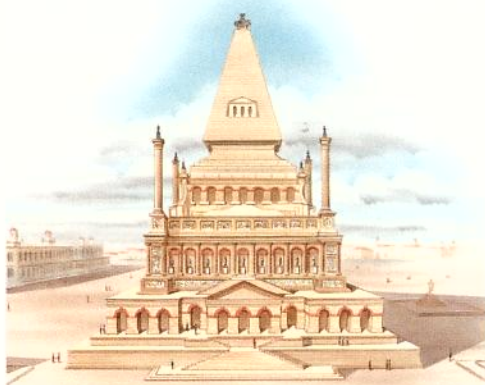


Seven stupendous structures, built between 3000 and 200 BC, became known as the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. Tourists of old had to travel what were then vast and difficult distances – across Europe, North Africa and eastern Asia. This was the ‘civilized world’, as known to the Greeks and Romans, who first listed the ‘Seven Wonders’.



① The word ‘mausoleum’ came to mean a large tomb.

What was the Mausoleum?

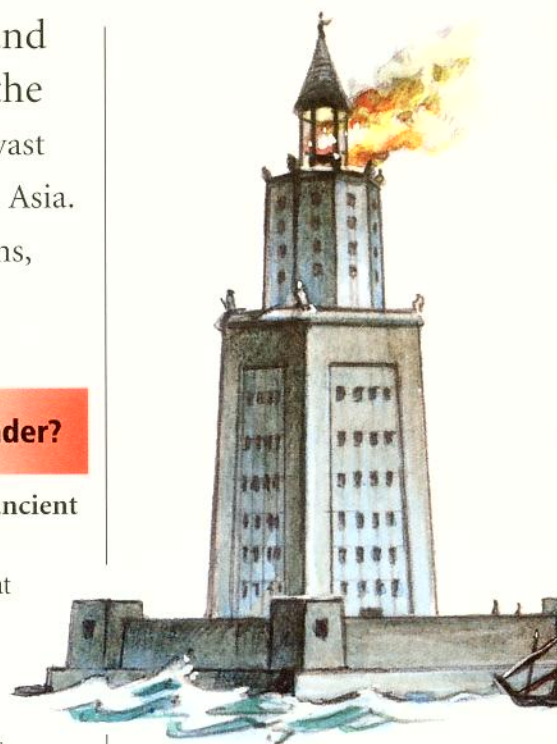
This was a marble tomb built about 353 BC at Halicarnassus, in what is now southwestern Turkey. It was commissioned for Mausolus, who was ruler of a province in the Persian Empire. The beautiful tomb was created by architects and sculptors from Greece. High on the roof, over 40 m from the ground, a statue was built of King Mausolus driving in his chariot.

Which god became a Wonder?

Zeus, king of the gods who the ancient Greeks believed lived on Mount Olympus. A mighty statue of Zeus at Olympia was 12 m high (six times human-size) and was made of ivory and gold. People visited the god’s temple to marvel at the statue of Zeus, made about 435 BC by Phidias, the greatest sculptor of ancient Greece.



① Zeus was seated on a golden throne, wearing a robe and ornaments of gold.



① The Pharos at Alexandria was so famous that the word pharos came to mean ‘lighthouse’.

Which Wonder had a fire on top?

The Pharos or Lighthouse at Alexandria (Egypt). It was a huge tower built on an island as a lighthouse to guide ships in and out of the harbour. The lighthouse was 122 m high, and workers kept a fire burning at the top to provide the light. The first lighthouse in history, it stood for about 1,500 years.

Wonders of their time

Famous monuments

Had the compilers of the ancient wonders known about the Great Wall of China (see page 20 for more information), they would have added an eighth wonder. But China was too far away.

The shortest-lived Ancient Wonder was the Colossus of Rhodes. It stood for less than 20 years before being toppled by an earthquake.

The Temple of Artemis burned down in 356 BC. A second temple built on the same site was also destroyed by fire, in AD 262. Sculptures from this second temple’s ruins were later taken to the British Museum in London.

Not much is left of the Mausoleum. It fell in an earthquake, but a few chunks and some sculptures survive.

The Great Sphinx is so old that sand blowing in the wind has rubbed away detail of the lion’s body and parts of Khafre’s face.

To water the Hanging Gardens, slaves worked in shifts, lifting water from the Euphrates River.

➔ China’s Great Wall was not known to Europeans until after the AD 1200s, when Marco Polo visited China.

Which Wonder was sold off for scrap?

A huge bronze statue, which stood at the harbour of Rhodes, an island in the Aegean Sea. A figure of the Sun god Helios, standing about 27 m tall, it was called the Colossus of Rhodes. The builders used stone blocks and iron bars to hold up the hollow figure. The iron was sold off as scrap metal in the AD 600s, 800 years after the Colossus was toppled by an earthquake.

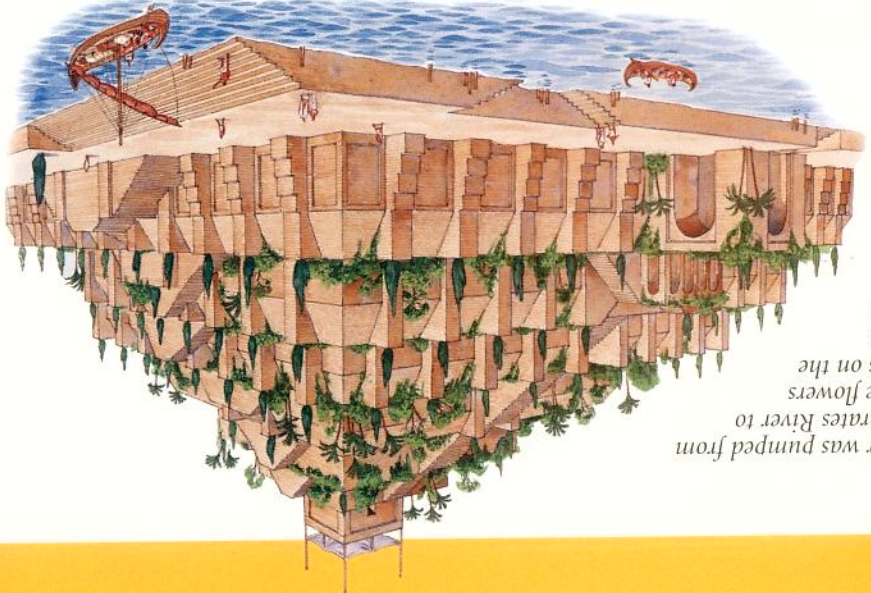
➊ The people of Rhodes made the Colossus to celebrate their victory against invaders in the 200s BC.



Which is the most mysterious Wonder?

The Hanging Gardens of Babylon. The Gardens were probably near Baghdad in Iraq. Writing 400 years after the Gardens were built, a priest described them as being like a ziggurat (a pyramid) with terraces covered in trees and plants. One story says that King Nebuchadnezzar II ordered the Hanging Gardens to please one of his wives, who missed the greenery of her mountain home.

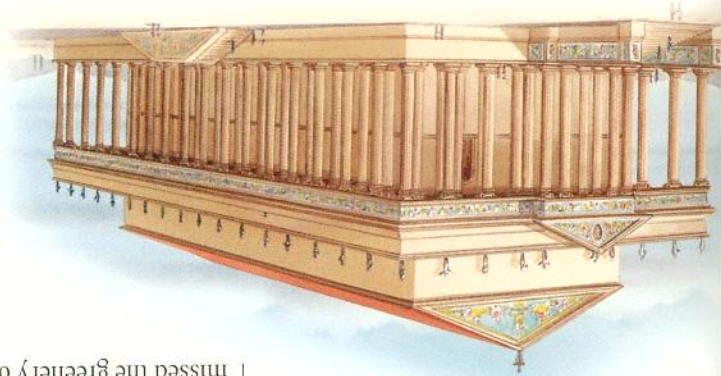
➋ The Temple of Artemis at Ephesus was finished in about 550 BC and rebuilt after a fire in 356 BC. It had 106 columns, which were each about 12 m high.



➌ Water was pumped from the Euphrates River to water the flowers and trees on the hanging terraces.

Who was honoured in the Temple at Ephesus?

Artemis, a Greek goddess. In the city of Ephesus on the west coast of what is now Turkey stood a magnificent marble temple. The temple honoured Artemis, who in Greek mythology was the daughter of Zeus, king of the gods. She was the goddess of childbirth and also of wild animals and hunting.



Seven Wonders...and what happened to them

- Hanging Gardens of Babylon (Iraq) late 500s BC. Fate unknown.
- Mausoleum at Halicarnassus (Turkey) 353 BC. Fragments remain.
- The Pyramids at Giza (Egypt) 2500–2600 BC. Still standing.
- The Lighthouse at Alexandria (Egypt) 283–246 BC. Collapsed AD 1300s.
- The Colossus of Rhodes (Aegean Sea) about 210 BC. Fell down in an earthquake in 224 BC.
- Statue of Zeus at Olympia (Greece) 435 BC. Fate unknown.
- Temple of Artemis at Ephesus (Turkey) 500 BC. Burned down 356 BC.

