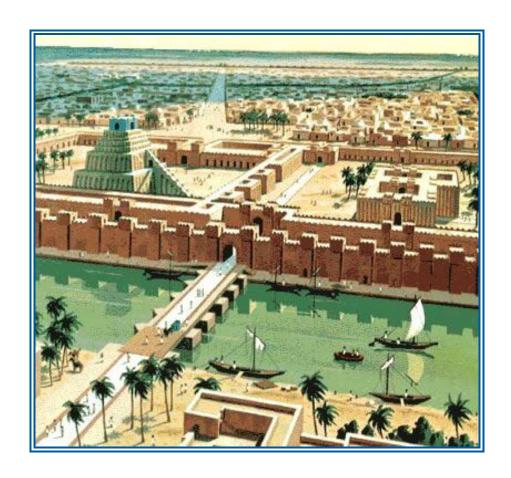


Bernd Rohrmann Essay about Babylon

History ~~ Demise ~~ Sway



March 2017



~ Babylon ~ βαβυλων ~ Babel ~ βαβελ ~

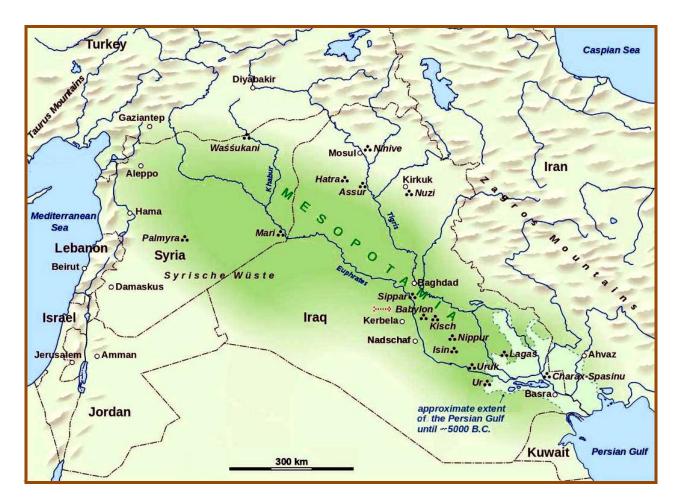


Bernd Rohrmann ~~ Essay about Babylon ~~ History ~~ Demise ~~ Sway March 2017

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The meaning of "Babylon"

Babylon is located in the centre of Mesopotamia (as marked below), a large area defined by the two rivers Euphrates and Tigris, both running south-east into the Persian gulf. From about 3000 B.C. {B.C.E} onwards, Mesopotamia was the 'birthplace' of the earliest "high cultures".



So, why is "Babylon" still a momentous name, even though this once famous city does not exist anymore? There are several reasons ... Firstly, some thousands of years ago Babylon was a mighty place, and ruled for some time a significant area then called Babylonia. Secondly, in its prime time, it contained stunning architecture. Thirdly, the Babylonian Tower, often called Babel Tower, was right there.



Finally, while this building is also gone completely, "Babylon" is still a symbolic label, it has a metaphysical meaning. One view is:: "Babylon" stands for a powerful yet corrupt and authoritarian metropolis. Another view is rather different: "Babylon" denotes a place with multiple languages, and thereby of complexity & struggles, yet also sophistication. Whatsoever, before going into this I shall first describe the history of Babylon, which is a big story indeed.

Babylon's foundation

The intense archaeology regarding Babylon has not really confirmed when it was founded – yet several researchers agree that it happened in the 23rd century B.C., at 2286 B.C. or 2243 B.C. Babylon then was a small Akkadian town at the Euphrates river, located about 80 km south of the current capital of nowadays country Iraq, which is Baqhdad.

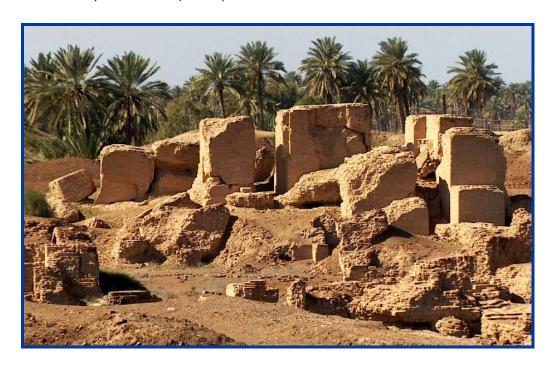
The earlier name of "Babylon" (which is Greek) was Babili (Akkadian). This may result from "Bab-Ili" ~ Gateway of God ("Bab" for gate and "Ili" for god). In the bible it's "Bab-El" ~ Babel.

What's left from Babylon?

To be lucid - not much. Babylon had two great epochs (outlined later on), one 1780 to 1750 B.C., and one 600 to 560 B.C. - it then was a grand city.

When happened its decline? Some authors think after the death of Alexander the Great - he died right in Babylon in 323. When later in 141 B.C. the Parthian Empire took over, Babylon was mostly deserted and forgotten.

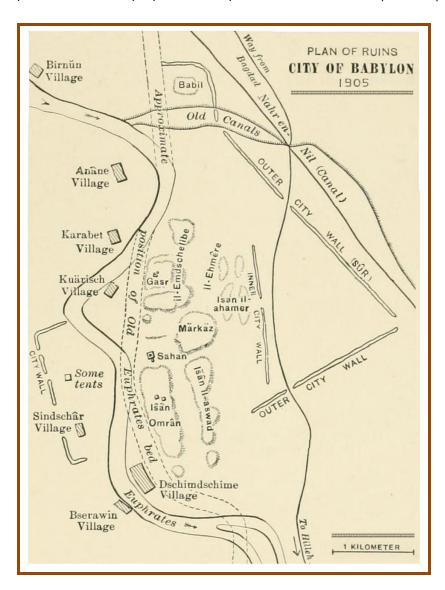
Other authors think Babylon had a small-scale recovery when part of the Sassanid Persians, without reaching its former greatness. Yet after the Muslim conquest 650 A.D. {C.E.} whatever had remained of Babylon was swept away, and much was in the end buried beneath the sands.





The enormous ruins of Babylon have suffered greatly due to neglect and very frequent looting. Only much much later, in 1850, eventually archaeological excavations began. And then a team from the German Oriental Society, led by Robert Koldewey, conducted the first scientific archaeological excavations at Babylon, done from 1899 until 1917.

This work included a crucial task - namely, to get an overview of the whole archaeology region. In 1905 a careful presentation was prepared, a map of all ruins of the city of Babylon.



Not one building has survived, there are only areas of debris. Each is marked above (so-called mounds). The outer and inner city walls could mostly be identified..

A crucial finding is that the Euphrates has moved considerably to the west, and thereby burying the western part of Babylon.

The most interesting issue was of course, what about the so famous Tower of Babylon~Babel? Yes that has indeed completely disappeared, however, its fundament has been found - it is marked in the map as "Sahan" (~archaeological site).

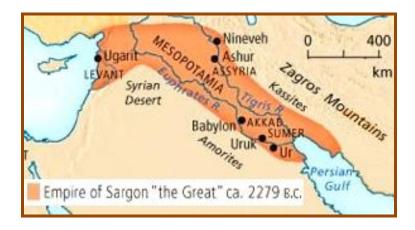


Babylon's early history

Several historians believe that Babylon was established as a small settlement by the emperor Sargon the Great, who created and ruled the Akkadian kingdom (2340–2284 B.C.).



Starting from his capital city Akkad, he added quite a few Sumerian and Assyrian cities to his realm, which finally covered whole Mesopotamia.

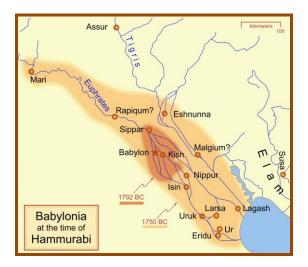


Babylon under Amorite kings

In 1894 B.C. the Amorites took over Babylon and created a kingdom. The 6th king, Hammurabi (c. 1810–1750 B.C.) became crucial because he conquered all of the cities and city states of southern Mesopotamia, including Akkad, Kish, and Ur. He also overpowered the states of Elam and Mari. Consequently, the whole of southern Mesopotamia, run from Babylon, came to be known as Babylonia, whereas the north had coalesced centuries before into Assyria.



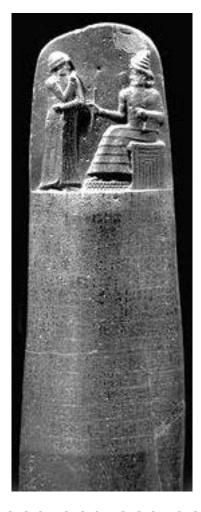
This meant that Babylon had now also access to an ocean, namely the Persian gulf, in the SE.



Why is king Hammurabi such a famous person of history? It is because he created the immense "Hammurabi Code", a collection of 282 laws and standards, giving rules to commercial or private interactions and set fines and punishments to meet the requirements of justice. They were chiselled into a marble stele – which survived!

Interestingly, women got quite a few rights as well, in spite of the principal male domination.







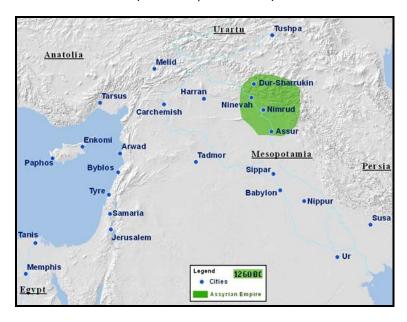


Babylon also became the major religious centre of Mesopotamia, supplanting the more ancient cities of Nippur and Eridu.

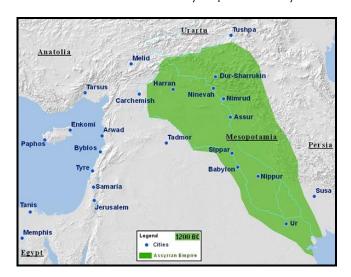
Yet after Hammurabi's death, the power of Babylon ceased, and it was before long reduced to just a small city state.

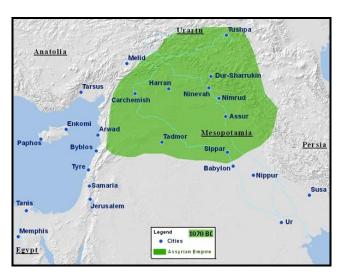
Babylon in the Assyrian empires

Assyria has been essential for the destiny of Babylon for many centuries. The Assyrian kingdom began as a small country around Assur, a city at the Tigris in the north of Mesopotamia, set up about 2500 B.C., which was its first capital. Assyria was unpretentious for about 1000 years.



Yet later Assyria demonstrated considerable militarian power, and thereby enlarged its realm. In 1200 B.C., it had already captured Babylon, for the first time.





Assyria then was for several centuries less forceful, and it did not control Babylon anymore.



Yet from about 920 B.C. onwards, things changed, and the prime time of the Assyrian Empire began, which soon got very large, based on many successful wars with neighbouring states. This included full Mesopotamia and towns at the Mediterranean coast. Finally even the far-way Egypt kingdom was taken!



Its new capital was most of the time Niniveh (located beside Mosul of nowadays-Iraq), which soon became a very large city.



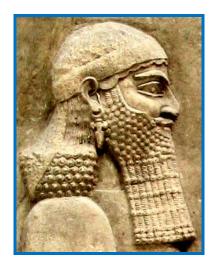


Babylon was captured by Assyria around 900 B.C. After several revolts, in 689 B.C. the city was completely destroyed, including the walls, palaces and even temples. Yet later an Assyrian king began to rebuild the old city, and made it his residence during parts of the year.

The Assyrian principals brought quite a bit modern technology to Babylon, and their style was certainly demanding, yet they also took up cultural and scientific features from there.









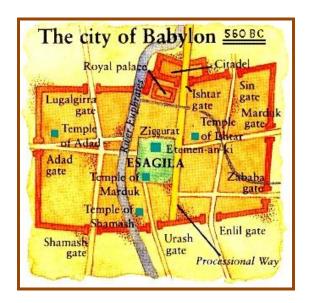
In Assyria and Babylonia art florished, focussed on kings and soldiers, yet soon covering various gods, as well as citizens.

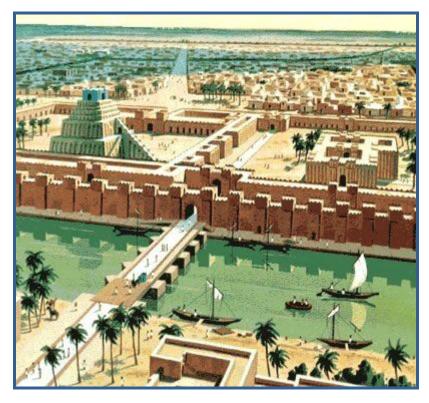




The formation of Babylon under Nebuchadnezzar

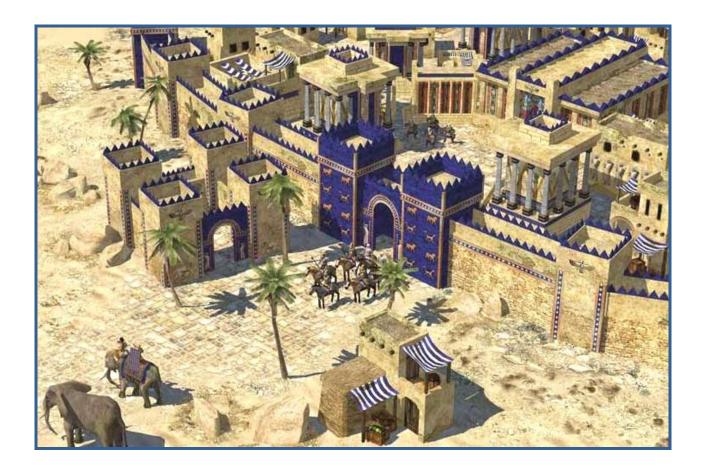
The second 'prime time' of Babylon occurred around 600 B.C., when the Assyrian Empire was teared down. Babylon then became the capital of what is called the Neo-Babylonian Empire. With the recovery of Babylon's sovereignty, a new era of architectural activity followed, especially during the reign of (ex-Assyrian) Nebuchadnezzar II. He was king for 44 years. First he concentrated on his military agenda, with wars on the Mediterranean coast (e..g., Tyre), in Egypt and in Judah, yet then he focussed on rebuilding, strengthen and beautifying Babylon. This included temples, citadels, palaces, gates, canals and walls - resulting in an imperial capital.







The two especially famous buildings of this time were the Etemenanki ziggurat, and the Ishtar Gate. The ziggurat is fully dealt with in the following chapter "The tower of Babel". The mighty Ishtar gate, located near the northern citadel, and being part of the city walls, was by far the most elaborated building ever created in Babylon.



Once the fortitude of Babylon came to an end and it eventually died, all the buildings fell apart, and what was left of the Ishtar Gate was basically rubble. However, during the excavations of Koldewey, its ruin was detected.

After immense efforts, a reconstruction of the Gate was built at the Pergamon Museum in Berlin/Germany, using the rescued material, and completed in the 1930s.

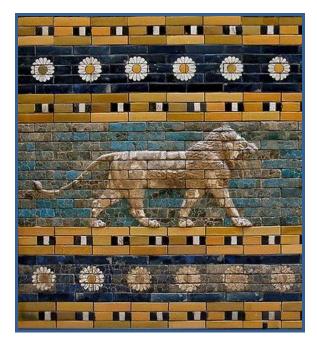
The gate was designed with a surface of unusual glazed bricks, and Lapis Lazuli, a deep-blue stone, was intensely used. The walls showed animals – many lions (often winged ones), bulls, dragons – and flowers on enamelled yellow and black glazed bricks, symbolizing the goddess Ishtar.







The blue glazed bricks may have given this very large façade (14 m high) a jewel-like shine.



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The Ishtar gate was part of the first register of "Seven Wonders of the World", created 100 B.C.

By the way, the completely gone "Hanging Gardens of Babylon" (listed in the seven wonders of the ancient world as well) were also attributed to Nebuchadnezzar II. However, after intense research archaeologists found eventually out that it was actually a feature of the Assyrian capital Niniveh, attributed to king Sennacherib, and built in the early 7th century B.C.



A rather different, less glamorous, enterprize of that period was to strengthen the city walls.





This meant to strengthen the inner walls, to protect the bridge over the Euphrates, and to add an enormous long outer wall on the eastern side of the city.

Babylon was already very large in its first 'prime time' under Hammurabi, and for its second 'prime time', 1000 years later, during the Neo-Babylonian period, it has been claimed that Babylon was the largest city in the antique world, with a population of possibly 200000 people.

The Tower of Babel in Babylon

For many people it is only one thing which comes to mind regarding Babylon – that's the "Tower of Babel", which indeed is, or rather was, right in the centre of Babylon.



This assumes that the ziggurat Etemenanki, which was dedicated to the god Marduk in 610 B.C., and about 90 m high, was actually the Babel Tower.

All this, obviously a myth, goes back to stories in the christian bible. In its section "Genesis" the following is said:

A united humanity of the generations following the great flood, speaking a single language and migrating eastward, came to the land of Shina. There they agreed to build a city and a tower "tall enough to reach heaven" Seeing this, God confounded their speech so that they could no longer understand each other and scattered them around the world.

And this meant that even the residents of the (mystical) Babel Tower were from multiple societies and could hardly communicate with each other.

This rather fundamental issue has been debated ever since, making the Tower of Babel a quite symbolic entity.



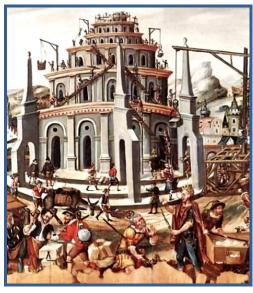
During the European renaissance it became intense. Yet no one could visit and inspect the Babel Tower, because neither Babylon nor the ziggurat Etemenanki existed anymore. In 331 B.C. Alexander the Great had ordered to demolish it, intending a complete rebuilding – but after his death that did not happen.

From 1400 A.D. onwards, a lot of artists created paintings of what they believed to be the appearance of the Babel Tower. Most of them were inspired by texts inn the christian bible, and by their awareness of existing large buildings, such as temples or churches or castles.

Here is a selection:





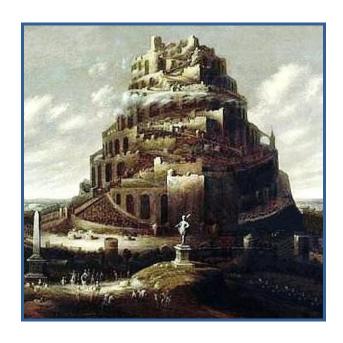


These are all excellent art pieces. They are very different to each other. And none of them is even remotely similar to the actual tower in Babylon, which was simply unknown to all artists.

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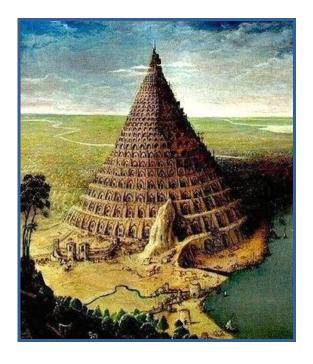


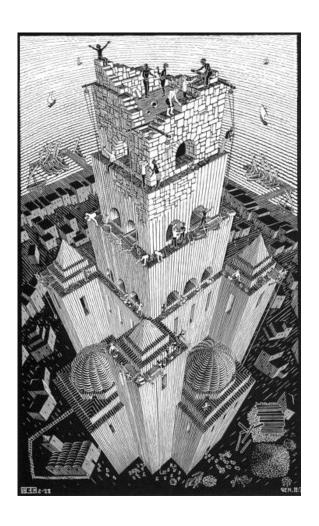


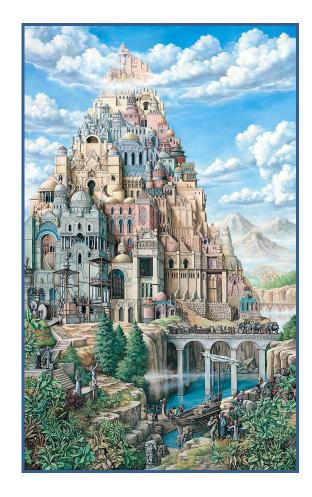
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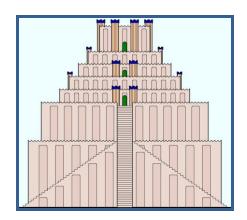
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The by far most famous, and most cited one, was made by Pieter Breughel The Elder in 1563:

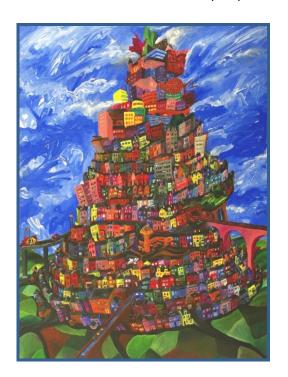


Only in 1995 the German archaeologist H.Schmid published a proper model of the Etemenanki tower, based on historic descriptions of it, and also knowledge about the oldest ziggurat, in Ur.



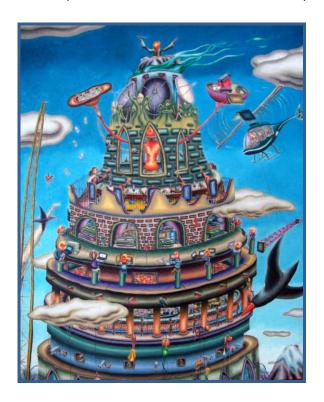


Current artists have different perspectives, such as: The tower is just part of a modern city,





or, they focus on the multitude and variety of people living there.

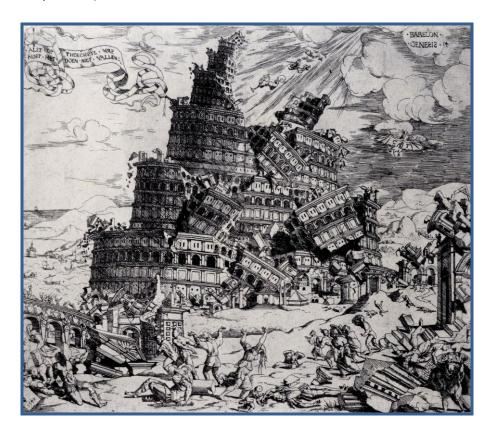




What these 16 artists have created is certainly stunning – it reflects their concepts, it's not a picture of a building they have seen because they haven't.



However - one artist painted a very different perspective - the gloomy fall of the Babel Tower, presented in a very harsh picture..



So, is there really nothing left of the ziggurat Etemenanki and thereby the Tower of Babel? Well, archaeologists have found where it was, because there is a structure in the ground which is in line with how this building was.

When I visited Iraq, many years ago, in 1978, I went to the ruins of Babylon, and I indeed saw this, sections of flat ruins as well as lots of ponds, and walked around it – just trying to imagine what there once was ...



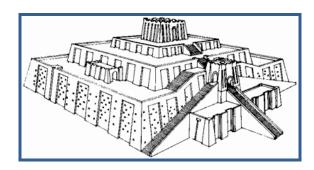


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Elsewhere in Mesopotamia some ziggurats have survived as a ruin, over such a very long time.

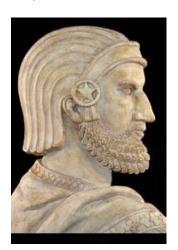


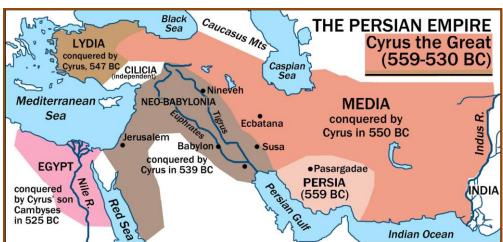


This ruin here is in Ur, one of the oldest and important city states in the south, plus a pertinent model. All ziggurats were erected based on mudbrick architecture.

* Babylon as part of the Persian empire

Cyrus the Great (559-530 B.C.) made Persia, originally a small kingdom, within 20 years a very large empire, reaching from Turkey to India. In 539 B.C. Neo-Babylonia was captured as well.







Babylon then became the capital of a large province and eventually functioned as the administrative centre of Persia, thereby maintaining some significance. Thus under the emperors Cyrus and later Darius the Great (550–486 B.C.), arts and science could again flourish in Babylon, including astronomy. Many texts were written as well, usually on clay tablets, and Babylon's "scribal schools" went on to thrive.

Babylon in Hellenistic times

Yet all this changed immensely when the Macedonian king, Alexander the Great, assailed the Persian Empire with his army and thrashed it almost completely.

Of course this had quite an impact on the fate of Babylon. What did Alexander have in mind?



Actually, he – a highly educated man – let Babylon continue to prosper as a hub of learning and commerce. And he decided to make it his capital. Furthermore, he was determined to get the ziggurat Etemenanki (and thus the "Babel Tower") re-built, and this started with pulling down what was still there of the building.

Yet then, in 323 B.C., while staying in Babylon, he got ill and died. – which was a very abrupt and unexpected end of the Hellenistic phase in Babylon.

For the following centuries, Babylonia returned mostly to the Persian Empire. Soon Babylon lost its significance, however, it did not vanish. The main cultural change was the raise of christianity in the early centuries A.D., as "The Church of the East" Babylon then became the seat of a bishop. One of the earliest was Zosima.



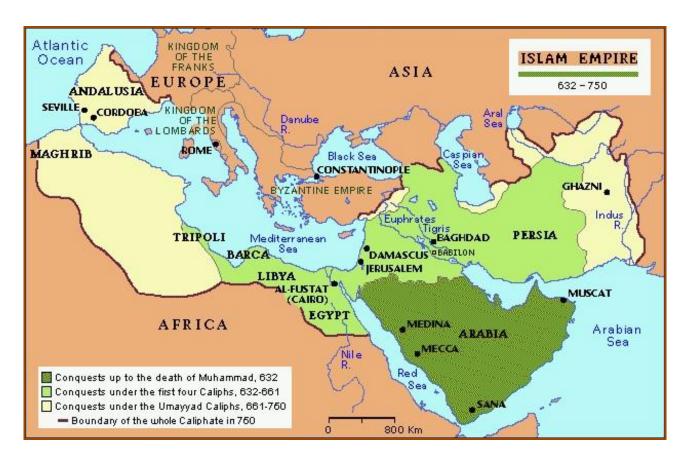


Babylon after the Muslim conquest

Around 600 A.D., the Sassanian empire in Persia run into many troubles, in political, economic and military regards. The long war against the Byzantine Empire was exhausting, and Persia was not a 'world power' anymore.

And then a truly fundamental matter started - the still very young arabic/islamic nation invaded Mesopotamia, from 636 to 638, soon occupied it entirely, and thereby ended the long Sassanid rule.

At that time Babylon was captured by the Muslims as well, and the province Babylonia was soon dissolved.



Babylon became marginalized, and what was left in this once glorious city was not of serious interest to the fast-growing Islam Empire. Its capital moved from Medina to Damascus and then to – Baghdad!

In the eighth century A.D., Babylon was falling apart and finally given up completely. – a dismal ending of a city which had been founded almost 3000 years before...



Yes, Babylon has died. Nevertheless, it's not forgotten, it lives on - in museums and in minds.

Babylon today

It is still just a very large district of ruins. The British Empire, to which Mesopotamia after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire belonged, supported archaeological efforts there, but had no interest in rebuilding anything. And they did not block sufficiently all the looting in this area. Furthermore, the harsh weather increased the 'ruin of the ruins'...



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Ironically it was Saddam Hussein, the president & dictator of modern Iraq who decided in 1983 to get essential parts of historic Babylon rebuilt on top of the old ruins. Then both restorations and new constructions were conducted.

BesideBabylon, the same occurred in Assur and Niniveh, "to demonstrate the magnificence of Arab achievements".

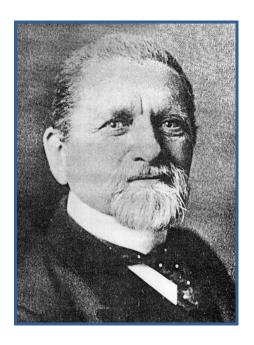
Unfortunately all this work was done adhoc-ish, without involvement of any professional archeology.

Yet the US-American and international gulf war in 2003 ended Hussein's Babylonian agenda completely, and in 2006 he was sentenced to death beause of his many social crimes.

By the way, during this war, the USA army damaged some historic sections rather badly.

Since 2009, the province of Babil, the capital town of which is Hillah, is responsible for the Babylonian ruin district. Not much work is happening, given the very unstable status of Iraq, but at least the access for visitors is now organized.

The prime time of archeology in Babylon was actually been between 1850 and World War I, predominantly by researchers from England, France and Germany. In my personal (of course biased) view, two people were outstanding, Mr Koldeway and Mrs Bell.





The German archaeologist Robert Koldewey (1855 – 1925) led a team from the "German Oriental Society" and conducted the most thorough scientific excavations of Babylon, from 1899 to 1917.

His outstanding results included to identify the fundament of the Marduk temple \sim Babel tower, and to fully dig out the Ishtar Gate.

This was later reconstructed in Berlin (as outlined in a chapter above).



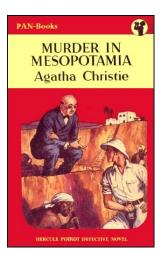
Gertrude Bell from England (1868–1926) was a very versatile writer, traveller, political officer, administrator and archaeologist. Furthermore, she spoke several languages, including Arabic, French, German, Persian.

Since 1899 Mrs Bell visited various excavations in Mesopotamia, including Babylon in 1908, and later wrote pertinent books.

From 1922 onwards she was crucial for creating the Baghdad "Antiquities Museum", and became then its director. Babylonian art was a main area covered.

At the end of this chapter I'd like to amuse you – here is a very unusual visitor to the Babylonian excavation areas, together with her husband, the archeologist Max Mallowan.





And yes, one of her countless books - which are still read allover the world - is obviously linked to this visit...

Babylon as a hub of architecture & art & skills & style

Inspite of the downfall of Babylon in the 8th century A.D., an enormous amount of science and art work has survived, either as sculptures or as texts on clay tablets (nothing from timber though – all trees in Mesopotamia had been cut down long ago).

There are also reports of early travellers and authors, such as Herodot (484–425 B.C.), the "father of history", although the trustworthiness of these books is often restricted.





In both Assyria and Mesopotamia, polytheistic societies, a lot of gods were honoured, and for the essential ones temples were erected. The main one of Babylon was Marduk



Further gods were linked to the sun or the moon, or to 'life' issues - fertility or agriculture.









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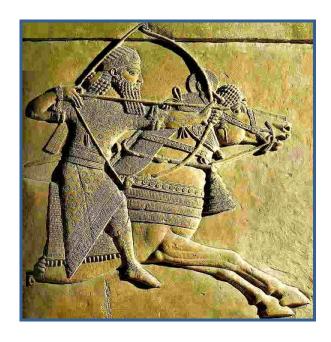


Also important in Babylon was the goddess Ishtar, the widely worshipped goddess of love and sex and war. She was also an icon of immoral attitudes. The Ishtar Gate is linked to her.



In Mesopotamia, many images of rulers, such as kings, were designed as a combination of animal bodies and human heads.





More common though was to show a king as a warrior, such as a fighter on a horse.

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From 3000 B.C. onwards, many crucial inventions were made in Mesopotamia, and images of these have been found in Babylon as well. Important examples are the plough for farming, waggons with wheels and ships for rivers (all this inspite of the shortage of timber).







And 750 B.C. even aquaeducts were built (long before the Romans) for Babylon's water supply.

Regarding folks - there are lots of figurines of 'normal' people.





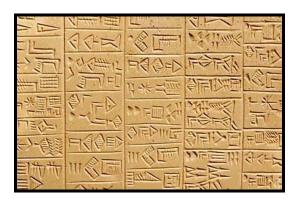
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Many historians think that the invention of a writing system is the most fundamental step of a society. This was first achieved in Sumer, in the city of Ur in southern Mesopotamia, around 3200 B.C. — five thousand years ago!

Writing was done with a stylus, a reed pen, putting wedge-shaped marks (a "cuneiform") on clay tablets. That required considerable competence.





Writing texts began with documenting trade deals, yet soon this became a much more general objective. Later cylinder seals were made, to be rolled into a clay tabled.

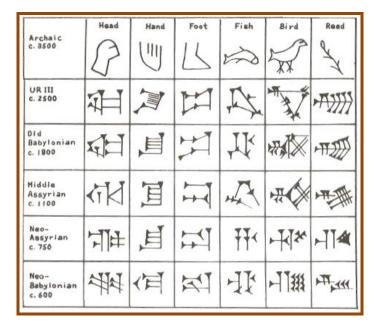


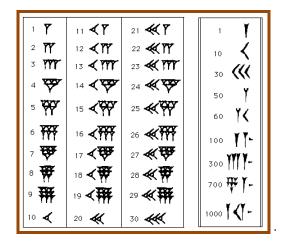
To create texts on clay tablets was a certainly significant profession in Babylon. One reason: The Babylonian language was for a while dominant.



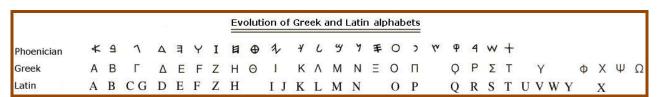
The development of letters as we have them has been a long process, beginning with pictograms, which were substituted over time with more and more abstract symbols which were needed for the cuneiform style of writing.





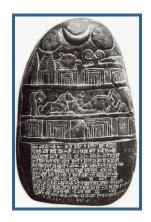


Here are some examples for this process. Numbers were especially important, and finally up to "1000" could be presented. Using these writings, the first real "alphabet" was developed by the Phoenicians, and later utilized by the Greeks and the Romans.



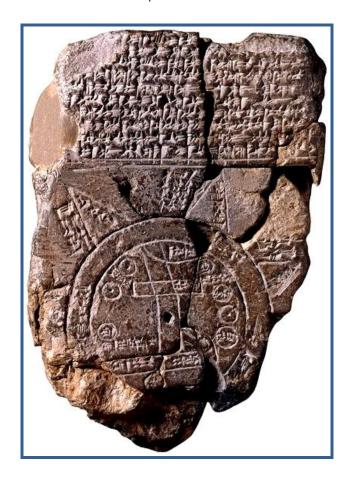
Interestingly, the first libraries were also generated! King Ashurbanipal (668–627 B.C.) of the Neo-Assyrian empire installed one in Niniveh, keeping about 30000 tablets. The most famous pieces contained the Gilgamesh Epos. It is not nown whether/where Babylon got a library. Alexander the Great intended to create one there, yet he died before he could realize this idea.

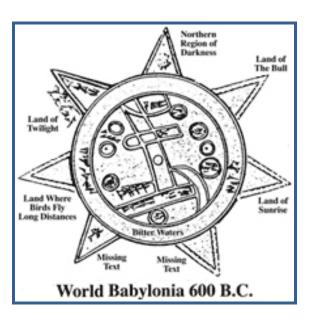
A very different invention were stone tools for measuring weights, and other ones for formal documenting land ownership. A "kudurru" recorded the land granted by the king to his vassals and was usually hold in a temple; the land owner got a clay tablet.





The most unusual and most impressive archaeological find in Babylon was what is rated as the first-ever world map, from ~600 B.C., later named "imago mundi".





It presents Babylon at the river Euphrates, surrounded by a number of external countries, for which archaeologists came up with interpretations.

And this ends the - admittedly, somewhat compressed - 'art review' of grand Babylonia.







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"Babylon" as icon of a multicultural world

Indeed, splendid Babylon is completely dead, physically – yet not conceptually. "Babylon" stands for several quite different issues: A magnificent city, a place of intelligence, a morally rotten metropolis, a multitude of languages, a flock of people from many cultures. Thus the notion of "Babylon" is almost an icon for uniqueness and variety and class, even nowadays.



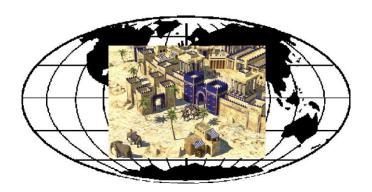




?! Why "a magnificent city"?

This is because of the stunning architecture which was created there in Babylon's prime time - the gorgeous Ishtar Gate, the big temples for gods, such as the Etemenanki ziggurat (believed to be the Babel Tower) and many palaces.

All these magnificent buildings are deceased for hundreds or even thousands of years – yet they were described by historic 'tourists' in praising words, and one of them, the Ishtar Gate, could be rebuilt, and demonstrates how grand Babylon was.



?! Why "a place of intelligence"?

It was Babylon where the first legal system was installed, by king Hammurabi, the "Code of Hammurabi", 1750 B.C. And it was there where creating texts on tablets prospered strongly over a very long time, until the end of Babylon. Plus, Babylon's mathematics and astronomy were highly respected.

Philosophy was quite vivid in Babylon, linked to astronomy, ultimately the "scientific study of the universe", a firmly fostered effort.

The "Diagnostic Handbook", dating back to the 11th century B.C., was an intricate medical device. It contained the concepts of diagnosis, prognosis, physical examination, prescriptions.

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It explicated therapy and treatments. Empiricism and rationality were explained – concepts which are still valid nowadays.

Given all this, Babylon hold for a long time the reputation as an excellent place for learning.



[!] Why "a morally rotten metropolis"?

The fame, or rather infamy, of Babylon was created by the Christians in their bible, which refers repeatedly to Babylon and describes it very negatively. Crucial texts are in the Book of Genesis, and also in the biblical chapters named Daniel, Ezra, Isaiah, Jeremiah.

Background:

The Hebrews were enslaved by the Babylonians under the rule of Nebuchadnezzar II. He seized Phoenicia, Syria and Palestine, and captured Jerusalem, the capital of Judah, twice, in 597 B.C. and 587 B.C., events that led to the destruction of the first temple in Jerusalem and the deportation of many Jewish inhabitants to Babylon, as slaves ("Babylon Captivity"). After his death, in 539 B.C., Babylon fell to the Persian king Cyrus the Great, and the Jewish people returned home from exile.

A crucial part of all this is the "Tower of Babel". The Hebrews/Jews in the Babylonian captivity will have noticed the ziggurat. Cuneiform texts indicate beliefs that this tower was erected "to reach the heavens". Jewish priests most likely denounced this strongly. So eventually the immense tower became a symbol for a completely unacceptable perspective, a viewpoint of egotism and arrogance, and this was disseminated so very widely through the Christian's bible.

It seems that Mesopotamia was widely known for its loose morals, and consequently Babylon was seen as shady and corrupt at the time the Christian's New Testament came about. In sum, the hefty language used against Babylon by the Jewish prophets would ultimately be used for Christian visions of the apocalypse.

Babylon is mentioned in the holy book of the Moslems, the Quran, as well. This is less derogative though. It is seen as an ancient city in Mesopotamia, which was both "the cradle of civilization" and "a place with a complicated ethics".



However — there are quite different perspectives about Babylon's nature. And the Babylonian kings obviously saw themselves as moral and societal humans.

So, the often used tag "Mystery Babylon" does not fully reflect the historic reality



[!] Why "a multitude of languages"?

Another legend is that Babylon was a city of very many languages in use. This myth goes back to the Christian's bible as well.

It is claimed there that God caused the people to begin speaking in different languages, and consequently they couldn't finish the mighty Tower of Babel – which was supposedly the "evil" target of the "shameless" kingdom of Babylon.





In reality the Tower of Babel has been built – actually it was Babylon's ziggurat Etemenanki, and got completed during the Neo-Babylonian dynasty.

Regarding the "multitude of languages – there is a remarkable link to current times, namely, the never-ending need of translations between languages. Two of the prominent software products for this enterprise are named thoughtfully: one is "Babel Fish", the other one "Babylon"!



Why "a flock of people from many cultures"?

Babylon, as capital of the Neo-Babylonian Empire, was most likely at that stage the largest city in the world. Its population was surely very cosmopolitan:

King Nebuchadnezzar II continued the Assyrian practice of moving large groups of people across the empire, in order to break up potential centers of opposition, yet also to provide labor, and to supply skilled people where needed.

The fact that Babylon was seized and ruled by so many empires – Akkadians, Amorites, Hittites, Kassites, Assyrians, Persians, Macedonians, Partians, Muslims – which differed in culture and language is an obvious reason for the multicultural spirit of Babylon until its demise in the eighth century A.D.



So, it was for more than 2000 years what nowadays Amsterdam or Berlin or Cairo or or -- and of course Melbourne is.



Finis & farewell

During the last decade, serious efforts to mend the archaeological ruins of Babylon have taken place guided by the Worlds Monument Fund (WMF), "to help the Iraqi authorities making the site ready for visitors to once again enjoy the wonders of this place in the cradle of civilization".

This enterprize is very demanding indeed - yet certainly most valuable.

And this is the end of my **Essay about Babylon** - I hope it gave you a chance to "travel" there, and to bring this so damned dead city for a while back to life - just in your mind!



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