

605–562 B.C.

# hanging gardens of babylon

## Landscaping fit for a queen

THE HANGING GARDENS of Babylon is the only one of the Seven Wonders whose location has yet to be proved. The gardens (illustrated at right) were purportedly built by Nebuchadnezzar II to appease his wife, Amytis's, homesickness for her native Persian greenery. Some sources suggest they were lush and exotic, watered by hidden machines.

It's a charming story, but contradictory descriptions of the gardens have made people question whether or not they actually existed. Nebuchadnezzar II appears never to have written about them; they are discussed by a priest named Berosus and two Greeks, Strabo and Diodorus Siculus, but they were writing hundreds of years later. Could they have mistaken the gardens of Babylon for those of Sennacherib of Nineveh, who also named his city, like Babylon, "Gate of the Gods"? We may never know, but the mystery adds to the gardens' allure.

### » FACTS AND STATS Intrigue Surrounds the Gardens

- WRITINGS suggest that the gardens' plants weren't actually hanging but probably spilling over the walls and terraces.
- QUINTUS CURTIUS RUFUS, a Roman historian, describes fortifications in Babylon with trees growing on them but says the walls are only 80 feet (24 m) tall.



