



The Hanging Gardens of Babylon
(as depicted by various artists)



The Magnificent Ishtar Gate of Babylon

- The Ishtar Gate was the eighth gate of the city of Babylon (in present day Iraq) and was the main entrance into the great city. It was a sight to behold; the gate was covered in lapis lazuli glazed bricks which would have rendered the façade with a jewel-like shine. Alternating rows of bas relief lions, dragons, and aurochs representing powerful deities formed the processional way. The message of course, was that Babylon was protected and defended by the gods, and one would be wise not to challenge it. The magnificent gate, which was dedicated to the Babylonian goddess Ishtar, was once included among the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World until it was replaced by the Lighthouse of Alexandria in the 3rd century B.C.
- The Babylonians had risen to power in the late 7th century and were heirs of the urban traditions which had long existed in southern Mesopotamia. They eventually ruled an empire as dominant in the Near East as that held by the Assyrians before them. This period is called the Neo-Babylonian Empire because Babylon had also risen to power earlier and became an independent city-state, most famously during the reign of King Hammurabi (1792 - 1750 BC). With the recovery of Babylonian independence under Nabopolassar a new era of architectural activity ensued, and his son Nebuchadnezzar II made Babylon into one of the wonders of the ancient world.
- King Nebuchadnezzar II (605 BC-562 BC) ordered the construction of the Ishtar Gate in about 575 BC, and was part of his plan to beautify his empire's capital. It was under his rule that Babylon became one of the most splendid cities of the ancient world.
- <http://www.ancient-origins.net/ancient-places-asia/magnificent-ishtar-gate-babylon-001866#ixzz3lkQvK3lS>



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