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And Other Memoirs

Claudius James Rich

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### Narrative of a Journey to the Site of Babylon in 1811

Well versed in oriental languages and antiquities, Claudius James Rich (1786/7–1821), the East India Company's resident at Baghdad, visited and described many historic locations in present-day Iraq and Iran. Following his early death from cholera in Shiraz, Rich's widow prepared his writings for publication. His two-volume *Narrative of a Residence in Koordistan, and on the Site of Ancient Nineveh* (1836) is also reissued in this series. The present work, which appeared in 1839, contains Rich's 1811 journal of his first visit to the site of the ancient city of Babylon, followed by the archaeological memoir he published in 1815. 'Remarks on the Topography of Ancient Babylon', an 1815 paper by the geographer James Rennell (1742–1830), who queried Rich's conclusions, is included, and Rich's 1818 memoir of his second visit then responds to Rennell. A narrative of Rich's Persian travels in 1821, featuring 'hitherto unpublished cuneiform inscriptions copied at Persepolis', completes the work.

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# Narrative of a Journey to the Site of Babylon in 1811

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CLAUDIUS JAMES RICH



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## BABYLON AND PERSEPOLIS.

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BABYLON,  
LEARNED AND WISE, HATH PERISH'D UTTERLY,  
NOR LEAVES HER SPEECH ONE WORD TO AID THE SIGH  
THAT WOULD LAMENT HER.

WORDSWORTH.

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GENERAL VIEW OF BABYLON.



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NARRATIVE OF A JOURNEY  
TO THE  
SITE OF BABYLON  
IN 1811,  
NOW FIRST PUBLISHED:

MEMOIR ON THE RUINS;  
WITH ENGRAVINGS FROM THE ORIGINAL SKETCHES BY THE AUTHOR:

REMARKS ON THE TOPOGRAPHY OF  
ANCIENT BABYLON,

By MAJOR RENNELL;  
IN REFERENCE TO THE MEMOIR:

SECOND MEMOIR ON THE RUINS;  
IN REFERENCE TO MAJOR RENNELL'S REMARKS:

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WITH NARRATIVE OF A JOURNEY TO  
PERSEPOLIS:

NOW FIRST PRINTED, WITH HITHERTO UNPUBLISHED CUNEIFORM INSCRIPTIONS  
COPIED AT PERSEPOLIS:

BY THE LATE  
CLAUDIUS JAMES RICH, Esq.,  
FORMERLY THE RESIDENT OF THE HON. EAST INDIA COMPANY AT BAGDAD.

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*EDITED BY HIS WIDOW.*

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LONDON:  
DUNCAN AND MALCOLM, PATERNOSTER ROW.

MDCCCXXXIX.

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## P R E F A C E.

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THE following Memoirs on the Ruins of Babylon were first published, many years ago, under the direction of Sir James Mackintosh. The edition having become exhausted, and another seeming to be called for, the Editor has undertaken the present work, and has endeavoured to add to it whatever might be likely to render it as complete as circumstances would admit of. For this purpose an Introduction has been prefixed, giving a general view of the history of Babylon; and an Appendix subjoined, containing extracts from the authors referred to in the Memoirs.

It has likewise been suggested to the Editor, that the Journal, from which the Memoirs were composed, might prove a valuable addition to the work. This Journal, or perhaps, more correctly, these Notes of a Journal, are very short; but still a journal is somewhat more animated, from its very

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nature, than a topographical memoir can possibly be; and it may assist the imagination of the Reader in forming to himself some general idea of these ruined heaps, while examining the minuter details and measurements contained in the Memoir.

In order, likewise, to assist the Reader in following the Second Memoir, the Editor has obtained permission from the Council of the Society of Antiquaries to republish in this work Major Rennell's Remarks on the Topography of Babylon, suggested by Mr. Rich's observations and discoveries.

The plates by which the present volume is illustrated have been newly executed by that very ingenious artist, Mr. Williams, from Mr. Rich's original sketches.

The second part of this volume, relating to Persepolis, is new. The Journal, some portion of which has already appeared in the latter part of Mr. Rich's work on Koordistan, is only given to serve as an explanation to the arrow-headed inscriptions which were copied by Mr. Rich at Persepolis, and are now published for the first time.

It is hoped that these inscriptions may prove of

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use in the progress which appears, at length, to be making in deciphering this hitherto unknown character, both by some learned foreigners\*, and by Major Rawlinson, an English officer in Persia, who thinks that he has deciphered an inscription of great length, recording the conquest of Darius the Younger.

In a work of this nature the writer has necessarily been much indebted to others, and is happy to have this opportunity of acknowledging her obligations to Sir R. H. Inglis, Bart.; the Hon. Mounstuart Elphinstone; General Briggs; Colonel Chesney; and William Erskine, Esq.; who have most kindly afforded her such assistance and information as she requested of them.

*Notting-hill, January 12th, 1839.*

\* The labours of Raske, Grotefend, and St. Martin, have been some time before the public. Since that time the German traveller Schulz made copies of some inscriptions near Hamadan, which were submitted to M. Burnouf, a French *savant*, who is equally skilled in Greek, Sanscrit, and Zend; and he has written an essay on Schulz's inscription; and, by an examination with other inscriptions, he has framed a Zend alphabet of the cuneiform character.

Lassen, a countryman of Burnouf, and who is likewise a good Sanscrit and Zend scholar, has also read and translated these tablets; and his alphabet is said not to differ much from Burnouf's. Burnouf has printed a work, in two volumes, called "Commentaries on the Yeqna," on the same subject.

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## ERRATUM.

Page 157.—Instead of "Abulfeda," says Al Neel, "is, &c.," *read*, Abulfeda says, "Al Neel is, &c."

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## INTRODUCTION.

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SOME ACCOUNT OF BABYLON, BEFORE AND SINCE  
HER DESTRUCTION.

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IN re-publishing Mr. Rich's Account of the Ruins of Babylon, as they existed when he visited them in the year 1811, it has been thought desirable to prefix a sketch of some of the leading circumstances connected with the history of that celebrated city.

Many circumstances combine to make this rather a difficult task to the Editor, and one which must necessarily be very imperfectly executed.

The present account, which is drawn up from a very interesting Memoir on the subject of Babylon by M. de St. Croix, that appeared in the "Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions" in the year 1789, and is referred to by Mr. Rich, will enable the reader to follow the history of this city through many ages. The Editor

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has added, from other sources, some further particulars, which seemed requisite in order to complete the account; but has endeavoured to make the whole as concise as was possible, consistently with the object in view, which was to revive the recollections of some readers, to supply information to others, and to assist the traveller in the East, who can rarely carry many books of reference about with him.

The first mention we find in history of Babylon, or Babel, is in the Bible. In the tenth chapter of Genesis, at the tenth verse, speaking of Nimrod, it is added, “and the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh in the land of Shinar.”\*

It is surely worthy to be observed that little if any further notice is taken of this great city in the Sacred Volume, until the time of its connexion with the history of the Jewish people, and, even then, our attention is chiefly directed to the punishment and ruin that are about to fall upon it for its wickedness. During this interval it had become the splendid capital of a most powerful empire—the teacher of other nations in every kind of knowledge—the mistress of the world in arts and sciences, and civilization! But all these things, so great in the eyes of men, are passed by in silence, or slightly referred to in the Bible, that History of Nations, written

\* This is supposed to have been about 2300 years before Christ, or about 1300 years after the creation of the world.



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## INTRODUCTION.

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by God, who there points out to us what He accounts of importance in history, and what insignificant. He tells us that the advancement of nations in civilization and knowledge are nothing in His sight, unless there be a corresponding advancement in reverence, and obedience, and love to Himself, and in true loving-kindness among men, to each other. It would be well for mankind if they would but look upon things truly, as they bear upon the wonderful history of man which is eternal; and they would be much helped in so doing, if they observed how these things are spoken of by the Creator and Father of Men.\*

Of Babylon—that glory of kingdoms, that beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, that city so great among the nations of the earth—He speaks only with indignation—for having striven against Him; for having been proud against Him; for having been unmerciful; for having been given up to pleasure; for dwelling carelessly; for saying, "I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children."† Her wisdom and her knowledge, God says, perverted her; her enchantments and the multitude of her sorceries made her brutish, and

\* A very remarkable book has lately been published, entitled, "The French Revolution," by Thomas Carlyle, which contains a most powerful unveiling of this *true history*, and sweeps away all the unrealities and falsehoods with which men endeavour to delude themselves. This work is, surely, a great gift to men, in this day of confusion and perplexity. May it prove a word of warning, and not of prophecy, to England!—ED.

† Isaiah, chap. xlvii.

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she said in her heart, “ I am, and none else beside me.”\*

In order to obtain any details concerning this great first sample of man’s mighty works, by which, during so many ages since, he has been dazzled and intoxicated, notwithstanding the warning thus early given him by his faithful Creator, we must have recourse to other sources, which, however, are very abundant, for Babylon appears to have been an object of admiration to all the ancients. By some of the ancient authors the building of Babylon is attributed to Semiramis,† who probably embellished, or enlarged it, and hence got the name of being its founder.

The principal works which rendered it so famous were the walls of the city, the palaces, quays, and the bridge, the lake, banks, and canals; the hanging gardens, and the Temple of Belus. The city stood on a large and very fertile plain. The walls were 87 feet thick, 350 in height, and in compass 480 furlongs, or 60 English miles. They were all built of large bricks, cemented together with bitumen. A trench, deep, wide, and full of water, surrounded the city. “ It is proper,” says Herodotus, “ that I should say in what manner the earth removed from the trench was disposed of, and how

\* Jeremiah, chaps. l., li.

† Herodotus tells us that she raised an embankment worthy of admiration through the plain, to confine the river Euphrates, which heretofore often spread over that level country like a lake.

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the wall was constructed. The earth, as fast as it was removed from the trench, was converted into bricks, and baked in furnaces; when thus prepared, melted bitumen was used instead of mortar,\* and between every thirtieth course of bricks there was a layer of reeds. The sides of the trench were first lined with brick-work, and then the wall raised in the manner described." The gates, of which there were 25, were all made of solid brass.† At different intervals between these gates were towers, said to have been 10 feet higher than the walls.

The reader is probably aware that some of the ancient authors describe the walls of Babylon as being drawn round the city in the form of a square; and that 25 streets, each 15 miles long and 150 feet broad, went in straight lines to the 25 gates, which were directly over against them, on the opposite sides, so that the whole number of the streets were 50, whereof 25 went one way and 25 the other, directly crossing each other at right angles. And besides these there were also four half streets, which had houses only on one side, and the wall on the other; these went round the four sides of the city next the walls, and were each of them 200 feet broad. By these streets thus crossing each other, the whole city is described as cut out into 676 squares, each of which was four furlongs and a half on every side, that is, two miles and a quarter in

\* See Mr. Rich's observations on Gen. xi. 3, in the "Memoir on the Ruins of Babylon," p. 98.

† Isaiah xlv. 2.

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circumference Round these squares, on every side, towards the streets, stood the houses (which were not contiguous, but had void spaces between them), all built three or four storeys high, and beautified with all manner of ornaments towards the streets. The space within, in the middle of each square, was likewise all void ground, employed for gardens, &c., so that Babylon was greater in appearance than reality; near one half of the city being taken up in gardens and other cultivated lands, as we are told by Quintus Curtius.

The ancient authors differ as to the number of royal palaces in Babylon. Herodotus mentions only one,\* but other authors speak of two, which they describe as situated at the two ends of the bridge, having a communication with each other by means of a tunnel, built under the channel of the river. The old palace, which stood on the east side of the river, was three miles and three-quarters in compass, near which stood the Temple of Belus. The new palace, which stood on the west side of the river, opposite to the other, was seven miles and a half in compass. It was surrounded with three walls, one within the other, with considerable spaces between them. These walls, as also those of the other palace, were embellished with a variety of sculptures.

\* His words are, “ In the centre of each portion of the city is an enclosed space; the one occupied by *the royal palace*, a building of vast extent and great strength; in the other stands the Temple of Belus with its brazen gates, remaining in my time.”—Herod. (Taylor’s Translation), p. 86.

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In the last, or new palace, were the hanging gardens. They contained a square of 40 feet on every side, and were carried up aloft into the air, in the manner of several large terraces, one above another, till the height equalled the walls of the city. The ascent was from terrace to terrace, by stairs 10 feet wide. The whole pile was sustained by arches raised upon other arches, one above another, and strengthened by a wall, surrounding it on every side, of 22 feet in thickness. On the top of the arches were first laid large, flat stones, 16 feet long, and 4 broad; over these was a layer of reeds, mixed with a great quantity of bitumen, upon which were two rows of bricks, closely cemented together with plaster. The whole was covered with thick sheets of lead, upon which lay the mould of the garden. And all this floorage was contrived to keep the moisture of the mould from running away through the arches. The mould or earth laid hereon was so deep that the greatest trees might take root in it; and with such the terraces were covered, as well as with all other plants and flowers that were proper to adorn a pleasure-garden. In the upper terrace there was an engine, or kind of pump, by which water was drawn up out of the river, and from whence the whole garden was watered. In the space between the several arches upon which this whole superstructure rested, were large and magnificent apartments, that were very light, and had the advantage of a beautiful prospect. But by far the greatest and

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most interesting work at Babylon was the Temple of Belus,\* which is said by some authors to have stood near the old palace. Herodotus, who mentions only one, describes the Temple of Belus as standing in an enclosed space, in the centre portion of the city, opposite to the palace. "It is," says Herodotus, "a square structure, each side measures two stadia. Within the enclosure is erected a solid tower, measuring a stadium both in width and depth; upon this tower is raised another and another, making eight in all. The ascent is by a path which is formed on the outside of the towers. Midway in the ascent is a resting-place, furnished with easy chairs, in which those who ascend repose themselves. On the summit of the topmost tower stands a large temple, and in this temple is a great couch, handsomely fitted up, and near it stands a golden table. No statue whatever is erected in the temple. Within the precincts of the Temple of Belus," adds the same author, "there is a smaller edifice on the ground, within which there is an immense golden statue of Jupiter in a sitting posture; around the statue are large tables, which, with the steps and throne, are all of gold, and, as the Chaldeans affirm, contain 800 talents of gold. Without

\* The meaning of Belus is Heaven, God, or Lord, says M. de St. Croix. Upon which he observes, "The inhabitants of Mesopotamia had not always been idolaters; and though they became such, they for a long time acknowledged the supremacy of the God of Nachor, and of Abraham."