

Seven ancient wonders of the world



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The seven ancient wonders of the world are one of the most extraordinary lists of artifacts in history. Even today there are several different branches of this list that include different categories of wonders in the world. Some of the other popular lists include wonders of the modern, medieval, natural world, and several others. Among the latest seven wonders is the Wilder beast migration scenario visible Maasai Mara game reserve in East Africa, which is being claimed to, seen from outer space great distances in the atmosphere. The great walls of china are also visible from outer space, built in 200 years B. C and stretches over eight thousand kilometers have also been featured in this list. Listing of the seven wonders can be traced back to the ancient Greek historians who developed a trend of documenting the most amazing sceneries and features in their land together with the surrounding regions that they had knowledge about during their time. The very first list of seven wonders was documented around first or second century before Christ (B. C) by Greek historians and consisted of constructions or natural sceneries around the modern day Mediterranean region together with some parts of Asia (Roberts, 16). This list came to be known as the “ Seven Wonders of the Ancient World”. The list is credited to historians like Antipater of Sidon, Diodoros and Herodotus although Antipater is given much of the credit. In this regard, this paper aims at discussing which of the ancient wonders should not have been included in the list.

The first seven wonders to have been documented in human history included the great pyramid of Giza, Statue of Zeus at Olympia, temple of Artemis at Ephesus, Hanging gardens of Babylon, Mausoleum of Halicarnassus, Colossus of Rhodes and Lighthouse of Alexandria. During that time, the

above named were classified as the most spectacular and remarkable manmade structures but some people have argued that this would not have been the case had the Greek historians and travelers had more knowledge about other regions of the world. Different people point out that certain wonders in the list should not have been included but according to my own point of view, the hanging gardens of Babylon should not have been included in that list for a number of reasons.

For a long time now, there has been a raging debate on the actual existence of the gardens in question (Optic 6). Up to date, there has never been concrete proof that the gardens of Babylon actually existed in the areas documented during the first account. In Babylonian history both now and in the past, there is no such documentation of its existence, which casts doubt about whether the Greek historians were right or wrong (Price & Clayton, 22). Compared to the other wonders of the time, there has been sufficient proof of existence and has been presented with ruins of some being seen even as of date. In fact, the Great pyramid of Giza is still physically visible even today. People living in regions where other members in the list had documented the existence of the respective structures in the writings, drawings and other types but Babylonians had not. This is a strong reason as to why the hanging gardens should not have been included considering prove of existence of the other six.

Secondly, it cannot be said as to who really was responsible for building the gardens if they indeed existed. The Greek historians who developed the list attributed the building to Nebuchadnezzar II, a powerful king who reigned around 600 B. C but other documentation shows otherwise. It is now a well-

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known fact that no artifacts, ruins, and walls of Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom have ever shown that he was responsible for building the gardens (Price & Clayton, 32). Other historians of the ancient times recorded that a man named Sennacherib was the one who built the hanging gardens after he took over the kingdom of Assyria in the year 705 B. C. Other historians of both modern and ancient times argue that the Gardens were a creation of the mind and artistry build upon stories that were taken to Greece by visitors who came from Babylonia. Being a land that had great architecture, tower of Babel, fertile soils, Palm tree plantations, beautiful gardens and great prosperity, merchants and soldiers who went back to Greece gave exaggerated stories about the region ruled by Nebuchadnezzar. On hearing this, artists and historians created mental pictures of the place and eventually came up with drawings. For this reason, I think hanging garden should have been excluded from the list.

Largely, the intention of constructing a building determines whether it will have great value or not. Some buildings are constructed for use as residential areas, places of worship, food stores, recreational and libraries among other reasons. In ancient times, buildings were built for various reasons some of which are explained above. With respect to the seven manmade structures that were listed as wonder of the world, all of them had a distinct purpose for their creation but according to my own personal view, the main intention for constructing the gardens was relatively less valuable or meaningless compared to the other six. The great Pyramid of Giza was built to act as a tomb for pharaohs, temple of Artemis at Ephesus as a place of worship, Lighthouse of Alexandria as a guide to seafarers or sailors.

Similarly, Statue of Zeus at Olympia as a depiction of matured artistry, and Colossus of Rhodes a symbol of one of many gods worshipped by Greeks called Helios. On the other hand, the hanging gardens had been built to make Nebuchadnezzar's wife feel more as if she was at her ancestral home (Woods & Michael, 69). In short, it was built to satisfy the ego of only one person resulting to wastage of massive financial resources, human labor, and time. All the other structures had been for a noble cause of either helping humanity, understanding life aspects more or helping create a better link between humans and their God but the gardens had been built to impact just one person who happened to be the wife of a king.

The actual location of the gardens is a matter of speculation and not factual like is the case with the other constructions (Clayton & Prince 58). Given that, ruins the other six structures have precise locations that are known to historians and ordinary persons, documentation of the gardens in relation to different historian of the time confirm that the precise location of the place is not known. There is a possibility that the gardens, if they ever existed may have been built elsewhere and not in the place recorded by historians as Babylonia (Woods & Michael, 97). Studies conducted by modern day archeologists strongly show that the place believed to be the zone where hanging gardens were situated based off ancient Greek historical accounts is actually Nineveh gardens, modern day Tigris which used to be in the kingdom of Assyria. This is strong evidence that Greek historians must have confused the two places making it odd to be included in the list of seven wonders of the ancient world. There also exists a major difference between type of architecture used in construction of hanging gardens and others in

the record. The gardens had been built using a mixture of clay and straw, which underwent a hardening process to make construction bricks. All the others were constructed using tough or special stones that had the capability of withstanding all types of unfavorable weather conditions for a long period. According to ancient records, walls of the hanging gardens could be fully destructed by exposure to water only that it was it a desert region that experienced region. It is said that the gardens were easily destroyed by an earthquake to an extent where not even ruins remained, an indication that they were less superior to the other wonders.

In relation to height, the hanging gardens of Babylon are documented to have been about eighty feet. Others like the Lighthouse of Alexandria were approximately one hundred and twenty meters high and could be seen from long distances. Sailors of the time could see the tower from as far as twenty-six miles and the great pyramid remained to be the tallest manmade structure on earth for over three thousand years. This means that the other six structures were appealing to the human eye compared to the hanging gardens. Having trees and other plants together with a river around it, the gardens could never have been appealing when the desert sun dried up the waters and made vegetation turn brown. From all the above arguments, it would be right to conclude that the hanging gardens should not have been included in that list of ancient wonders given the many weaknesses it had compared to the others.