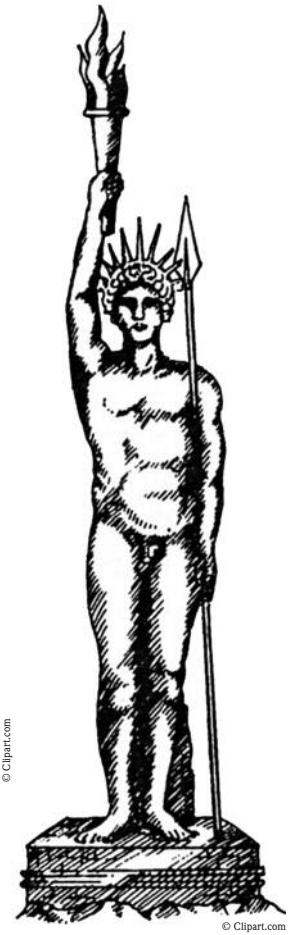
According to Philo, Chares first molded parts of the statue elsewhere, then fitted the elements together from the feet up. He continuously raised his working surface by mounding earth around the parts of the statue that had been completed. Both Pliny and Philo agree that large stones in the hollow interior of the statue were used for stabilization.

There is no record of the actual appearance of the Colossus. Because of its height and weight, most scholars today believe the statue stood upright, with legs together, perhaps one arm raised straight overhead holding a torch. Because the image was Helios, it is likely that the statue wore a radiate crown from which spiky sunbeams emanated. Such images of the sun god appear on Rhodian coinage. As for the location of the Colossus within the city of Rhodes, there is no information. An Italian pilgrim named de Martoni visited Rhodes in 1395 and popularized the tradition that the Colossus stood with legs spanning the opening of the larger harbor of Rhodes, a distance of 1,300 feet. From then on artists depicted the statue straddling the harbor, with tall sailing ships gliding

Two tetradrachms from Rhodes show images on their obverse sides of Helios with radiate sunbeams (top) and without (bottom).

between its legs. Scholars now know that it would have been impossible for the statue to be located in such a position. Besides being extremely unsteady, ancient testimonia are clear in saying that the fragments of the Colossus remained on shore where they fell, an impossible situation if the statue stood over water. It is possible that the Colossus stood on the mole that separated the two ancient harbors of Rhodes, where now sits the medieval Fort of Saint Nicholas. But ancient reports inform us that when the Colossus fell it crushed several houses, and it is unlikely that there were homes located in the heart of the commercial port. The most likely scenario is that the Colossus, as a statue of Helios and a gift to the god, was set up within the sanctuary of the deity. Although the precinct of Helios has long since been obscured by the medieval and later buildings of Rhodes, its location is known: on a low hill in what would have been the center of town. Here the colossal bronze statue would have been visible from far out at sea.

Even though the statue stood for a little over half a century it was on the lists of Seven Wonders until Christian times and later. In AD 654, after the Arabs conquered Rhodes, the fragments of the Colossus were sold for sheet metal. Tradition has it that a Jewish merchant from Emesa (in Syria) carried the remains of the Colossus away on nine hundred camels. Although nothing today survives of the Colossus of Rhodes, its message of freedom has been echoed on other huge bronze statues, most notably the Statue of Liberty.



Engraving by sixteenth-century artist Maarten van Heemskerck showing the Colossus standing with legs apart across the entrance to the harbor (above). Many scholars now believe the statue stood with its legs together as in the illustration at the right.

FOR GREATER UNDERSTANDING

Questions

1. Who was Chares of Lindus?
2. What was Chares's method of construction?

Suggested Reading

Clayton, Peter A., and Martin J. Price. *The Seven Wonders of the Ancient World*. Reprint ed. New York: Routledge, 1990.

Other Books of Interest

Romer, John, and Elizabeth Romer. *The Seven Wonders of the World: A History of the Modern Imagination*. New York: Barnes & Noble Books, 2005.

Websites of Interest

The *Discover Rhodes* website provides a video that originally aired on the *Discovery* television channel and features Dr. Scott Steedman (British Royal Academy of Engineering) discussing the possible location of the Colossus, and a reenactment of how it may have been constructed. — http://www.discover-rhodes.com/features/the-colossus-of-rhodes

Lecture 12

The Lighthouse of Alexandria

The Suggested Reading for this lecture is *The Seven Wonders of the Ancient World*, chapter 7, edited by Peter A. Clayton and Martin J. Price.

The earliest list of wonders, created in Alexandria in the second century BC, included the Pyramids, the Walls of Babylon, the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, the Statue of Zeus at Olympia, the Temple of Artemis at Ephesus, the Mausoleum of Halicarnassus, and the Colossus of Rhodes. Ironically, it did not mention the one monument that stood in Alexandria itself, the Pharos, or Lighthouse, featured on later lists. It first emerged on a list of the sixth century AD and from then on the Pharos appeared fairly regularly on subsequent lists throughout the medieval period. In the sixteenth century, when the "canonical" list was created, it was listed as the seventh "wonder," with the two monuments from Babylon counting as one.

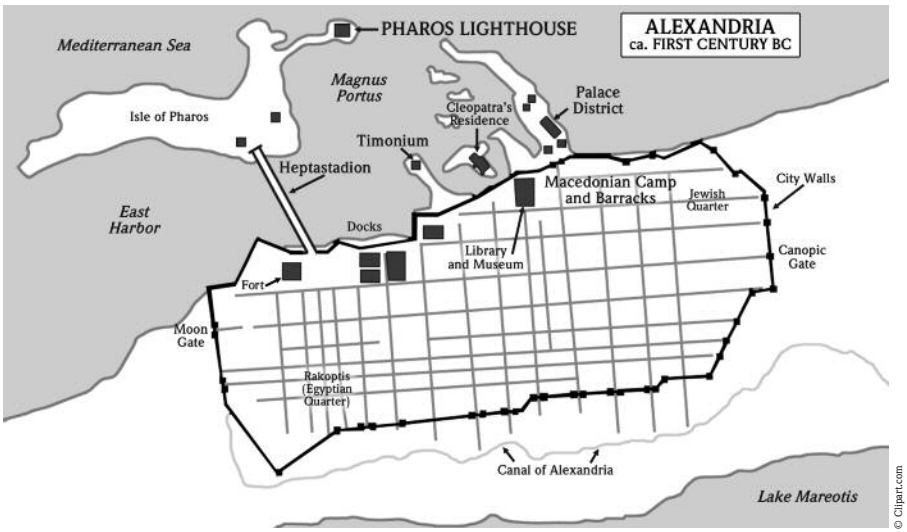
Alexander the Great had founded Alexandria in 332 BC, hoping to create a vibrant port city in the eastern Mediterranean. He chose to build his new city upon the small fishing village of Rhacotis, located in the western Nile delta, near the lake of Mareotis. There are several ancient accounts of the layout of Alexander's city; perhaps the most interesting is that of Diodorus Siculus:

> He decided to found a great city in Egypt, and gave orders to the men left behind with this mission to build the city between the marsh and the sea. He laid out the site and traced the streets skillfully and ordered that the city should be called after him Alexandria. It was conveniently situated near the harbor of Pharos, and by selecting the right angle of the streets, Alexander made the city breathe with the Etesian winds [northwestern winds of summer] so that as these blow across a great expanse of sea, they cool the air of the town, and so he provided its inhabitants with a moderate climate and good health. Alexander also laid out the walls so that they were at once exceedingly large and marvelously strong. Lying between a great marsh and the sea, it affords by land only two approaches, both narrow and very easily blocked.
>
> ~Diodorus Siculus, XVII, 5

After founding his city Alexander left Egypt, never to return. It fell upon his friend Ptolemy, nicknamed Soter (the Savior), who after Alexander's death had taken control of Egypt, to make the city a true showplace. As mentioned in the first lecture, Ptolemy I and his son Ptolemy II (nicknamed Philadelphos) created the Library (where the list of the Seven Wonders was first conceived) as well as the Museum, or "Place of the Muses," a center

for scholars. Ptolemy I also made the bold and brilliant move of gaining control of the body of Alexander the Great, literally hijacking it as it was being taken from Babylon (the site of Alexander's death) to his homeland of Macedonia in northern Greece. Possessing Alexander's body gave legitimacy to the new king, and Ptolemy constructed an impressive tomb, the Sema, to house Alexander's body. Unfortunately, because much of ancient Alexandria is either under the sea or covered in modern buildings, neither the Library, the Museum, nor the Sema has ever been discovered. Perhaps the most famous monument of Alexandria was a building begun under Ptolemy I but completed during the reign of his son: a high tower designed to help ships find a safe harbor at Alexandria. Its location on the eastern end of the Pharos island gave the building its name, the Pharos, a word that has come to mean lighthouse.

The Pharos was built in the third century BC and seems to have been funded not by the Ptolemaic kings but by a private individual. The Roman author Lucian, writing in the second century AD, quotes an inscription carved on the building: "Sostratus, the son of Dexiphanes, the Cnidian, dedicated this to the Savior Gods on behalf of those who sail the seas." There is some confusion about the identity of Sostratus. A few ancient sources identify him as not only the one who gave money for the building but also as the designer of the building, due to the existence of a famous architect by the same name. But Sostratus the architect was active in the 330s BC and the Pharos was built some sixty years later, in the 270s BC. It is therefore unlikely that he could have been responsible for the lighthouse. Another Sostratus, a man who served as an envoy for Ptolemy II in the 270s BC, is a better candidate for the donation of the Pharos. He may have been a relation of the architect Sostratus. Lucian relates that the lighthouse



was dedicated to the "Savior Gods." These were probably the deceased pharaoh and his wife, Ptolemy I Soter and Berenice, who were worshipped as deities after their deaths.

The Pharos was designed to guide sailors to safe port at Alexandria, a necessity along the flat, featureless, and fairly shallow coast of the Nile delta. It was the first lighthouse of the ancient world and served as a model for later Roman period lighthouses in such harbors as Ostia, Ravenna, and Caesarea in Israel, and it was the forerunner of modern-day lighthouses. Unfortunately, there is no trace of the Pharos of Alexandria today, and few detailed descriptions of the lighthouse survive from the Greco-Roman period. Some artistic representations exist that help with a reconstruction of the building. These are rendered in a variety of media: floor mosaics from North Africa, Italy, and Syria; terracotta lamps from Egypt; and even a glass beaker discovered in Afghanistan. The wide geographical scope of these objects reflects the fascination the Pharos held for people throughout the ancient world.

The clearest representations of the Pharos appear on coins of Alexandria minted in the Roman period. On the first sequence of coins, ranging from the reign of Domitian to Hadrian (AD 81 to 138), the Pharos comprises two elements: a tall, cylindrical lower section topped by a shorter tower, perhaps of octagonal form. At the joint between the two sections were statues of tritons, sea monsters whose upper bodies were human but whose lower halves ended in fishlike tails, blowing trumpets or conch shells. At the very top stood a statue of Zeus, leaning on a long scepter with his right hand outstretched. In this first sequence of coins the door leading into the Pharos was located at the base of the cylinder, but in a later sequence of coins dating from the reign of Antoninus Pius (AD 138–161), the door appears higher in the building and is accessed by a staircase. This may well indicate alterations to the Pharos that took place in the mid-second century AD. The shift in the means of entry did not seem to change the general dimensions of the Pharos, and these can be reconstructed thanks to information gathered from ancient and medieval sources. The Pharos originally stood at a height of over three hundred feet. The lower, cylindrical section stood about two hundred feet tall, the second, octagonal portion was one hundred feet in height, and a small section that once supported the statue of Zeus was fifty feet tall.

The coin at the top is a drachm from the time of Antoninus Pius (AD 138–161) showing round windows and a high entrance to the Pharos, while the image at the bottom—probably from the time of Hadrian (AD 117–138)—is a sketch of a coin showing the windows, statues, and steps to the entrance.

How did the Pharos function as a lighthouse? The ancient sources agree that the building emitted a constant light, guiding sailors by day and by night. It is thought that a fire burning in the base of the building created light that was captured by a series of large bronze mirrors angled in such a way so as to shine reflected light out the top of the building. A problem lies in the fact that Egypt possessed little fodder for burning, and it has been suggested that during daylight hours these mighty mirrors refracted the sun's rays for the Pharos's beacon.

In 1326, an Arab traveler, Ibn Battuta, visited the Pharos and noted that one face of the building was in ruins. Upon his return in 1349, "he found that it had fallen into so ruinous a condition that it was not possible to enter it or climb up to the door." In the fifteenth century a fort, Qait Bey, was constructed over the ruins of the Pharos, obscuring any trace of the older building. Recently, underwater excavations conducted around the Pharos island have revealed monumental sculpture and architecture from the time of the Ptolemies. It is likely that, one day, fragments of the Pharos that had toppled into the sea will be recovered to help better understand this remarkable building.

A reconstruction drawing by German scholar Hermann Thiersch (1909) of the Pharos.

FOR GREATER UNDERSTANDING

Questions

1. Where was the list of the Seven Wonders first conceived?
2. What were the dimensions of the Pharos?

Suggested Reading

Clayton, Peter A., and Martin J. Price. *The Seven Wonders of the Ancient World*. Reprint ed. New York: Routledge, 1990.

Other Books of Interest

Romer, John, and Elizabeth Romer. *The Seven Wonders of the World: A History of the Modern Imagination*. New York: Barnes & Noble Books, 2005.

Websites of Interest

The *History Channel* website features a video narrated by Leonard Nimoy and comments by Chris Scarre (McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research at the University of Cambridge), entitled "Seven Wonders: The Pharos Lighthouse at Alexandria." — http://www.history.com/videos/seven-wonders-the-pharos-lighthouse-at-alexandria#seven-wonders-the-pharos-lighthouse-at-alexandria

Lecture 13

The Seven Wonders in the Roman Period

The Suggested Reading for this lecture is *The Seven Wonders of the Ancient World*, epilogue, edited by Peter A. Clayton and Martin J. Price.

Intellectuals working in Alexandria in the second century BC created the original list of the Seven Wonders; a list of monuments drawn from disparate regions, lands that were once under the control of Alexander the Great. During this period independent Macedonian kings controlled these lands, forming a cultural but not a political unity. By the end of the first century BC, however, the eastern reaches of Alexander's empire had returned to Persian rule, while the rest had been conquered by Rome. The Roman Empire now controlled a huge region, from Spain to Syria, and from Germany to the Sudan. The Greeks had long fascinated the Romans, who absorbed Greek art and literature and made them their own. The idea of the Seven Wonders took root among the Romans, becoming something of a household word, not just a list for the intelligentsia. In the first century BC, the Roman author Propertius, known for his passionate love poetry, compares his literary endeavors to the Seven Wonders:

> Happy the girl whose praises resound in my slim book!
> Each song will be your beauty's monument:
> for neither the proud expense of the Pyramids, heaped to the stars,
> nor the mansion of Elean Jove, that counterfeits heaven,
> nor the vast prosperity of Mausolus's sepulcher,
> is free from the final stipulation of death.
> Fire or driving rain will erode their majesty
> or their own weight crush them under the pounding years;
> but time will never fade the fame that genius wins:
> genius abides, a glory beyond death.
>
> Propertius, III.2.17–26

He does not mention all seven, but even this partial list of wonders demonstrates that in his day the list had altered. Rather than the statue of Zeus at Olympia, Propertius cites the temple as a wonder.

Other Roman authors also offer variant lists of wonders. Hyginus, an author of the first century AD who specialized in summaries of myths and legends, provides the following:

> The temple of Diana at Ephesus which the Amazon Otrera, wife of Mars, made. The Monument of King Mausolus made of marble blocks, 80 feet high, 1,340 feet around. The bronze statue of the Sun at Rhodes, which is colossal, being 90 feet high. The statue of

> Olympian Jove which Phidias made, a seated statue of gold and ivory, 60 feet high. The palace of Cyrus the King in Ecbatana, which Memnon made, of many colored and shining white stones bound with gold. The wall in Babylon, which Semiramis, daughter of Dercetis, made, of baked brick and bitumen, bound with iron, 25 feet broad, 60 feet high, and 300 stades in circuit. The pyramids in Egypt, whose shadow isn't seen, 60 feet high.
>
> Hyginus, *Fabulae*, 223

In Hyginus's list a new monument displaces the Hanging Gardens, the "palace of Cyrus the King in Ecbatana." Ecbatana, also called Hamadan, was a Persian city, controlled by the enemies of the Romans, the Parthians, therefore inaccessible to Hyginus or other Western travelers. Why this place should be added to the list at this point is a mystery. Cyrus the Great of Persia took control of Ecbatana sometime in the mid-sixth century BC, but no trace of a palace dating to that time has ever been discovered. Hyginus may have been influenced by the description of Ecbatana found in the writings of the fifth century BC Greek author Herodotus, who describes the city. Herodotus claims that Deioces, king of the Medes (a tribe related to the Persians), and not Cyrus, founded Ecbatana. It is not clear today whether Deioces was an actual person, or a mythical figure, but if he lived at all, he lived in the eighth century BC. Herodotus describes Ecbatana as a magnificent city on a hill, encircled by seven concentric ring walls, each painted different colors: white, black, red, blue, and orange. The inner walls, which protected the palace, were plated with silver and gold. Archaeologists have uncovered no trace of such walls. Despite the likelihood that Cyrus's palace at Ecbatana never existed, the monument reappears from time to time on later lists of the Seven Wonders.

The Roman poet Martial, writing in the second half of the first century AD, also cites a variant list of wonders:

The Roman and Parthian Empires at the extent of the Parthian Empire, ca. AD 1.

> Let barbarous Memphis speak no more of the wonder of her pyramids, nor Assyrian toil boast of Babylon, nor let the soft Ionians be extolled for Trivia's Temple, let the altar of many horns say naught of Delos; nor let the Carians exalt to the skies with extravagant praises the Mausoleum poised in empty air. All labor yields to Caesar's Amphitheater. Fame shall tell of one work in lieu of all.
>
> ~Martial, *Liber Spectaculorum* 2

Although he mentions only six wonders, two of these are new to the list. One is the altar made of horns from Delos, a monument known from earlier literature. According to legend, the god Apollo built the horned altar, or Keraton, on the island of Delos, the place of his birth. He created it from the horns of goats hunted by his twin sister, the goddess Artemis. The biographer Plutarch, who lived a bit later than Martial, reported seeing the altar, and that it was "celebrated as one of the Seven Wonders of the World because it needs no glue or any other binding, but is joined and fastened together, made entirely of horns taken from the right side of the head." The third century BC poet Callimachus also mentions the remarkable cohesion of the horns, claiming that Apollo formed the altar by plaiting the horns together. Although no trace of the actual altar has been found, the French excavators of Delos have identified a small apsidal building standing in front of a temple to Apollo, which they have identified as the building that housed the altar from the fifth century BC onward.

The point of Martial's list, however, is that all previous wonders should bow to the wonder created in his own day, a structure he calls Caesar's Amphitheater, which we know as the Colosseum. Martial's epigram is addressed to a Roman Emperor, probably Titus, under whom the Colosseum had been completed. In a second epigram, Martial explains why the Colosseum is such a marvel:

> Where rises before our eyes the august pile of the amphitheater was once Nero's lake. Where we admire the warm baths [built by Titus], a haughty tract of land had robbed the poor of their dwellings. . . . Rome has been restored to herself, and under your rule, Caesar, the pleasures that belonged to a master now belongs to a people.
>
> ~Martial, *Liber Spectaculorum* 2

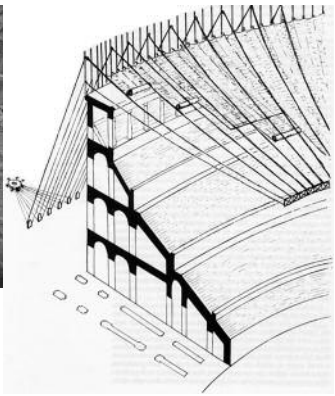
Fifteen years before the Colosseum was built a fire swept through Rome, burning many homes. After the conflagration was quenched the emperor at the time, Nero, confiscated much of the land in order to construct a vast palace. The grounds of the palace included the construction of an artificial lake, next to which he erected a colossal statue of himself. Eventually Nero was deposed and a new dynasty, the Flavians, ruled Rome. The first Flavian Emperor, Vespasian, returned the confiscated lands to the people of Rome. He drained the lake and constructed an amphitheater in its marshy bed. Being economical by nature, Vespasian kept the colossal statue of Nero, but

he removed the emperor's head and replaced it with an image of Apollo. During the medieval period, the amphitheater came to be known as the Colosseum, because of its proximity to the colossal statue.

Martial saw the Colosseum as a wonder because of the context in which it was constructed—an emperor returning land to the people, enhanced by a marvelous building. The building itself was truly remarkable. It was the largest amphitheater in the Roman world ever built, its oval plan measuring six hundred fifteen by five hundred ten feet. Constructed mostly of travertine, it rested on a deep concrete foundation and stood one hundred fifty-nine feet tall. Three superimposed arcades decorated the exterior, each composed of columns of three different architectural orders: Tuscan (a variant on Doric), Ionic, and Corinthian, respectively. On the upper two levels the columns flanked niches in which stood statues of deities. At the ground floor the columns flanked doorways, seventy-six of which were used by the general public to reach their seats. These seats were arranged on several tiers within the building. Over fifty thousand spectators could be accommodated. Because the interior was open air, and because events were held during the daytime, awnings were strung across the seating area to protect the audience from the elements.

The Colosseum housed a variety of events, the most notorious being gladiatorial shows and animal fights. The center of the amphitheater was known as the arena, or sandy place, consisting of wooden flooring covered in sand. Trapdoors in the floor connected to ramps leading down to a labyrinth of subterranean tunnels where animals and gladiators were held before the events. The completion of the building was celebrated with animal fights in which six thousand beasts were killed.

The Colosseum was also the site of executions of criminals, and in the second and third centuries, Christians fell into that category. It is no surprise that when the Christians created a list of the Seven Wonders, the Colosseum was conspicuously absent.



A recent photograph (above) of the interior of the Colosseum in Rome showing the subterranean passageways and a partially restored floor. To the right is an artist's rendering of the mechanics of the awnings at the Colosseum.

FOR GREATER UNDERSTANDING

Questions

1. What changes did Hyginus make to the list of wonders?
2. Why did Martial see the Colosseum as a wonder?

Suggested Reading

Clayton, Peter A., and Martin J. Price. *The Seven Wonders of the Ancient World*. Reprint ed. New York: Routledge, 1990.

Other Books of Interest

Romer, John, and Elizabeth Romer. *The Seven Wonders of the World: A History of the Modern Imagination*. New York: Barnes & Noble Books, 2005.

Websites of Interest

1. *Parthia.com* is a website featuring the history, geography, coins, arts, and culture of ancient Parthia, including a bibliographic list of scholarly sources. — http://www.parthia.com
2. *Arounder* provides a virtual tour that features five 360-degree images of the ruins of the Colosseum in Rome. — http://rome.arounder.com/en/monuments/colosseo

Lecture 14

The Seven Wonders in Later Periods

The Suggested Reading for this lecture is *The Seven Wonders of the Ancient World*, epilogue, edited by Peter A. Clayton and Martin J. Price.

With the advent of Christianity the list of Seven Wonders changed somewhat. In part this was due to a shift of focus from an emphasis on the works of men to a reverence for the acts of God. Historical circumstances also impacted the makeup of the list. Rome's fall to the Ostrogoths in AD 476 created a break between the eastern and western Roman Empire, and the conquest of Egypt and Mesopotamia by Muslims in the seventh century meant that Westerners could only with difficulty visit the lands that had held many of the wonders. No list of wonders survives from the Eastern Roman or Byzantine Empire, but several are preserved from the West. For the most part, these lists were composed by monks who drew on earlier catalogs preserved in monastic libraries. It is unlikely that any of these authors had firsthand knowledge of any of the wonders they described.

The most important of these Christian list makers was Bishop Gregory of Tours, writing in the sixth century. In a work concerning the liturgical calendar called "The Reckoning of the Course of the Stars," he provided a list of the wonders. Some of them, the Walls of Babylon, the Colossus of Rhodes, and the Mausoleum of Halicarnassus, had occupied the list since its inception in the second century BC. Gregory is the first to count the Lighthouse of Alexandria as a wonder, and he introduced another mysterious building, the Theater of Heraclea, remarkable because it was carved out of a single stone. There were several ancient cities called Heraclea, cities named after the Greek hero Heracles. Later authors who mention the extraordinary theater say that the city was located in the region of Pontus, today part of Turkey. The modern city of Eregli stands at the site of Heraclea, but nothing is known about the theater, and it is unclear how Gregory might have learned about it. Gregory also adds two other Christian-based wonders to the list: Noah's Ark and the Temple of Solomon, monuments obviously taken from the Hebrew Bible. Having presented his list, Gregory dismisses it, saying the following:

> But the aforementioned, even though they were sometimes constructed upon divine command, as well as sometimes by human ingenuity alone, still remain works of men, for which reason some have fallen into ruins and others are about to do so.

Gregory then produced a list of wonders created by God, items that "do not grow old with any age, do not perish by any onslaught, which do not grow less by falling into ruin": "the tidal movement of the sea and the

fruits of the earth," "the sun, the moon, the stars and the phoenix," and "Etna and the spring of Grenoble." While most of these phenomena are self-explanatory, the spring of Grenoble was a wonder because it produced hot water. It is paired with the volcano of Etna because together they served as a reminder of hell and thus as a deterrent to sinners. The mythical Phoenix, a creature that purportedly lived for five hundred years and then self-combusted only to be reborn from its own ashes, seems to be coupled with celestial bodies to illustrate God's heavenly power of cycle and renewal. These wonders, concluded Gregory, were superior because they would not decay "except at that time when the Lord should command the world to be destroyed."

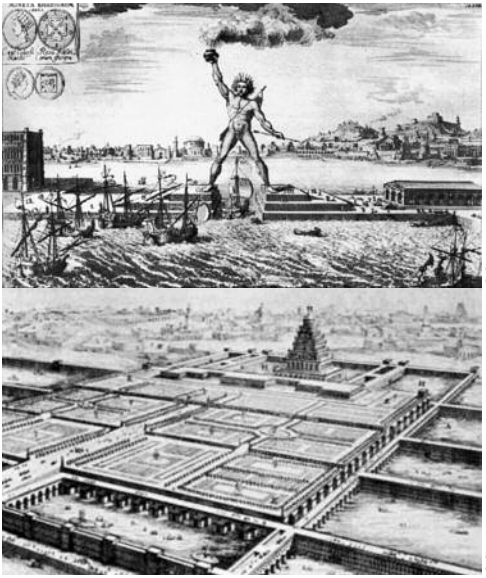
A century later another Christian writer, a Saxon monk known today as the Venerable Bede, wrote a "Treatise on the Seven Wonders of the World." Sequestered in a monastery in Jarrow, England, Bede's only source material were those works found in his own library. His list included some old favorites, the Colossus at Rhodes and the Temple of Artemis at Ephesus, as well as a few of Gregory's inclusions, the Lighthouse of Alexandria and the Theater of Heraclea. He also lists some wonders mentioned nowhere else, leading to the speculation that he was using an earlier list of wonders that no longer survives. He mentions a bath building in the city of Tyana (today in Turkey), heated by a single candle, as well as an iron statue of the mythical Greek hero Bellerophon on his winged horse Pegasus from the city of Smyrna, also in Turkey. This incredible statue hung in mid air without the benefit of chains, held into position by judiciously placed magnetic stones. Bede also included the Capitolium at Rome, an enormous temple dedicated to Jupiter, initially constructed in the sixth century BC, but rebuilt several times. Bede includes the building on his list, not because it was an impressive structure but because of the remarkable contents within, statues representing the nations conquered by the Romans, each wearing a bell around its neck. If the nation were preparing a rebellion, the bell would ring and alert the Romans of the coming insurrection.

Gregory and Bede, as well as other writers from the medieval period, listed wonders located in half-imagined places that they had never visited. They relied on descriptions of earlier writers that were not always detailed or accurate. This began to change during the Renaissance, when scholars began to deeply scrutinize works of ancient literature as part of a widespread fascination in the Classical past. Not only men of letters but artists took an interest in the heritage of Greece and Rome, and their works helped to popularize Classical forms and ideas. In 1532, a Dutch artist named Maarten van Heemskerck visited Rome and was profoundly inspired by what he saw there: massive ancient buildings, which, though broken, still spoke of the glories of a bygone age. Many years later, after returning to Holland, Heemskerck produced etchings of the Seven Wonders. The list he illustrated was essentially the "original" one from the second century BC:

the Pyramids, the Walls and Hanging Gardens of Babylon, the Temple of Artemis at Ephesus, the Statue of Zeus at Olympia, the Mausoleum of Halicarnassus, and the Colossus of Rhodes. He counted the two Babylonian wonders as one, so his seventh wonder was the Lighthouse of Alexandria. The great popularity these sixteenth-century etchings enjoyed made the Seven Wonders a household word once again, and these seven monuments ultimately made up the final, canonical list. Copies of van Heemskerck's works were widely distributed and copied, etched onto porcelain and woven into tapestries. They were highly fanciful. His treatment of the Pyramids shows the tombs conflated with obelisks surrounded by scantily clad workmen under the command of a king dressed in Renaissance garb. Van Heemskerck knew his ancient sources, however. In the sky above a bird holds a slipper, a reference to the story preserved in the writings of Strabo, about the courtesan Rhodipe for whom a king built a pyramid. Many of the wonders were "updated" by van Heemskerck: the Lighthouse is shown as a tall spiraling tower atop a rocky island in a sea filled with sixteenth-century galleons, the Temple of Artemis resembles a Renaissance church, and the Walls of Babylon enclose a clock tower. Van Heemskerck also created an eighth etching, a self-portrait with the Colosseum, a building he had actually seen and reproduced faithfully.

Maarten van Heemskerck (1498–1574) rendered fanciful versions of the Pyramids at Giza (top) and the Pharos at Alexandria (middle). His self-portrait with the Colosseum at Rome (bottom) faithfully portrayed the ancient structure.

In the eighteenth century, Austrian architect Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach produced *A Plan of Civil and Historical Architecture* (1721), a masterful work considered the first comparative study of world architecture. His book begins with a consideration of the Seven Wonders, illustrated with drawings based on what historical and architectural data was available to him. His list is identical to that of van Heemskerck, but gone are the human figures that populated the foreground of the Dutchman's etchings. Fischer von Erlach created dispassionate images whose focus were the buildings and statues; humans were only added for scale. For both the Colossus and the Artemis Temple Fischer von Erlach also included drawings of ancient coins that illustrated these wonders, demonstrating the architect's commitment to present the wonders in a scientific light. Fischer von Erlach brought the Seven Wonders into the modern world, presenting them not as fantasies, but as actual buildings and statues that humans could marvel at and learn from.



Illustrations emphasizing the architectural aspects of the Colossus of Rhodes (top) and the city of Babylon by Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach (1656–1723) repopularized the Seven Wonders to a modern world.

Fascination with the Seven Wonders continues today. Lists abound, such as the Seven Wonders of the Modern World (the Channel Tunnel, the CN Tower in Toronto, the Empire State Building, the Golden Gate Bridge, the Itaipu Dam between Brazil and Paraguay, the Delta Works in the Netherlands, and the Panama Canal) and the Seven Wonders of the Natural World (the Grand Canyon, the Great Barrier Reef, the Harbor of Rio de Janeiro, Mount Everest, the aurora borealis, Paricutin Volcano, and Victoria Falls). On July 7, 2007 (7/7/07), the New Seven Wonders of the World were declared. The list was created by a Swiss foundation that organized an election using telephone and Internet votes. The results were Petra in Jordan, Machu Picchu in Peru, the Great Wall of China, the statue of Christ the Redeemer from Brazil, the Colosseum in Rome, Chichen Itza in Mexico, and the Taj Mahal in India. The Pyramids of Egypt were added as an "honorary wonder." Although many may argue with this list, there is no question that each of these buildings and statues has the power to create wonder in the viewer, just as the "wonders" of the original list did seventeen centuries earlier.

FOR GREATER UNDERSTANDING

Questions

1. What wonders did Bishop Gregory of Tours add to the list?
2. Why did the Venerable Bede include the Capitolium on his list of wonders?

Suggested Reading

Clayton, Peter A., and Martin J. Price. *The Seven Wonders of the Ancient World*. Reprint ed. New York: Routledge, 1990.

Other Books of Interest

Romer, John, and Elizabeth Romer. *The Seven Wonders of the World: A History of the Modern Imagination*. New York: Barnes & Noble Books, 2005.

Websites of Interest

The "Wonders of the World" entry on Wikipedia provides several lists of modern or alternate wonders from around the world, including Stonehenge, the Great Wall of China, and the Hagia Sophia in Istanbul. Other lists, such as "Seven Wonders of the Natural World," "Seven Wonders of the Underwater World," and "Seven Wonders of the Industrial World," are also included. — http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wonders_of_the_World

COURSE MATERIALS

Suggested Readings

Clayton, Peter A., and Martin J. Price. *The Seven Wonders of the Ancient World*. Reprint ed. New York: Routledge, 1990.

Other Books of Interest

Romer, John, and Elizabeth Romer. *The Seven Wonders of the World: A History of the Modern Imagination*. New York: Barnes & Noble Books, 2005.

Wiseman, Donald J. *Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon*. Schweich Lectures of the British Academy, 1983. London: British Academy, 1991 (1985).

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Fox, Robin Lane. *Alexander of Macedonia: The World Conquered*. The Modern Scholar Series. Prince Frederick, MD: Recorded Books, 2010.

Johnston, Susan A. *Myths and Mysteries in Archaeology*. The Modern Scholar Series. Prince Frederick, MD: Recorded Books, 2010.

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