

flood, and afterlife) stemmed from Babylon as the purer source of these biblical parallels (Lehmann: 85). This even extended to monotheism, which was not Mosaic in origin. The North(west) Semitic tribes (Amorites) around the time of Hammurabi had worshipped a single deity 'Ēl, which Delitzsch translated "the [solitary] god" (Lehmann: 89). They had also worshipped a deity Yahweh, which Delitzsch had found in several Old Babylonian names, such as "Yahweh is 'Ēl." A thousand years later the Israelites were to adopt this god when they entered Canaan, which Delitzsch maintained was culturally Mesopotamian (Lehmann: 90). Thereafter, this pure inherited idea of a single god became corrupted by crude anthropomorphisms and even by Israelite "particularism." Eventually it was to return to its original clarity through the efforts of the prophets, psalmists, and especially of Jesus.

Delitzsch's German nationalism surfaced when he accepted A. Billerbeck's observation of a portrayal of Ashurbanipal's wife as "a blond-hair princess of Aryan blood" (Lehmann: 83).

2. Second Lecture (Singakademie on January 12, 1903). Delitzsch's second lecture – in the presence of both the emperor, Wilhelm II, and the empress – developed the implications of his earlier lecture. Here Delitzsch challenged both the Old Testament's claim as an "original revelation" as well as the uniqueness of its ethical monotheism. Delitzsch argued that both of these were being used to insulate the OT from the impact of any Assyriological data. This address focused on denigrating the theology of the OT, which when compared with Babylon often came out inferior. The Old Testament's laws were of human origin and character, and thus deserved no privileged status (Lehmann: 180). Its "ethical monotheism" was tainted by its "nationalistic exclusivism" (Lehmann: 183). The OT should not obligate modern German Christians (Lehmann: 185–91, 244); it was of more interest as evidence of a stage in the history of religions than for its binding theology. Henceforth Delitzsch was emerging as more a theologian than an Assyriologist.

3. Third Lecture (Barmen and Köln on October 27–28, 1904). The Kaiser was not supportive of Delitzsch's second lecture; Delitzsch was admonished to stick to Assyriology and not to deviate into theology and Christology. Thus, his third lecture was not delivered in Berlin but before literary societies in Barmen and Köln. In this final lecture, Delitzsch made more explicit some of his positions only hinted at up to this point. From the outset of his third lecture, the OT has now become "the old Hebrew Literature." The population of Galilee and Samaria had become mixed after its 8th-century BCE Assyrian conquest; thus, many of its "Babylonian" inhabitants were of Aryan stock (Lehmann: 252). The Babylonians had previously become "mixed" by the influences of the non-Semitic Sumerians and

Elamites. When Jesus extolled the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:36, Delitzsch saw Jesus as extolling the "Babylonians" who were more neighborly and accepting than the Jews who he claimed excluded others. In this lecture, Jesus of Galilee approximates the Aryan Jesus who transcends Jewish nationalism; this latter claim would be more explicit in his two-volume *The Great Deception* (1920/21). For Delitzsch this "Great Deception" was the OT.

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See also → Delitzsch, Friedrich; → Pan-Babylonianism

Baboon

→ Ape

Baby

→ Child, Children; → Infant, Infancy

Babylon

- I. Archaeology
- II. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament
- III. Judaism
- IV. New Testament
- V. Christianity
- VI. New Religious Movements
- VII. Literature
- VIII. Visual Arts
- IX. Music
- X. Film

I. Archaeology

That the site of Babylon was inhabited in very ancient times is proved by archaeological finds dating back as far as the 4th millennium BCE. It was only under Hammurabi and his successors, however, that Babylon effectively became a capital city. It consisted of two quarters, west and east, which were situated on either side of the Arahtu, a secondary branch of the river Euphrates. The archaeological layers of this first great period, however, are covered by the water table, and scientists have been

able to reach them only in the quarter of Merkès, where parts of dwellings of the late Paleo-Babylonian era have been found.

The construction of the first rampart was undertaken by Hammurabi's predecessors. The city wall of the western quarter reached its quasi-final limits under the kings of the 2nd Dynasty of Isin in the 12th century BCE. It constituted two parallel walls whose names, *Imgur-Enlil* and *Nemetti-Enlil*, were borrowed from the city of Nippur. The wall had to be restored on several occasions, was demolished by Sennacherib in 689 BCE, and was rebuilt by his son Esarhaddon. It received its final colossal dimensions from the Neo-Babylonian kings of the 7th century BCE, Nabopolassar and Nebuchadnezzar II, who provided it with a surrounding moat that was itself protected by a triple wall. Nebuchadnezzar II added another external wall from the summer palace to the riverbank of the Euphrates, south of the city, protecting a large agricultural area that could be used whenever the city was being besieged.

There were several monumental gates to the inner city, the most famous being the Ishtar Gate on the north side of the city. For the 7th century BCE alone, three distinct layers have been identified: the underlying part was decorated with panels of baked cast bricks representing bulls and dragons, while the overlying part showed the same adornment, though on enameled relief bricks. The gate seems to have reached a total height of 15 meters. Through the Ishtar Gate and into the city of Babylon ran the great processional way called *Ay-ibur-shabû*, where the cultic New Year processions took place. Running along a north-south axis, the processional way led to the temple of Marduk. It was connected to another processional way in the south, allowing access to the statue of the god Nabu of Borsippa in the temple of his father, Marduk.

The great palace, rebuilt and extended by Nabopolassar and in particular by Nebuchadnezzar II, was situated north of the main quarter of the city. Separated from the city by an inner wall, the palace practically constituted an independent entity. Its southern part, the most ancient one, comprised more than 200 rooms organized in five units centered around great courtyards. German excavations have uncovered a considerable number of halls, including a throne hall 17 meters in width and 52 meters in length. The function of most of the other halls remains uncertain, other than that of the administrative and storage quarters situated in the eastern part of the palace. The northern part of the palace, whose construction began under Nebuchadnezzar II, was without a doubt the true center of power during the time of the Achaemenid Empire, but only parts of it have been uncovered and reconstructed. It seems to have included a great building erected on a high terrace, in the center of a vast vestibule.

The religious quarter, situated in the central part of the city on the river Euphrates, connected Esagila, the temple of Marduk, with the ziggurat of Etemenanki. Under Nebuchadnezzar II, the latter reached its maximal height of 90 meters. It seems to have been erected in the course of the 12th century BCE, though there may have been an even older, multi-story tower. New analyses of the corpus of finds brought to light by German excavation teams have proved that the lower levels, excavated by R. Koldewey and his colleagues, were indeed too deep to originate from the Neo-Babylonian period (7th–6th cent. BCE).

Of the enormous complex of the Esagila temple, which Hammurabi's predecessors began to build, only the later stage of the late 1st millennium BCE is known. It has been excavated only in part and thus remains unexplored to a large extent. It comprised several courtyards and a central complex which was dedicated to Marduk and his consort Sarpanitu. The cult complex of Esagila and Etemenanki was the largest, but certainly not the only one in the city. According to the lexical lists, Babylon would have had more than 43 temples, some of which had been built in the course of the 2nd millennium BCE and dedicated to the deities of the traditional Sumer-Akkadian pantheon, e.g., Nanna/Sîn or Utu/Shamash. When the cities in southern Mesopotamia were abandoned after the 17th century BCE, Babylon inherited some of their tutelary gods and started erecting temples for them as well. As Marduk grew to be the king of the gods in the second half of the 2nd millennium BCE, a considerable number of gods would have had a particular chapel within the Esagila temple, where services similar to the ones of the palace courtiers could be held. In the accessible areas, German and Iraqi excavations have discovered six temples (Ninmah, Ishtar of Akkad, Nabu, Ashratum, Ninurta, and Ishara). Many others, however, have not been found, including all the ones in the western quarter.

In the southern part of the city, the hill of Ishan Aswad covers the ancient quarter of Shu-anna. Narrow trenches have made it possible to recognize remains of dwellings. The majority of private archives of the 1st century, which were found by illegal excavators, indeed came from this quarter and from areas in its direct proximity.

In the northeastern part of Babylon, a theater and a palaestra dating from the Hellenistic period were found alongside a small hill, which today carries the name of Homera. It was partially stacked with debris, which probably came from Esagila and the great ziggurat, moved here when Alexander the Great and his successors planned the city's restoration.

The king Nabonidus ordered the construction of a bridge across the Euphrates that would permit one to reach the other quarter of the city. This

bridge had a deck of removable joists resting on seven piles of bricks, with a wall-facing of stone, which excavators found on site.

A great number of travelers have visited and described Babylon since Herodotus. In 1851, F. Fresnel and J. Oppert excavated selected portions of the palace area and the temples. The decisive archaeological endeavor was that directed by R. Koldewey between 1899 and 1917. Restoration campaigns run by the Iraqi Antiquity Services have been happening on a regular basis since 1958, and on a larger scale since 1978. In 1986, an Italian team also undertook work on the site.

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II. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament

Babylon has several names in the HB/OT. Most frequent is the Hebrew *Bābel* (Βαβυλών in LXX), denoting the city and the country, as well as the empire. The region is also called *Šin'ār* (Gen 11:2; Zech 5:11). *Šēšak* (Jer 25:26), *Mērātayim* (Jer 50:21), *Pēqôd* (Jer 50:21), and *Zādôn* (Jer 50:31–32) are used as derogatory designations.

1. Texts about Babylon. Texts about Babylon are tradition literature as is all ancient and biblical literature. This implies that texts about Babylon have influenced each other on every stage of their growth. The texts are mostly exilic or postexilic, to a large extent conceived after Babylon's power had declined. The name quickly became symbolic of world power, overshadowing its particular historical connotations. It can be doubted, however, if any literary or historical reference to Babylon ever existed that did not react in some way to its symbolic power. Babylon is stereotypically characterized as either threatened with destruction or as destroyed, and descriptions of it tended to be loaded with political and religious significance growing increasingly stronger through the history of the Bible's reception. No foreign city, region, or empire mentioned in the HB/OT is as dominant as Babylon quantitatively or qualitatively.

Babylon is attested in nearly every genre of the HB and in every part of the canon: in a narrative (Gen 11:1–9) and a gloss (Gen 10:8–10) in the primeval history, in an annal entry in the book of

Kings (2 Kgs 24–25; par. Jer 52,1–30), in a prophetic story (2 Kgs 20; par. Isa 39), in a parodied *qinā* (Isa 14:4b–21), in many prophecies (Isa 13; 21:1–10; 47; Jer 25; 50–51), and in an elegy (Ps 137). The plots of Esther and Daniel are situated in Babylon; so is the book of Ezekiel. Additionally, there are many short notes about Babylon scattered throughout the HB/OT (e.g., Mic 4:10; Zech 2:11).

The oldest biblical text on Babylon may be the core of Isa 21 (Macintosh 1980). However, this text is barely understandable in its Masoretic version; reconstructions of earlier stages are thus not unproblematic.

In Isa 13, details conjure the impression of authenticity insofar as the gates of the nobles and perhaps the bare hill (13:2) are concerned. The motif of a global end (Isa 13:9–13) is embedded in an announcement of the particular city's destruction (Isa 13:2–8, 14–22). Most biblical scholars attribute the presence of the two differing motifs to different times of composition: that of the local destruction is supposedly preexilic, and the proto-apocalyptic motif concerning the destruction of the whole earth is supposedly postexilic.

The legend of the tower of Babel (Gen 11:1–9) is one of the best known biblical texts about Babylon. This text reacts to Assyrian propaganda by Sargon II and to his building of Dur Sarukkin, the new capital of the Assyrian Empire. His imperial agenda was to unite all the peoples of the earth under a single language and ideology. He died without achieving his aim. Whereas the core of the text now found in Gen 11:1–9 dates from around 700 BCE, it was not before the second of four stages of reworking that this text was transformed into a “Babylon-text” (i.e., a text about Babylon) by the insertion of Gen 11:9* and 3 in the exilic or early postexilic period, as a reaction to Nebuchadnezzar II's building projects (Uehlinger 1990).

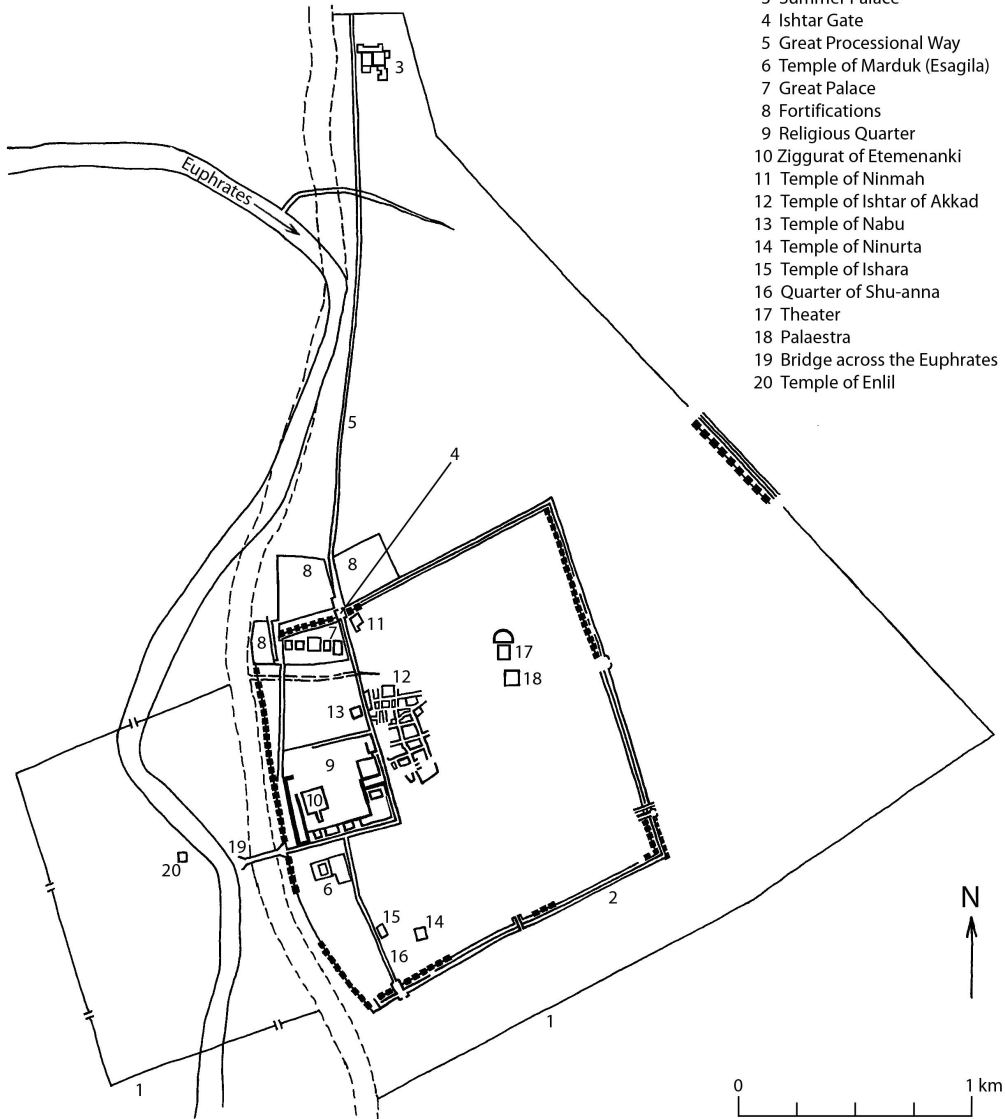
Parts of Jer 25 and even more of Jer 50–51 must date very late, since Jer 50–51 contains many citations, allusions, and motifs borrowed from other texts about Babylon and other foreign nations, including especially Edom. Jeremiah 25 expands the tradition of the cup of wrath to include all nations, who are forced to drink and to enter into a world war with Babylon, which will triumph for 70 years before finally falling.

In 2 Kgs 20 (par. Isa 39), King Hezekiah shows the temple treasures to a Babylonian envoy and all but makes covenant with Babylon, resulting in Isaiah's (*vaticinium ex eventu*) prophecy that the treasures of the temple and the palace would be transported to Babylon. In Isa 47, Babylon is personified as a queen, and in Isa 14 as a king, being condemned because of its arrogance, cruelty, and resistance to YHWH's rule.

The latest canonical reference to Babylon can be found in the book of Daniel. Daniel 2 and 7 con-

Babylon

"Neo-Babylonian Period (7th–6th centuries BCE)"



Map 2 Ancient Babylon

tinue to be influential even today in the perception of history as a succession of empires. Babylon has been identified in different positions in this succession of four empires, but it has always been included among the world empires that will eventually fall. It is while looking out over Babylon and admiring its glory that Nebuchadnezzar hears a

voice from heaven and descends into madness (Dan 4: 28–33).

2. Historical Babylon in the Hebrew Bible. Nebuchadnezzar conquered Judah and Jerusalem twice (e.g., 2 Kgs 24–25; Jer 20:4–6; 27) and deported King Jehoiachin and many nobles to Babylonia in the first year of his reign (= 597 BCE; Jer 22:25–26;

24: 1). He installed Jehoiachin's uncle Mattaniah on the throne and re-named him Zedekiah (2 Kgs 24; par. 2 Chr 36). After the new king revolted (Jer 27: 3), Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the rest of Judah, Jerusalem, and the temple (e.g., Isa 23: 13). In 582 BCE, Babylonian troops marched into the Benjaminite remains and put down riots against King Gedaliah at Mizpah.

The Babylonian exile, despite its three beginnings (597, 586, 582 BCE), is usually regarded as a single period. It is considered by many to have been a time of great literary production, with many texts and ideas developing both during and after the exile (though the scholarly reconstruction of the details of such developments remains controversial). Following the exile, many Jews stayed in Babylonia (see also Jer 29).

The only historical kings mentioned in the HB/OT besides Nebuchadnezzar are Merodach-baladan (Marduk-apal-iddin II [722–711 BCE]; see 2 Kgs 20: 12–19; par. Isa 39) and the third Evil-merodach (Amel-Marduk [562 BCE]; see 2 Kgs 25: 27). Belshazzar figures as Nebuchadnezzar's son (Dan 5, 7; 2 Bar.), but historically he was the son Nabonidus, a crown-prince who never became king.

3. Babylon as a Literary Symbol. In the HB/OT, Babylon is a theological and literary figure. Both Babylon's destructive power and its own foretold destruction play dominant parts in its descriptions. It became a lasting metaphor due to its destruction of Jerusalem. The metaphor "Babylon" subsumed the metaphors of Assyria (Jer 50: 17–18), Nineveh (Nah 3; Zeph 2: 13–15), Edom (Ps 137: 7; Isa 34), and Sodom (Jer 50: 40), as well as inheriting aspects of their imagery. As the destroyer eternally to be destroyed, Babylon became the antitype of Jerusalem rebuilt, as well as, of course, the concept of the heavenly Jerusalem (e.g., Isa 51: 17; Joel 2: 1–11; Zech 14: 1–14; Zeph 1: 18; 2: 2). Babylon is frequently a figure for Rome in deuterocanonical and apocryphal texts, the NT, and beyond (e.g., *Gk. Apoc. Ezra*; *Bar*; *Sib. Or.* 3: 96–104, 303–313, 434–445; 4, 93; *MidShir* 1: 6; *bSan* 21b; and *bShab* 56b).

Babylon's symbolic impact on the HB/OT can even be seen in the structure of certain books. Babylon plays a recurring role in the oracles against foreign nations of Isa 13–23 (Berges 1998). Depending on the parameters one assumes for the biblical primeval history, the story of the tower of Babylon (Gen 11: 1–9) forms its end and climax, or the end and climax of the section Gen 9–11. The last section of the book of Jeremiah MT (Jer 50–51), as well as the book's exact middle (Jer 25), both deal with Babylon.

"Babylon" in a biblical text is always more than a historical reference, since it represents at once a locality, a personification, and a theological concept. This ultimately leads to Babylon becoming a symbol for God's adversaries and, in the NT, a symbol of the antichrist.

4. Babylon as Cultural and Geographical Locality. a. Babylon's Culture. The biblical image of Babylon is colored by fascination, scorn, and fear. All texts about Babylon share an emphasis on its cultural achievements (particularly in architecture), its famous size, and its ancient urban development, particularly its walls (Gen 11: 1–9; Jer 51: 53, 58), its military (Jer 5: 15–17), and astronomy (Isa 47: 12–14; 13: 10–13). Babylon stands for prosperity in every sense (Jer 51: 7, 13; see also Josh 7: 21; Isa 13: 18; 47: 5, 15; Ezek 17: 4). As a mighty and beautiful city, Babylon is loved by its king (Dan 4: 27 [MT; = 4: 29 LXX]). This is why Babylon is seen as a both a temptation and a threat (Ezek 23: 14–21).

b. Universalism. In some texts Babylon represents the whole earth. In Gen 11, all the world settles in a valley in Shinar. In Isa 13, the city's conquest entails the world's destruction. Babylon's king planned to rule everything everywhere (Isa 14); Queen Babylon even rules heaven (Isa 47: 13). Isaiah 21: 1 addresses Babylon as "the wilderness of the sea" (Isa 21: 9). The apocalyptic reading of Isa 24–27 works similarly.

"Babylon" is always more than Babylon(ia); its destruction is at the same time a local and a universal incident. Conceptualizing the overlapping of locality and universality is the Judean reaction to Babylon's self-perception as the navel of the world, whose god Marduk was declared creator of the universe, and whose buildings connect heaven and earth (George 1997; Maul 1997). This is all true according to the HB/OT, only of YHWH.

5. Babylon Personified. a. The Babylonian King. In the HB/OT, Babylon's kings are the most powerful of all. Over the course of the centuries, the biblical figure Nebuchadnezzar grows to be an increasingly mythical literary figure (Dan 2–4). His power is the power of the first human being (Jer 27: 6; 28: 14). He is drawn as especially cruel, as well as a divine tool to subdue the whole world (Jer 25: 9; 27: 6; 43: 10). In Jer 50: 43, this king of the world falls in anguish, with "pain like that of a woman in labor," and can only passively witness Babylon's fall. He has been like a monster, like a lion seizing Zion and gnawing the bones left over by Assur (Jer 51: 34–35).

Babylon itself is depicted as a king in Isa 14: 4b–21, and in Isa 47 as a queen (Sals 2004). In Gen 10: 8–10, possibly a biblical reference to the Akkadian epic of Ninurta, Babylon is the base of the legendary king Nimrod, the great hunter.

b. Babylon becoming Female. Babylon has many denotations, connotations, and identities. It is (only) a city, a region, or the inhabitants of the city or region in Gen 11; Isa 13; 14: 22–23; Jer 25; Ps 137: 1 (an entity of unknown identity in Isa 21: 1–10). It is a woman in Isa 47 and Ps 137: 7–9, and a man in Isa 14: 4b–21 and Jer 50: 31–32. In Jer 50–

51, we find a synthesis of many identities, qualifications, titles, and genders. Despite a nearly equal quantity of verses in which Babylon is symbolized as female and male, the female connotations dominate Babylon's literary reception due to the female metaphorization of Jerusalem, its eternal opponent, and the reception of this mismatched pair in deuterocanonical, apocryphical, and NT texts, especially the book of Revelation.

6. Babylon as Theological Concept. In the theology of the texts one can see two movements concerning Babylon's theological function. The first is to declare Babylon as a divine tool (Isa 47:6; Jer 25:9–11; 50:20), and similarly Nebuchadnezzar (Jer 25:9; 27:6; 43:10). The second is to see in Babylon YHWH's comparably powerful adversary, both in mimetic concurrence, with YHWH finally defeating Babylon (Isa 14; 47; Gen 11:6).

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Ulrike Sals

III. Judaism

In 539 BCE, the Neo-Babylonian (Chaldean) Empire, conqueror of Assyria and scourge of the ancient Near East, was itself conquered by Cyrus of Persia. Babylon was incorporated into the Persian Empire, never again to regain its autonomy. Two centuries later, following the death of Alexander and the fragmentation of his domain, Babylon devolved to Seleucid rule. By the end of the 2nd century BCE, as twilight descended on the Hellenistic kingdoms and the axis of the Mediterranean world shifted westward to Rome, Babylon was absorbed by the distant Parthian Empire in the east. But the memories of King Nebuchadnezzar, of the destruction of Jerusalem and Solomon's temple, and of the long years spent in exile ensured that Jews throughout the Second Temple period would recall the Babylon of old as a powerful and terrifying symbol of imperial oppression.

The antecedents of this symbolism are located in the prophetic literature of the Babylonian exile, above all Second Isaiah. Although Babylon had played its appointed role in God's great plan for

Israel, it would be punished for its hubris and excessive cruelty, a fate which neither its army nor its sorcerers could avert (Isa 47:1–15; 48:20–22). The prospect of Babylon's imminent downfall forms part of a constellation of themes anticipating a return to the land, the restoration of Jerusalem and Judah, and the redemption of Israel. When situated within an eschatological horizon, these themes would play an important role in Second Temple apocalyptic literature.

The portrayal of Babylon in Daniel is more complex, reflecting the book's disparate composition of court tales and revelatory visions. The tales, possibly products of the Egyptian diaspora of the end of the 3rd century BCE, attempt to reconcile the seemingly contrary themes of faithfulness to Jewish law and success in a Gentile milieu. As such, Babylon, emblematic of any foreign land in which Jews might dwell, could not be entirely wicked. The tension is resolved in part through the depictions of the Chaldean wise men and courtiers, who are inimical to Daniel, and of their king, usually Nebuchadnezzar (Dan 2–4), who although the typical tyrant in his edicts and punishments is presented in what, given historical events, is a remarkably neutral light that at times borders on the favorable (cf. the doxologies of Dan 3:28; 4:31b–32, 34 [MT]). In the stories of "Bel and the Dragon," which are preserved in the ancient Greek versions of Daniel, the Babylonian priests and court officials are again portrayed unfavorably, while the king (in this case, Cyrus the Persian) is described positively (note v. 28).

Daniel's revelatory visions, a response to the national-religious crisis precipitated by the policies of the Seleucid monarch Antiochus IV (175–164 BCE), describe a very different Babylon. In contrast to the prophetic historiography of Second Isaiah, which comprehends restoration and renewal in terms of God's ongoing historical relationship with Israel, the visions of Daniel, structured as they are by an apocalyptic theology of history, propose a dramatic eschatological resolution to the present intolerable state of affairs. In Dan 7, four bizarre beasts emerge from the sea, one after the other, to exercise their oppressive dominion over the face of the earth before the end of days. They symbolize world-empires, and their appearance is part of the divine plan for history. Although none of the beasts is named, Babylon is clearly the first empire, reprising its role in the earlier schema of four empires of Nebuchadnezzar's dream (Dan 2:37–45). In the vision of Dan 7, Babylon is portrayed by a lion with the wings of an eagle (7:4), recalling the winged lions with human faces familiar from Assyro-Babylonian iconography, which the Jews of the era would have known. While the schema of four or five empires is not apocalyptic *per se* (note the aforesaid Dan 2 and its non-Jewish precursors in Hesiod, etc.), it became

a common motif in the historical apocalypica of early Judaism (*Sib. Or.* 4: 49–114; 4Q554 1 iii; 2 *Bar.* 39), as did the use of fantastic animal hybrids to represent sovereign states (*Pss. Sol.* 2: 25; *T. Naph.* 5: 6–8). In the *Animal Apocalypse*, which presents a long review of history from Adam to the Maccabees but recasts nations and peoples as sheep, bulls, dogs, and other animals, the Chaldeans are again symbolized by lions (1 *En.* 89: 56).

Although the visions of Dan 8 and 10–12 do not mention Babylon in their historical reviews, the exilic setting is fundamental not only to Dan 9 and its radical reinterpretation of Jeremiah's prophecy of 70 years of exile (Jer 25: 11–12; 29: 10), but to all the visions of the book. The memory of Babylon and the exile functioned as potent images for Daniel's audience (cf. Ps 137), who would have correlated them with their contemporary situation. From their perspective, they were still living in exile under the domination of an oppressive empire and the menace of death, at least in the sense that is assumed from the standpoint of apocalyptic historiography, according to which the resolution of the intolerable present situation would transpire only at the end of days. This perspective is explicit in the *Damascus Document*, whose exhortation affirms that the "age of wrath" has persisted since God delivered Israel into the hand of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon centuries ago (CD I, 5–6 par. 4Q266 2 I, 10–11; 4Q268 1 12–14).

Further contributing to the idea of an ongoing exile is the concept of the *translatio imperii*, or the transfer of imperial rule. Isaiah helped to set the pattern by envisioning Assyria and Babylon as two faces of the same pitiless empire. Daniel's apocalyptic historiography develops the concept so that each empire, without shedding its historical identity, is now understood as inheriting a predetermined role as the corporate, worldly manifestation of evil in its age-old conflict with the forces of good. In this fashion, the empires of history – but especially Babylon, the archetype – retain a present-day significance for contemporary audiences and their hopes for the future. For example, 4QPseudo-Ezekiel mentions Babylon (4Q386 1 III) alongside Ezekiel and his vision of the revivification of the dry bones and of the day of doom for the Gentiles (4Q385b 2). Likewise, the coming destruction of Babylon (4Q163 8–10 1; cf. 4Q163 4–7 II, 4; 25 1; 4Q165 8 1) is part of a larger commentary on Isaiah that circumscribes the last days, the branch of David, and the once and future Gentile enemies of Israel, the "Kittim." The superposition of multiple empires on a single template is possible within the logic of apocalypticism, where the temporal restrictions of the historical age could be partially abrogated in the revelation of the divine plan to a visionary seer or an inspired interpreter. The same logic also permitted the Dead Sea sectarians to iden-

tify the Kittim initially with the Greeks and then, as the political situation changed, with the Romans.

By the time Pompey and his legions departed the East in 63 BCE, few apocalypticists would have doubted that Rome was the last world empire. Babylon was the preferred symbol for the seven-hilled city in many of the Jewish apocalyptic texts of the era, particularly after 70 CE, when Rome, like Babylon before it, ravaged Jerusalem, destroyed the temple, and scattered the people of Israel. A secondary yet not insignificant reason for the substitution of Babylon for Rome in the post-70 CE texts was to obscure predictions of imminent imperial demise and thereby thwart potential reprisals by an empire that was in no mood for further sedition or rebellion. The stridently anti-Roman *Sibylline Oracle* 5, composed in the generation after Nero's death, contains a bitter prophecy about Rome, in the guise of Babylon (lines 137–78 at 143, 155–61). The oracle of lines 434–46 additionally warns Babylon of its great hubris and predicts its pending subjugation by the Parthians. The reference to Parthia, and another to Rome (at line 442), suggest that the oracle should be considered coeval with the rest of the book. If so, it also must be regarded as another example of a lightly veiled prediction of judgment and doom against Rome.

Similarly, 4 *Ezra* refers to "the city" (12: 40, 50), which within the context of the narrative presumably means Babylon (Stone 1990: 56), but which would have been understood by the book's audience as alluding to Rome. Like Daniel, 4 *Ezra* relies on the idea of an ongoing exile (3: 1–3, 27–29) and the superimposing of historical empires to achieve its purposes. Most critical here is the angel's initial comment regarding Ezra's vision of the dreadful eagle with multiple heads and wings, which rises from the sea (11: 1–12: 39). The eagle, the angel assures Ezra, is none other than the 4th and final kingdom that Daniel saw in his vision, but its interpretation is different (12: 10–12). Whereas for Daniel the last kingdom was Greek, for Ezra's time it is now mighty Rome, the imperial eagle. With this pronouncement, the visions and interpretations of past and present coalesce into a single message of future hope: Babylon is Rome and the empire has yet to end, but Greece is now Rome and the days of the empire are numbered (cf. Dan 5: 26).

The references to Babylon in 2 *Baruch* are more ambiguous, or so they appear at first glance. The "apocalypse of the clouds" of chapters 53–76 depicts a 12-period review of history that includes the Babylonian conquest (67: 1–9). No overt symbolism is involved: the exile is followed by a description of the restoration and the postexilic period (68: 1–8), after which comes the time of tribulation and the final, messianic age (69: 1–74: 4). However, the exilic setting of 2 *Baruch*, as with 4 *Ezra* and Daniel, is fictional. As such, all references to Babylon and the

exile must have conducted a contemporary message for the intended audience (NB 10:1–3; 11:1–3). The covenantal theology of 2 *Baruch*, with its perspectives modified through the lens of apocalypticism (Collins 1998: 221–25), employs the Babylon of history and memory to explain the present tragedy involving Rome: God, then and now, punishes the people of Zion for their sins (79:1–4).

Not every literary reference to Babylon carries a symbolic value. Some texts are retrospectively set in historic Babylon (Bar 1:1–4; Ep Jer 6:1) or refer to the city historically (4Q385a 18 I, a–b 4, 6), even if in an oracular sense (*Sib. Or.* 3:381–87, 11:204–5). Still, the image of Babylon as the archetype of the oppressive world empire and as a metaphor of the ongoing exile (real or perceived) is characteristic of the Jewish literature of the Second Temple era. Notwithstanding its key role in post-70 CE texts such as 4 *Ezra*, this image would have its greatest influence on western civilization through the NT Revelation of John.

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IV. New Testament

There are references to Babylon in four NT books.

1. Matthew. Matthew’s genealogy refers to “the deportation to Babylon” (Matt 1:11–12, 17) as an event in Israelite history. Because it brought the period of the Davidic rule to an end, it serves, with David (vv. 6, 17), to divide the genealogy into three sections.

2. Acts of the Apostles. Babylon is also named as the place of Israel’s exile in Acts 7:42–43, where Amos 5:25–27 is quoted, but with “Babylon” substituted for “Damascus” (found in Amos 5:27 in both MT and LXX). This is an example of the Jewish exegetical practice of modifying a text in order to indicate the interpretation being given to it.

3. 1 Peter. Babylon is named in 1 Pet 5:13, apparently as the location from which the letter is written (most scholars take “the co-elect one who is in Babylon” to refer to the Christian community from which the letter was sent). There have been five proposals for understanding this reference:

a) It refers literally to Babylon on the Euphrates, the great city of Old Testament times. This is unlikely, both because the site of Babylon was at this period a largely uninhabited ruin, and

because no tradition connects Peter with this area.

- b) It refers to another place called Babylon, a small military settlement in Egypt, where at this period one of the three Roman legions in Egypt was stationed. This too lacks any support from traditions about Peter’s travels or life (though later tradition does connect Mark with Alexandria).
- c) Most scholars think the reference is to Babylon on the Euphrates, but in a figurative sense, as a symbolic name for the city of Rome. This is supported both by the fact that it is virtually certain that Peter spent the last period of his life in Rome (the tradition to this effect is early and widely attested) and that Babylon is known to have been used as a symbolic name for Rome by both Jews and Christians.
- d) A few scholars have suggested that Babylon is here a symbolic name for Jerusalem, just as some have made the same suggestion about Babylon in Revelation, but since the latter is implausible (see below) there is no good evidence of such a usage.
- e) Some take Babylon here to be, not a specific place, but a designation for the world as a place of exile for Christians, as the literal Babylon was for Israel of old. This has the advantage of relating the reference to Babylon here to the way the addressees are described in 1 Pet 1:1 (cf. v. 17; 1 Pet 2:11), forming a connection between the beginning and the end of the letter. But this significance of Babylon can be combined with proposal “c”; the reason why the name Babylon is used for Rome would be precisely because it suggests a place of exile and thus connects the writer’s situation with that of his readers as described in 1 Pet 1:1.

It has been argued that the use of Babylon as a symbolic name for Rome originated among Jews after the fall of Jerusalem in 70 CE, when the writers of the two apocalypses of 4 *Ezra* and 2 *Baruch*, exploited the parallel between this catastrophe and the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians in 586 BCE, writing ostensibly about the latter in order to reflect on the former. If Christians borrowed the use of Babylon as a symbolic name for Rome from this post-70 CE Jewish usage, then 1 Pet 5:13 would require a post-70 CE date for the letter. However, 1 Peter’s attitude to Rome is not what we should expect if the Roman destruction of Jerusalem were the reason for calling it Babylon (cf. 1 Pet 2:13–14). The symbolic significance seems limited to its being the place of exile. Moreover, there is some evidence that Jews may have equated Rome with Babylon already before 70 CE (*Pss. Sol.* 2:25; *Sib. Or.* 3:356–62; 1QpHab).

4. Revelation. In the book of Revelation, Babylon (Rev 14:8; 16:19; 17:5; 18:2, 10, 21) is one of the

forces of evil allied against God, along with the dragon and the two beasts. While the latter form a “satanic trinity” that parodies God, Christ, and the Spirit, Babylon is the evil counterpart of the people of God. Like the people of God (Rev 12:1–6; 19:7–8; 21:9–27), Babylon is represented both as a city (Rev 16:19; 17:18; 18:2, 4, 8–24) and as a woman (Rev 17:1–6, 15–17; 18:2, 6–7; 19:2). This combination of images is natural because cities were often represented as female figures (often their tutelary deities). Like the first beast (Rev 11:7; 13:1–8), Babylon is first introduced briefly (Rev 14:6; 16:19) before being described at length (Rev 17:1–17). Since Babylon is intimately connected with the first beast, this extended description also includes more information about that figure (vv. 7–14).

Babylon is regularly called “Babylon the great” (Rev 14:8; 16:19; 17:5; 18:2, probably following Dan 4:27) or “the great city” (Rev 16:19; 18:10, 18–19, 21) or “the great city that rules over the kings of the earth” (Rev 17:18). If Babylon represents a political reality at the time of the writing, it seems clear she must be Rome. If, as most agree, the first beast represents the imperial and military power of the Roman Empire, then the reason that, when personified as a woman, Babylon sits on the beast (vv. 3, 7) must be that the city of Rome depended economically on the empire, which supplied the extravagant wealth so characteristic of Rome at this time.

When Babylon is portrayed as a wealthy courtesan (Rev 17:1–18; 18:3; 19:2), it may be that this is a polemical transformation of the figure of the goddess Roma, who personified the city. The meaning of the harlot image becomes clear in Rev 18:3 and the following account of the way her clients mourn her fall. Her fornication with the kings of the earth symbolizes Rome’s trading relationships into which the ruling elites of the empire are enticed and from which the city’s prosperity derives. The list of cargoes in vv. 12–13 is an accurate list of many of the imports, both staples and luxuries, which flowed into Rome from all parts of her empire and beyond. Some commentators have seen a note of tragedy in the lament over Babylon, but this is to miss the fact that those who mourn her are precisely those who benefited economically from Rome’s exploitation of the empire: the client kings and local ruling elites, the merchants and the mariners (vv. 9–19). By contrast, the inhabitants of heaven rejoice and call on Babylon’s victims to celebrate with them (v. 20; Rev 19:1–5). Babylon’s rule is seen as deceptive. People are dazzled by her splendor and intoxicated by the wine of her fornication (Rev 14:8; 17:2; 18:3), i.e., taken in by the propaganda of the *Pax Romana* that portrayed Rome’s rule as universally beneficial, masking the reality of exploitation. Part and parcel of this propaganda, represented by the “abominations” in Baby-

lon’s golden cup (Rev 17:4–5), is the idolatrous religion – the imperial cult – with which she has corrupted the whole earth (Rev 19:2).

Babylon’s downfall is portrayed in various ways: the city destroyed by earthquake (Rev 16:19), the city razed to the ground and left an uninhabitable wasteland (Rev 18:2, 8; 19:3), the prostitute stripped and consumed by lovers who hate her (Rev 17:16). These images convey a variety of theological meanings: the earthquake issues from a theophany of God the judge, the eternally smoking wasteland recalls the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah, the way the kings turn on Babylon exemplifies the self-destructiveness of evil. Babylon’s fate is also depicted as a measure-for-measure punishment (Rev 14:8 with 16:19; also 18:6–7), or as the just avenging of her victims (v. 20; Rev 19:2). It also demonstrates the falsehood of Rome’s boast of being “the eternal city,” which Rev 18:7 depicts as self-deifying pride.

One component of Babylon’s crimes is that she is “drunk with the blood of the saints” (Rev 17:6; cf. 18:24; 19:2); the persecution of Christians in Rome by Nero is probably in mind. But Revelation holds Babylon guilty of the blood not only of Christian martyrs, but of “all who have been slain on earth” (Rev 18:24). This verse expresses a sense of solidarity between the martyrs and all the other innocent victims of Rome’s military and political brutality. This broader perspective chimes with the way Babylon is condemned at great length for the excessive affluence gained through the economic exploitation of her empire. Revelation’s critique of Rome is not a narrowly sectarian one (as unsympathetic critics of the book so often assume), but one of the most penetrating indictments of the whole Roman system of power to have survived in ancient literature.

Like the whole book of Revelation, the oracle against Babylon (Rev 18:1–19:6) is full of Old Testament echoes and allusions. Remarkably, it echoes each of the five oracles against Babylon found in the prophets (Isa 13:1–14:23; 21:1–10; 47; Jer 25:12–38; 50–51), as well as the two major oracles against Tyre (Isa 23; Ezek 26–28) and one against Edom (Isa 34). The relationship to the HB/OT prophecies is thus studied and systematic. While HB/OT Babylon was condemned by the prophets for political and military oppression, Tyre was condemned for her international commercial activities, for which Isa 23:15–18 uses the metaphor of prostitution that Revelation elaborates. Revelation sees in Rome the evil characteristics of both cities and provides an oracle that gathers up all the prophetic indictments against them in one final exposure of that city in which the evil of all the self-deifying empires of history culminates. Behind the whole picture lies the ominous account of the tower of Babel (Gen 11:1–9): what was begun then (Gen 11:6) is resumed and surpassed by Rome.

Some have argued that Babylon in Revelation represents, not Rome, but Jerusalem. However, Jerusalem was not built on seven hills (Rev 17:9), as Rome famously was (the goddess Roma was sometimes portrayed sitting on seven hills). Jerusalem did not “rule over the kings of the earth” (v. 18), nor was Jerusalem famous for its wealth and luxury, importing all the goods listed in vv. 12–13. In the HB/OT, Jerusalem is sometimes portrayed as a harlot (Jer 2–3; Ezek 16; Hos 2), but there are no allusions to these passages in Revelation. The image as applied to Jerusalem in the HB/OT presupposes that Judah or Jerusalem was YHWH’s wife, who “played the harlot” by worshipping other gods. This kind of unfaithfulness to Israel’s God could not be a plausible accusation against Jerusalem in the 1st century CE, nor does Revelation ever suggest that Babylon was God’s wife. When it portrays Babylon as a harlot, the image symbolizes trade, not religious unfaithfulness.

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V. Christianity

To write the story of the impact of Babylon, “that great city” (Rev 18:10), upon the Christian imagination would be to give a history of views of opposition to God, not only geographically and politically, but also personally. Babylon’s historical identification as the kingdom that destroyed the First Temple gave it a malignant potency that pervades the HB/OT and, in the NT, is strong in Revelation. This guaranteed the symbol Babylon polyvalent meanings and near ubiquity through two millennia of Christian use of the Bible. Origen provides an insight into how early Christians utilized the historical city to construct their theological image of Babylon. In his introduction to hermeneutics (*Princ.* 4.3.8–11) the Alexandrian analyzes how the opposition of the two cities, Jerusalem and Babylon, and the history and warfare of their inhabitants should be read as an allegory of the cosmic conflict between good and evil. According to Origen, if Israel really means a “race of souls, and Jerusalem is a city in heaven,” it stands to reason that “the Egyptians and Babylonians are also spiritual” (i.e., the enemies of

the Israelites signify those souls who have sinfully fallen into the bondage of this world). Augustine of Hippo expresses a comparable dualism in his *De civitate Dei*. In his *Retractions* the bishop admitted that although the title of the book was drawn only from the “better one” (i.e., the city of God, or Jerusalem), the entire 22 books were about both cities (i.e., Jerusalem and Babylon). Babylon comes in for explicit treatment in the last books, beginning with the discussion of Nimrod’s foundation of Babylon (i.e., the tower of Babel in Gen 11:1–9) as the city whose purpose was to challenge God (*Civ.* 16.4). In book 18, Augustine turns to Babylon (= Rome) as a symbol of the earthly city, which “runs its course along with the city of God, which is a stranger to this world” (*Civ.* 18.2). Even if some of the things proclaimed in the earthly Babylon may be true, its mingling of truth and error and general impiety mean that “such a city has rightly received the title of the mystic Babylon” (i.e., “confusion”: *Civ.* 18.41). In preaching on the Psalms, Augustine asked his audience to decide which city they found within them:

Let each person ask himself what he loves and he will find out whose citizen he is. If he finds himself a citizen of Babylon, let him root out selfishness and plant charity; if he find himself a citizen of Jerusalem, let him bear his captivity and hope for liberation. (*Enarrat.* Ps. 64.2)

The many dimensions of Babylon as a symbol of evil are evident in the etymologies and analyses of the name found in patristic and medieval biblical handbooks. Jerome’s *De situ et nominibus locorum hebraeorum* cites the Sibyl to provide an historical interpretation for naming the city *Babylon* (“confusion”) after *Babel*, the attempted tower which led to the confusion of tongues. Scholastic textbooks on biblical words (the *Distinctiones*) expanded on the meaning of Babylon, culling material from patristic and medieval exegetes. Thus, in Alan of Lille’s *Distinctiones dictionum theologicarum* we read:

Babylon is properly speaking this world, in which there is much confusion, as the Psalm says, ‘By the waters of Babylon’ (Ps 136:1). It is also the sinner, as in the Psalm, ‘I will be mindful of Rahab and Babylon’ (Ps 86:4 Vg); and it is idolatry and heresy, as in Revelation, ‘Fallen is that great city Babylon’ (Rev 14:8); it is also earthly delights, as in Revelation, ‘From the golden cup of Babylon’ (Rev 17:4–5).

A longer list of meanings is found in the *Allegoriae in universam sacram scripturam* ascribed to Rabanus Maurus, but really a late 12th-century product. Here (PL 112:872) Babylon is glossed as the city of the reprobate, the evil mind, the church of the Gentiles, sin, evil people headed for damnation, our flesh, this world, and hell.

Generalizing Babylon as the world of sin and internalizing it as heresy or an evil mind did not prevent historical applications of the symbol. Revelation uses Babylon both as a general symbol of op-

position to God and as a cipher for the persecuting power of Rome. Because early Christians generally sought accommodation with the empire, however, identifying Rome with Babylon grew rare, though not absent (e.g., Lactantius, Victorinus of Poetovio). The rise of Islam as the major opponent of the imperial state-church in the 7th century CE (as well as its geographical location) facilitated linking the evil of Babylon with the new religion, an identification found, e.g., in the 12th-century *Ludus de Antichristo* and in 15th-century polemical literature against the Turks. The 12th-century revival of apocalypticism in Latin Christendom allowed for diverse historical applications. Joachim of Fiore, e.g., saw Babylon as both evil churchmen and as the persecuting Roman (i.e., German) Empire in its struggles against the papacy. The Spiritual Franciscans and their descendants identified Babylon with the “carnal church” that condemned their view of apostolic poverty, while Petrarca (and many others) spoke of the Avignon papacy as the new Babylon:

Covetous Babylon has its sack full
Of the wrath of God and of impious and
wicked vices.
(Sonnet 137)

In the Reformation era, M. Luther came to the conviction that the papal church of Rome fulfilled all the malignant potential of the biblical image of Babylon and proclaimed this message to the European public in his treatise *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church* (1520). Henceforward Babylon became common coin in Reformation attacks on the Roman church, especially among the commentators on Revelation. Some authors, such as the Quaker Isaac Pennington in his *Babylon the Great described* (1659), took a wider view, identifying Babylon as “the city that overspreads the world” found in “all the deceits of Religion.” Pennington has no sympathy for the fornication of the Popish church, but he also finds Babylonian fornication among the Protestants. To the question, “But hath all our Religion for these many ages been *Babylonishe*, and whoredom from the life?” he answers that wherever there have been or are stirrings of “simplicity and sincerity of heart,” there have existed elements of true belief even in “the darkest part of *Egypt* or *Babylon*.” The historical identification of Babylon with the papacy, however, remained strong for centuries, both in European and American Protestantism. The *Scofield Reference Bible* of 1909, perhaps the most influential text in the growth of American Fundamentalism, distinguished between an ecclesiastical Babylon headed by the papacy and a political Babylon, the final manifestation of godless government predicted to destroy the papacy and reign despotically until Christ’s return.

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VI. New Religious Movements

The biblically-derived image of Babylon is found by some scholars to be the dominant trope in the discourse of the Rastafari movement. The images of Babylon in the Bible, especially in Revelation, are “the interpretive context for the Rastafarians’ belief in the messianic liberation of black people from captivity and oppression in contemporary, global Babylon” (Murrell et al.: 393). Consistent with its portrayal in the Christian Scriptures as the embodiment of opposition to the Hebrews (“the people of God”) and, in Revelation in particular, as the epitome of worldly wickedness, “Babylon” designates what Rastas experience as the alienating and oppressive social, political, economic, and cultural structures of Jamaica and the Western world – a world rooted in colonialism. Thus a kernel Rastafarian belief is that paradise and/or the promised land is Ethiopia and/or Africa, while Babylon is hell (Clarke: 65). Accordingly, Rastas engage in “beating down Babylon,” in the hope of “steppin’ outa [out of] Babylon” (quoted in Murrell et al.: 23; see also 443).

As Steed V. Davidson points out, this understanding of Babylon, whose biblical inversion, “Zion,” is taken by Rastas as a symbol for Africa, draws upon the teachings of the Jamaican black nationalist Marcus Garvey (1887–1940) and is premised on an array of scriptural passages: the oracle against Babylon in Jer 50–51, which anticipates the punishment of Babylon and the deliverance of its victim, Zion (here, read: Rastas); Isa 13–23, 36–39, and 40–48, which reveal that the destruction of Babylon will precede Zion’s (i.e., Jacob/Israel’s) rehabilitation (cf. Mic 4: 10; Zech 2: 7); Ps 137, where the songs of Zion become hard to sing in Babylon; and the somber refrain in Rev 14: 8 and 18: 2, “Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great.”

In connoting the white establishment and symbolizing all that is corrupt and evil, “Babylon” came also, by extension, to denote the United States and the police, while “Babylonian” can denote a white person (Dalzell/Victor: 61).

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Eric Ziolkowski

VII. Literature

Babylon in literature draws on the *topoi* of the place of the Hebrew exile and the evil city of Rev 17:3–5. Whereas, in Dante's *Paradiso* 23, Babylon stands for this world as the gateway to the next, in Petrarch's "Babylonian Sonnets" (ca. 1347) *Babylonia* is expressive of the chaos and evil of the secular world, epitomized for him in Avignon, as opposed to the spiritual world of Jerusalem.

In folklore, Babylon veers between whimsy, as in the nursery rhyme which begins "How many miles to Babylon?," with its possible origins in songs associated with the Crusades, and horror, as in the cannibalistic tale of the king of Babylon's sons in a Danish ballad.

In William Cowper's *The Task* (IV, 90–91), London is portrayed as the modern Babylon, and in William Blake's poetry and illustrations, Babylon is once again the antipole to Jerusalem. It is the state Rahab, site of the Moral Law and the place of Jesus' crucifixion.

In Byron's *Hebrew Melodies* (1815), the poems "By the Rivers of Babylon" and "By the Waters of Babylon" strike a note of resistance, with the Jewish harpists refusing to play for their captors. But in Edgar Allan Poe's "The City in the Sea" (1835/46), Babylon is the doomed city, this time without a Jerusalem. It is the destination awaiting all humanity.

Part of Heine's *Hebrew Melodies*, the epic poem "Jehuda ben Halevy" (1851) opens with the poet using the words of Ps 137 to describe the situation of Jewish poets through the ages, including Heine himself, who spent the final 26 years of his life in Paris. Later, the same poem uses the image of the hanging gardens of Babylon to celebrate the *agadah* as a means by which the imagination is liberated.

In Dostoevsky's *Notes from the Underground* (1864), the infernal Babylon is present in the Colossus of Rhodes, in Černyševskij's and London's Crystal Palace, and in other grandiose structures.

In chapters 6–7 of Edith Nesbit's *The Story of the Amulet* (1906), four children are transported by magic to ancient Babylon, where, in a scene recalling *Alice in Wonderland*, three of them fall foul of the king and are thrown into the deepest dungeon (below the Euphrates), from which they are rescued only after summoning up the bird-god, Nisroch.

Jorge Luis Borges' short story "The Lottery in Babylon" (1944) offers the fantasy of life as a lottery organized by a secretive organization called The Company. In this hellish vision, it makes no difference whether the Company exists or not.

In Louis MacNeice's poem "The Streets of Laredo" (1948), London becomes the fire-ravaged city of Babylon as it bears the brunt of the British government's initial policy of appeasement over Czechoslovakia and Spain. Fernando Arrabal's *Babel Babylon* (1959), his first novel, describes the terrors of his childhood in fascist Spain.

Jorge de Sena's short story "By the Rivers of Babylon" (1964) has an elderly and infirm poet looking back on a sensuous and fulfilled life and finally ending a long procrastination over a commission to put the Psalms of David into verse by commencing with the opening lines of Ps 137.

In Jennifer Johnston's novel *How Many Miles to Babylon?* (1974), the traditional verse becomes the incantation used by Alexander Moore, a young officer in the Royal Irish Guards, as he prepares to leave home for the trenches of the First World War, and then again as he awaits the firing squad after he has, in an act of mercy, shot dead his friend and fellow Irishman, Jerry, who himself was facing the firing squad for desertion. The title and the incantation sum up the exilic situation of both the Anglo-Irish in Ireland and the soldiers of the British Expeditionary Force sent to France.

Derek Walcott's play *O Babylon!* (1976) is about the efforts of the New Zion Construction Company to evict a Rastafarian community from their shantytown on the beach outside Kingston, Jamaica. The Rastas constantly refer to the capitalists and the police force as Babylon. The developers' plans include a "Babylon Lounge" on the site.

Denise Levertov's poem "Candles in Babylon" (1982) harks back to the traditional rhyme as the hope for a new beginning, leaving behind the barbarities of the modern world, whilst David Malouf's novel *Remembering Babylon* (1993) makes Babylon, as the place of exile imposed by God on the Israelites, a warning about the consequences of the activities of 19th-century settlers in Australia.

Moya Cannon's poem "Carrying the Songs" (2003) thinks of Babylon and the Mississippi as "hard places" to which the dispossessed nevertheless carried songs.

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VIII. Visual Arts

Three primary modes of representing the city of Babylon correspond to the four primary contexts in which the city appears. The vision of its destruction in Isa 13 and Jer 51, anticipated *before* the Babylonian exile, is one. John Martin's 1831 mezzotint (similar to his somewhat earlier oil painting, and based on Jer 51:58) sandwiches the majestic geometries of the far-flung city, a ziggurat as its central architectural element, between the swirls of a dramatic thunderhead-and-lightning sky and agitated clumps of increasingly desperate inhabitants. Gustave Doré (1865; based on Isa 13:20–21) places his wildly gesturing prophet in the midst of an endless compendium of diverse architectural elements, as if

he is within the already-destroyed city, empty but for “wild animals” (Isa 13:21). Marc Chagall’s ca. 1933 etching (Isa 13:14–21) connects a soaring, sword-bearing angel to the prophet (or is it to the conquering king, Cyrus the Great, who arrives over the curve of the earth with the hint of a large army behind him in the mist?) by way of an enormous flag hovering over the simple landscape, whereon a handful of buildings sit, abandoned and tumbling, while across the space wild beasts prowl and human beings flee or lie sprawled in death.

The vision of the exile to and in Babylon may be occasionally depicted with hordes of Judean captives pouring down the main thoroughfare of the city, but almost always in contemporary images, such as that by Ted Larson, where the imagined metropolis is centered on the fabled Gate of Ishtar and a great ziggurat towers beyond it. More usual are visions based on the opening words of Ps 137: “by the waters/rivers of Babylon, there we sat down and there we wept.” Thus the 1806 watercolor by William Blake, with its tall, dignified personages, or the 1852 oil painting by the romantic realist Philip Hermogenes Calderon, who depicts a tender and saddened family group clustered by the water, neither of which bears any visual evidence of the city itself.

Babylon is similarly often missing from images that are based on the passages in Revelation referring to the city. Johann Christoph Weigel’s 1695 woodcut (based on Rev 18:21) places primary, foreground visual emphasis on the angel hovering in mid-air and on refugees fleeing the city, while the city itself, in flames, recedes into the background; we are reminded of Lot’s family fleeing Sodom. Although “the Whore of Babylon” (Rev 17:3–6) is typically understood as a metaphor for Rome (but ultimately for any urban center marked by evil human behavior), Albrecht Dürer’s complex and figuratively crowded 1496–98 woodcut and Weigel’s simpler 1695 woodcut, in which a woman sits upon the seven-headed beast, show virtually no architectural structures. Blake’s fantastical 1809 pen-and-watercolor-over-pencil image, dramatic in the extreme (ghost-like little figures stream out of the large cup held aloft by the bare-chested woman, while the gigantic seven-headed beast she rides kneels and licks at the creatures crowding the earth below) offers absolutely no architectural references. (See also EBR vol. 2, plate 7.)

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IX. Music

In western music, the biblical Babylon has enjoyed a rich reception in classical and popular traditions alike, unsurprisingly and almost invariably bearing negative associations.

1. Classical. In western classical music, no biblical text concerning Babylon has been more frequently set or adapted than Ps 137 (Vg. 136): “By the Rivers of Babylon.” Since the 16th century, this psalm has inspired innumerable compositions for different purposes in a wide variety of musical genres. While William Byrd’s (1540–1623) Latin motets on it veiledly analogized the persecution of the Catholic minority in England to the Jews’ Babylonian bondage, Dutch composer Johann Adam Reincken (1643–1722) wrote a chorale fantasia on the same psalm, *An Wasser flüssen Babylon*, as a sort of musical “self-portrait of the artist” (Grapenthin), a piece with which Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750) later proved sufficiently familiar in 1720 to impress Reincken by improvising upon it for almost an hour in the manner of the Hamburg organists. Bach’s own organ chorale prelude on this psalm went through several different versions, while Charles Hague (1769–1821) submitted an anthem with orchestral accompaniment on it to obtain his Bachelor of Music degree at Cambridge. Other notable adaptations, listed according to their composers’ nationality, include:

- a) *German*: a melody by Wolfgang Dachstein (ca. 1487–1553), and a setting for solo voice by Franz Tunder (1614–1667).
- b) *Swiss*: a song by Johannes Wannenmacher (ca. 1485–1551).
- c) *French*: a “paraphrase” of the psalm for solo piano by Charles-Valentin Alkan (1813–1888), whose first edition (1859) was embellished with a French translation (apparently Alkan’s own) of the Hebrew text (Luguenot: 7).
- d) *English*: anthems by Richard Farrant (ca. 1525–1580); Richard Browne (ca. 1630–1664?); Pelham Humfrey (1647/8–1674); Robert Barber (fl. 1723–53); William Boyce (1711–1779).
- e) *Hungarian*: setting for five female voices, violin, harp, and organ by Franz Liszt (1911–1886).
- f) *Estonian*: a choral setting, *Paabeli jõgede kaldail* (1944) by Cyrillus Kreet (1889–1962), included as one of his *Taaveti laulud* (Songs of David) based upon Eastern Orthodox church melodies and styles.
- g) *American (Alsatian-born)*: women’s choral piece (1902) by Charles Martin Loeffler (1861–1935).
- h) *Israeli (German-born)*: symphony for orchestra (1971) by Tzvi Avni (b. 1927).

Two tales from the book of Daniel set in Babylon, each featuring a wicked Babylonian ruler, inspired numerous compositions of widely varying sorts. The story of the three Hebrew youths’ ordeal in Nebuchadnezzar’s flaming furnace (Dan 3) inspired works as different as Karlheinz Stockhausen’s (1928–2007) Mass for electronic sounds, *Gesang der Jünglinge* (premiere 1956; Song of the Youths), and Benjamin Britten’s (1913–1976) opera or “church parable” *The Burning Fiery Furnace* (1966; see “Fiery

Furnace"). The tale of Belshazzar and the script on the wall (Dan 5) has been frequently set to music from medieval through modern times (see "Belshazzar").

In the past two centuries, the Bible's account of the idea of Babylon's destruction gave rise to more than one important musical work: Louis Spohr's (1784–1859) oratorio of 1842, *Der Fall Babylons* (Babylon's Fall), and Alexander Goehr's (b. 1932) last cantata *Babylon the Great is Fallen* (1979) for chorus and orchestra, whose title quotes Rev 14:8 and 18:2.

2. Popular. In American popular music, the biblical Babylon bears deeply and almost exclusively negative associations, from the spirituals of African-American slaves who identified with the Israelites lamenting bondage and exile by the rivers of Babylon, to Johnny Cash's song "Belshazzar [sic]" (1957), which mocks the doomed king of Dan 5 who "called his Babylon 'Paradise,'" ignorant that for him:

[I]t was getting late.

His kingdom was divided, couldn't stand.

He was weighed in the balance and found wanting,

His houses were built upon the sand.

The Rastafarian symbolization of the African diasporic sufferings in America (particularly in Jamaica) as "Babylon" (see above, "New Religious Movements"), is paradigmatically present in "Rivers of Babylon," a reggae song composed by Brent Dowe and Trevor McNaughton of the Jamaican rocksteady band The Melodians, recorded by them in 1970, and featured in the 1972 film starring Jimmy Cliff, *The Harder They Come* (dir. Perry Henzell), and Cliff's hit LP bearing the same title that same year. Through direct quotation and paraphrase, the song adapts Ps 137:1–4 and, at the end, Ps 19:14, to the Rastafarian idiom and ideology, implicitly equating the rivers with the Atlantic Ocean, Zion with Africa (or Ethiopia), "captivity" and "a strange land" with spiritual bondage in Jamaica (or America more broadly), and substituting the phrase "King Alfa's [= Haile Selassie's] song" for "the Lord's song" (from Ps 137:4).

While "Rivers of Babylon," like the opening of Ps 137 that it quotes, confines itself to passive lamentation (omitting any reference to the actively vengeful closing portion of Ps 137; i.e., vv. 8–9), other Rastafarian songs are more evocative of the vitriol of Jeremiah, Isaiah, and Revelation in actively resisting or even attacking Babylon: e.g., "Rastafari burn down Babylon, / Rastafari smite down Babylon, / Rastafari crash down Babylon," exclaims a song from 1972, while another accuses: "Babylon is a wicked one / O, Jah Rastafari O – Selah" (both quoted by Davidson).

The most celebrated of all reggae artists, Bob Marley (1945–1981), popularized the rebellious ex-

hortation, couched in an expressly musical metaphor, to "chant down Babylon," i.e., to oppose the political, economic, and ideological structures of white, Euro-American, colonial oppression. Accordingly, the rhetoric of active anti-Babylon resistance pervades Marley's lyrics, not only most obviously in the song entitled "Chant Down Babylon" (e.g., "A Reggae Music, mek we chant down Babylon; / With music, mek we chant down Babylon" – a refrain repeated on and on), but also in "Exodus" (e.g., "We're leaving Babylon, / we're going to our Father land"), in "Babylon System" (e.g., "Babylon system is the vampire, yea! ... / Suckin' the children day by day, yeah!"), in "Rastaman Chant" (e.g., "Babylon you [sic] throne gone down [cf. Rev 18:1–3] / ... I say fly away home to Zion"), and in "Africa Unite" (e.g., "Africa unite: / 'Cause we're moving right out of Babylon, / And we're going to our Father's land").

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X. Film

Babylon is not a locus of neutrality in film. A site of ambition, moral perversity, sexual promiscuity, and destruction, it conflates a great city and empire – not always historical – with the tower of Babel (Gen 11) and the whore of Babylon (Rev 17–18). Films referring to Babylon exhibit anxieties about communication, ambitions to omnipotence, tech-

nological threat, imperial oppression, and ultimately, escape from these dangers.

This thematic constellation is exploited in *Two Weeks in Another Town* (dir. Vincente Minnelli, 1962), which draws parallels between Hollywood and Babylon; and, *The Devil's Advocate* (dir. Taylor Hackford, 1997), where New York is the seductive home of Satan's law firm. In works of comparable superficiality, Babylon appears as a quasi-historical city in which tyrants rule slaves, whom freedom-loving heroes rescue: *Alexander* (dir. Oliver Stone, 2004); *Hercules and the Tyrants of Babylon* (dir. Domenico Paolella, 1964); *L'eroe di Babilonia* (dir. Siro Marcellini, 1963); *Alexander the Great* (dir. Robert Rossen, 1956); *Slaves of Babylon* (dir. William Castle, 1953); *The Fall of Babylon* (dir. Theo Frenkel, 1911); *Le festin de Balthazar* (dir. Louis Feuillade, 1910). Many of these subtly celebrate the West's putative ascendancy over the East, ideologically inflating the historical Greek conquest of Persian Babylon.

More visually compelling, and influential in the development of cinema, is Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* (1927) (see Bachmann), which treats the fear of technology and social revolt gone awry. *Metropolis* is a fictional towering city – inspired by New York – sustained underground by enslaved workers and machines. The film's heroine, Maria, exhorts workers with the story of Babel, calling for peaceful mediation of the miscommunication with the bosses. But an evil inventor creates a robot in Maria's likeness (eroticized as the whore of Babylon), which incites the workers to revolt, sabotages the machines, and destroys the city. The concern with technological ambition is much amplified in the anime version, *Metropolis* (dir. Rintaro, 2001). Other anime films with Babylonian allusions include: *Castle in the Sky* (dir. Hayao Miyazaki, 1986) and *Tokyo Babylon* (dir. Kōichi Chigira, 1992).

D. W. Griffith's *Intolerance* (1916) – whose Babylon sequences were later reedited as *The Fall of Babylon* (dir. Griffith, 1919) – famously reverses the Babylon complex. Important for its role in working out early film syntax, *Intolerance* sets one of its four tales condemning moral Puritanism in Babylon. The city, its prince, Belshazzar, and the sensuous cult of Ishtar are not vilified, but rather are destroyed by the ambitious and evil priests of Bel. M. Hansen suggests Babylon is thus valorized precisely because the film “draws a line from the disappearance of the last universal written language ... to the vision of film as a new universal language, as it was being advanced by Griffith in defense of his own practice” (184). Likewise against the usual grain, *Babel* (dir. Alejandro González Iñárritu, 2006) subtly interrogates the usual love and loathing of the Other associated with Babylon, by exploring connections between tourism and fear of terrorism. World unity deteriorates because of poor judgment and an inability to listen.

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See also → Apocalypses and Apocalypticism;

→ Babel, Tower of; → Babylonia; → Babylonian Judaism; → Belshazzar; → Daniel (Book and Person); → Darius the Mede; → Exile; → Fiery Furnace; → Mesopotamia; → Nebuchadnezzar; → Rastafari Movement

Babylonia

- I. Babylonia in the Bible
- II. Geography and Climate
- III. History
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- VI. Babylonia and the Bible
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I. Babylonia in the Bible

Occurrences in the Bible usually refer either to Babylon (MT *Bābel*; LXX Βαβυλών) the city, which also serves as a metonym for the territory which has Babylon as its principal city, or to the Chaldeans (MT *Kašdīm*; LXX Χαλδαίoi), its inhabitants. Occasionally, the word Shinar (*šīn'ār*) is used to refer to the territory as well (Isa 11:11; Dan 1:2; Zech 5:11).

Most references to Babylon in the HB/OT are found in the books of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, texts which reflect events of the 6th century BCE, especially the Babylonian conquest of Judah and the subsequent deportations of a number of its inhabitants. Babylon also figures in 2 Kgs 18, 24–25; 2 Chr 36; Ezra-Nehemiah; and Daniel, with less frequent mention in Genesis, Psalms, Zechariah, Esther, and Tobit. Most NT occurrences surface in Revelation, though Matthew, Acts, and 1 Peter make passing references.

1. Genesis. The first appearance of Babylonia in the HB/OT is in the book of Genesis. The most well-known is Gen 11:1–9, the famous story of the tower of Babel, which is set in Shinar, a term referring to the territory whose capital is the city of Babylon. This particular story functions as an etiology to explain the origins of Babylon (*Bābel*). In Gen 10:10, Babel is part of the territory of the mythical hunter Nimrod. Other references are found in Gen 14:1, 9.

2. Kings and Chronicles. In the books of Kings, references to Babylonia are related to the 6th-century BCE invasion of Judah by Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kgs 24–25). The Babylonian conquest is foretold in 2 Kgs 20 by the prophet Isaiah. After Jerusalem's