

# National and World Wonders

Wonders are the spectacular buildings, inventions, and concepts that have stood the test of time and changed the world forever. The Pyramids, Notre Dame Cathedral, the Statue of Liberty and Hollywood are all examples of wonders. Wonders require much time and energy from your cities, but once completed, they provide your civilization with many benefits. There are two basic types of wonders: great wonders and national wonders. Great wonders are unique; only one of each can be constructed during a game. For example, the Great Lighthouse is a great wonder; whoever completes it first, is the only one who may possess its benefits. Great Wonders tend to be quite powerful indeed, but also extremely time-consuming to build. National wonders may be built once by each civilization in the game. That is, each civilization can have the Wall Street national wonder (though no civilization can have two of them). Each city may only build two national wonders, so be sure to plan ahead where you wish to put them.

## Apostolic Palace

The Apostolic Palace, located in Vatican City, Italy, is the home of the Pope and the heart of the Catholic Church. Having only been occupied by the Pope since the breakup of the Papal State in 1871, the current Apostolic Palace is a relatively new addition to the Church's assets. Sitting adjacent to the iconic St. Peter's Square, the Palace acts as the administrative center for all business of the Catholic Church. Further, it is from here that the Pope issues decrees which affect Catholics throughout the world. And with nearly one in six people on Earth prescribing to Catholicism, this means the Apostolic Palace is the headquarters for one of the most influential organizations on the planet.[PARAGRAPH:1]While the palace's importance as a world administrative center cannot be doubted, the Apostolic Palace also houses one of the most famous art collections on Earth. Contained within the walls of the Apostolic Palace is the Vatican Museum, which displays the works of master artisans Caravaggio, Raphael and Da Vinci. Michelangelo's famous Sistine Chapel is also a part of the Apostolic Palace.

## Colossus

The Colossus of Rhodes was a bronze statue of Helios, the Greek God of the Sun, erected near the mouth of the city harbor. It stood over 100 feet high, about two-thirds the height of the Statue of Liberty. Unfortunately, an earthquake toppled it only 56 years after its construction. Taking the counsel of an oracle, the city elected to leave the statue where it lay. For over 900 years, people from all over the ancient world came to Rhodes to see the Colossus. It remained where it was until 654 AD when the Muslims who plundered the city sold the statue for scrap.

## Colosseum

The original colosseum provided entertainment for the common people of Roman society by presenting them with spectacles and events as a temporary escape from day-to-day life. This concept has been revived in the 20th Century. Modern-day stadiums and civic

centers provide an arena for entertainment ranging from concerts to professional sporting events. Although the violent spectacle of gladiatorial combat is a thing of the past, today's colosseums still provide entertainment and diversion for the masses.

### **Forbidden Palace**

A collection of imperial structures in Beijing, the Forbidden Palace stands as a testament to the Chinese architectural ingenuity and aesthetic. Ornamental gardens, terraces and fountains surround the magnificent structure, which became the capital of China in 1421. It was the residence of 24 emperors of the Ming and Qing Dynasties until the last emperor abdicated in 1911. Although the correct title for the building is the Imperial Palace, it is more widely known as the "Forbidden" Palace because ordinary people were barred from entering its grounds. With a 160-foot moat and walls 30 feet tall, there was little chance that they would get inside unwanted. The Forbidden Palace is enormous; it occupies 170 acres and contains 8,706 rooms. An estimated eight to ten thousand people lived inside the palace to serve the needs of the emperor. Today, the Forbidden Palace is a major tourist attraction, and it is still used as a symbol of Chinese sovereignty.

### **Globe Theater**

Most of the plays of William Shakespeare were first performed on the stage of London's Globe Theater during the 1600s. Theaters offered people a diversion from their everyday lives by allowing them to enjoy comedies, tragedies, and triumphs acted out on stage. Similar theaters, such as the Comedie Francaise in Paris, and La Scala in Milan, fulfilled similar roles by offering entertainment to the citizens of their cities. Although the original Globe Theater burned down, Shakespeare's plays are still performed in a new theater bearing his name, and in other theaters throughout the world.

### **Great Library**

The Great Library of Alexandria was one of the two most important libraries of the ancient world. Ptolemy I founded it around 300 BC, and was enhanced and expanded by his successors. The library attempted to obtain copies of all scrolls of any consequence, and eventually contained over 700,000 volumes. Religious fanatics destroyed the library in 391 AD, after nearly 700 years of operation. During this period, Alexandria served as the cultural center of the Hellenistic world. Today, only part of the catalog remains, providing us with a mere hint of what treasures the library contained.

### **Great Lighthouse**

The Pharos was a marble watchtower and lighthouse built in 280 BC on an island in the harbor of Alexandria, Egypt. Estimated to have been 300 feet high, the primary function of the lighthouse was to guide approaching ships to the harbor on an otherwise unmarked coast. Historians debate whether fires were burned on the top of the tower, or whether mirrors were used to reflect sunlight. Since ships rarely sailed along coasts at night, there was probably little need for the lighthouse after dark. The Pharos was destroyed in the 14th century, after having been damaged by several earthquakes.

## **Great Wall**

The Great Wall of China is one of the largest and most famous man-made constructions in the entire world. Chinese rulers built the Great Wall to ward off attack from nomadic tribesmen living in modern Manchuria and Mongolia. Interestingly, the Great Wall was not designed to keep the nomads out - the Chinese knew it was all but impossible to defend such a long border - it was designed to make it difficult for the raiders to carry off loot, thus making raids far less profitable and thus less worth the risks involved. There have actually been five different "Great Walls" built by different Chinese dynasties. The first four were constructed of earth and have since all but disappeared. The current wall was built almost entirely by the Ming Dynasty between 1368 and 1640 AD. This wall was constructed on a grander scale, using more permanent materials (like stone). The Ming wall stretches for 3,948 miles from Shanhai Pass on the Bohai Gulf in the east to Lop Nur in the southeast portion of Xinjiang's Uygur Autonomous Region in the west. This was the region where the Silk Road first entered China and a series of watchtowers which could communicate via smoke signals were intended to pass messages rapidly along the vast length. In pure military terms, the Great Wall turned out to be something of a failure. The Manchus were able to bribe a Chinese general to let them pass through the wall, so it turned out to be of little value in stopping a major barbarian attack. After the Manchus conquered China, the borders of the country extended far to the north, rendering the wall irrelevant. The sheer cost of the wall was also staggering, and the cost in human lives is said to have exceeded over one million souls (the Great Wall is sometimes nicknamed "the long graveyard"). Today much of the Great Wall is in a state of disrepair - though the tourist regions are well-preserved, much of the rest of the structure is crumbling, and perhaps only 20% of the wall is in good condition. Despite its decay, the Great Wall remains one of China's most popular tourist attractions and a true wonder of the world.

## **Hanging Garden**

In modern, developed countries, gardens are often more valued for their aesthetic qualities than for their food growing functionality. However, in ancient civilizations such as Babylonia, gardens were an important source of nutrition for city dwelling families who otherwise could not purchase an adequate variety of food.

## **Notre Dame**

Notre Dame is a mighty cathedral standing on the "Ile de la Citie," an island in the Seine River in Paris, France. Built on the site of an older church, which was in turn built on the site of a Roman temple to Jupiter, Notre Dame is a magnificent example of gothic architecture and one of the greatest buildings standing. Construction of Notre Dame began in 1163 and took almost two centuries to complete. Notre Dame is a massive stone building of square towers, flying buttresses, and tall spires. The exterior of the building is decorated with delicate ribbons of arches and statues of saints and kings. The roofline of the building is festooned with gargoyles. The interior of the cathedral is a long, narrow space with columns lining each side, supporting two beautiful raised galleries. Brilliant stained glass windows shine gently down on the main altar, which contains a beautiful statue of the

Virgin Mary, the cathedral's patron, holding the body of Jesus. The cathedral has suffered many periods of neglect over the years. During the French Revolution, many of Notre Dame's treasures were stolen and the building was used as a warehouse. In the early 1800s, the cathedral was in such a state of disrepair that the city planners contemplated tearing it down. In fact, Victor Hugo wrote "The Hunchback of Notre Dame" in part to raise awareness of the cathedral's plight. In 1871, during the short-lived Paris Commune, Notre Dame was almost set on fire. Fortunately the cathedral survived it all, and has now been largely restored to its original grandeur.

## **Oracle**

In ancient Greek religion, an oracle was a priest or priestess through whom the gods spoke in response to questions. The oracle interpreted dreams, the actions of entranced persons, and physical signs found in the entrails of sacrificed animals. The most famous oracle resided in the shrine of Apollo at Delphi, located on the slopes of Mount Parnassus. Greeks, Romans, and others consulted this oracle for centuries about public policy and private matters. A priestess called the Pythia would, for a fee, make public predictions for the future. These ecstatic pronouncements became infamous for their ambiguity.

## **Oxford University**

The University of Oxford, England, is the oldest university in the English-speaking world. It is also one of the most prestigious. The exact date of the university's founding is unknown, but scholars believe it was sometime around 1100 AD. Oxford is made up of 39 colleges and seven "permanent private halls" (which are religious organizations). Each is housed in a separate building usually built in a square around a quadrangle. The colleges generally consist of a great hall, a chapel, a library, a bar, several common rooms, classrooms, and lodging for around 300 students. Built in the 1250s, Balliol, Merton, and University Colleges are among the oldest. For most of its existence, Oxford has been one of the world's great universities, and it remains so to this day. Many famous people have passed through its halls, including four English and eight foreign kings, over 50 presidents and prime ministers (including US President William Clinton), 47 Nobel Prize winners, and one pope.

## **Palace**

When populations began to organize their communities into cities, their governments became more structured and formalized. At an early stage, the ruler of the city established headquarters from which the business of running the city was conducted. In many cases, these buildings also served as the living quarters of the ruler. In wealthy cities, these facilities often expanded into immense, sprawling palaces. These richly adorned, imposing buildings were a source of civic pride, and helped to reinforce the aura of power surrounding the ruler.

## **Parthenon**

The Parthenon was constructed in 433 BC, in Athens, Greece, in honor of Athens' patron goddess, Athena. Measuring 100 feet by 225 feet, the Parthenon is constructed almost totally of marble. The exterior of the Parthenon is ringed with Doric-style columns more than 30 feet in height, and the center part of the temple, called the "cella," is a large open space which once held a statue of Athena. Much of the temple was decorated with beautiful marble statues and friezes celebrating Athena and the glories of Athens. The Parthenon has suffered much from the ravages of time. In the 5th century a Roman Emperor stole the statue of Athena and moved it to Constantinople, where it was subsequently destroyed. In the 13th century the Parthenon was converted to a Catholic church, which involved altering the internal structure and removing (and probably destroying) many statues dedicated to the old gods. In the 15th century Athens was captured by the Ottomans, and the temple was turned into a mosque. In the 17th century the Parthenon was partially destroyed during a war between the Ottomans and Venetians. Finally, in the 19th century, the British ambassador to Greece looted all of the surviving marble friezes from the building, which he subsequently sold to the British museum. Despite the centuries of neglect, mutilation and pillaging, the Parthenon still stands - a remarkably powerful and beautiful symbol of the glories of ancient Greece.

### **Pyramids**

Built by the fourth dynasty of Egyptian rulers, the Pyramids represent the pinnacle of ancient Egyptian cultural achievement. Constructed on the Giza plateau outside modern-day Cairo, these structures were burial tombs and monuments for the Pharaohs, and may have taken generations and tens of thousands of workers to complete. The Pyramids are the only one of the generally accepted man-made wonders of the ancient world that remains in existence today.

### **Spiral Minaret**

The Spiral Minaret is a massive brick and clay structure adjacent to the Mosque of al-Mutawakkil in Samarra, Iraq. The mosque was constructed in 852 AD, and at the time was the largest mosque in the world. A remarkable triumph of ancient engineering, the minaret is a circular tower 170 feet in height. A spiral exterior staircase extends up the tower to the platform where the "muezzin" called the people to prayer. It is said that the caliph al-Mutawakkil once rode up the stairs on a white Egyptian donkey. An imposing yet magnificent building, the Spiral Minaret still stands today, calling the people of Samarra to prayer at the Mosque of al-Mutawakkil. The more courageous visitors can climb the staircase to the top of the minaret, which appears to lack an outside guardrail.

### **Statue of Zeus**

Many monuments were created to honor Zeus, King of the Greek Gods, yet none could be as impressive as the Statue of Zeus at Olympia. Over forty feet tall, the Statue filled the temple in which it was constructed from floor to ceiling. Created by the master artisan Phidias between 438 and 446BC, the whole statue rested on a wooden frame built upon a cedar wood throne of appropriate size for a forty-foot deity. The frame was then draped in

ivory and gold (ivory for skin, gold for clothing) and covered from head to toe in jewels. Before Zeus' feet, a shallow lake of olive oil reflected light into the temple, illuminating the otherwise closed building. Every four years, when the Olympic Games would be held in the town, Olympic competitors would approach the statue and make sacrifices to the King of the Gods with the hope of assuring their victory.

## **Stonehenge**

Stonehenge is perhaps the most astounding construct of pre-history still standing. Though standing in ruins, this mighty relic still has the power to insight amazement, awe and wonder. Stonehenge was built in southern England. Consisting of concentric circles of stone surrounded by a moat (called a "henge"), Stonehenge was constructed in several stages over thousands of years. The henge was dug approximately 5000 years ago; the inner ring of smaller "bluestones" were added about a thousand years later, in approximately 2000 BC; and the outer ring of huge sarsen stones was completed 500 years later. No one is sure exactly who constructed Stonehenge. For centuries it was romantically and erroneously believed that the Druids built the wonder, but in fact the edifice was completed 2000 years before there were any Druids. All we really know is that construction was begun by people of the Neolithic period and completed by those who supplanted them. Stonehenge is a wonder of engineering constructed with the most primitive tools. It appears that the outer ditch was dug with wooden and bone implements. The 80 inner bluestones, weighing about 4 tons each, were transported from a quarry over 240 miles away. Scientists speculate that the stones were dragged on logs and wooden sledges for part of the journey and carried on river barges for the rest. The heaviest of the outer ring of stones weighs in at about 50 tons; it took approximately 600 men to drag such stones from their quarry, about 20 miles away. These monster stones had to be pulled upright in exactly the correct position by men equipped with ropes and wooden levers. There is much debate about Stonehenge's purpose. Some theorize that it was built as a temple to honor earth gods, while others believe that it was a burial ground for ancient kings and noblemen. Another theory is that Stonehenge is an ancient astronomical observatory, charting the movement of the stars which men believed controlled their destinies. Whatever its original purpose, it remains today a rugged and beautiful monument to the astonishing skill and dedication of its "primitive" builders.

## **Taj Mahal**

The Taj Mahal stands in Agra, India. It was constructed in the mid-16th century at the orders of the Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan, as a mausoleum for his wife. Acknowledged as one of the most beautiful structures in the world, the Taj Mahal is constructed of rare and brilliant materials imported from across India and Asia - it is said that over 1000 elephants were employed to carry the sandstone, marble, jade, turquoise, sapphires, and other materials used in its construction. The Taj Mahal complex covers an area of approximately 1000 feet by 1900 feet and consists of a gateway, garden, mausoleum, mosque, and guest house. The first three buildings are clad in white marble and covered with geometric patterns, while the mosque and guesthouse are built of brilliant red sandstone. The

buildings are topped with magnificent onion-shaped domes and minarets. Experts have debated about what makes the Taj Mahal unique and beautiful. Some suggest that it lies in the structures' marvelous proportions and symmetry, while others argue in favor of the way that the marble buildings interact with the light, giving the Taj Mahal ever-changing character as the sun rises and sets. Still others believe that its inherent beauty lies in its purpose - a man seeking to cast in stone his love for his departed wife.

### **Temple of Artemis**

The Temple of Artemis was located in the city of Ephesus in modern Turkey, and it was considered to be one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. At its grandest the building contained more than 100 marble columns (each 50 feet or more in length) and covered an area larger than the Acropolis in Athens. The first temple built on the site was finished around 600 BC, but was burned down and destroyed some 50 years later. The temple was rebuilt starting circa 550 BC, and its new incarnation was even larger and more magnificent than before. Its construction was sponsored by the Lydian king Croesus and it was designed by the Greek architect Chersiphron. The temple was decorated with bronze sculptures made by the finest artists of the era, including Phidias, Polycleitus, Kresilas, and Phradmon. It served as both a marketplace and a religious institution, drawing tourists from far and wide across Greece and the Near East. Unfortunately, the Temple of Artemis was destroyed again in 356 BC by a man named Herostratus, who deliberately committed arson in an attempt to immortalize his name (in which he obviously succeeded). Legend has it that the temple burned to the ground on the same night as Alexander the Great was born, and that Artemis was too busy attending his birth to save her temple. After Alexander's death, the Temple of Artemis was rebuilt once more, achieving its largest and most impressive size yet. Aside from its roof, the new temple was made entirely out of marble, with steps leading up to a huge terrace that measured 260 by 430 feet in size. The temple was re-adorned with statues, paintings, and other fine artwork, and over time regained its position of glory. When St. Paul visited Ephesus in the first century AD, the Temple of Artemis was still standing and its priests had no intention of renouncing their goddess. Unfortunately, the building was burned down by the Goths during a raid in 262 AD. The Ephesians vowed to rebuild it, but interest in the Hellenic gods and goddesses was beginning to wane by that point. By 400 AD, most of the people of Ephesus had converted to Christianity, and the remnants of the temple were torn down by St. John Chrysostom. The marble from the temple was salvaged for use in other building projects, and almost nothing remains of the Temple of Artemis today.