

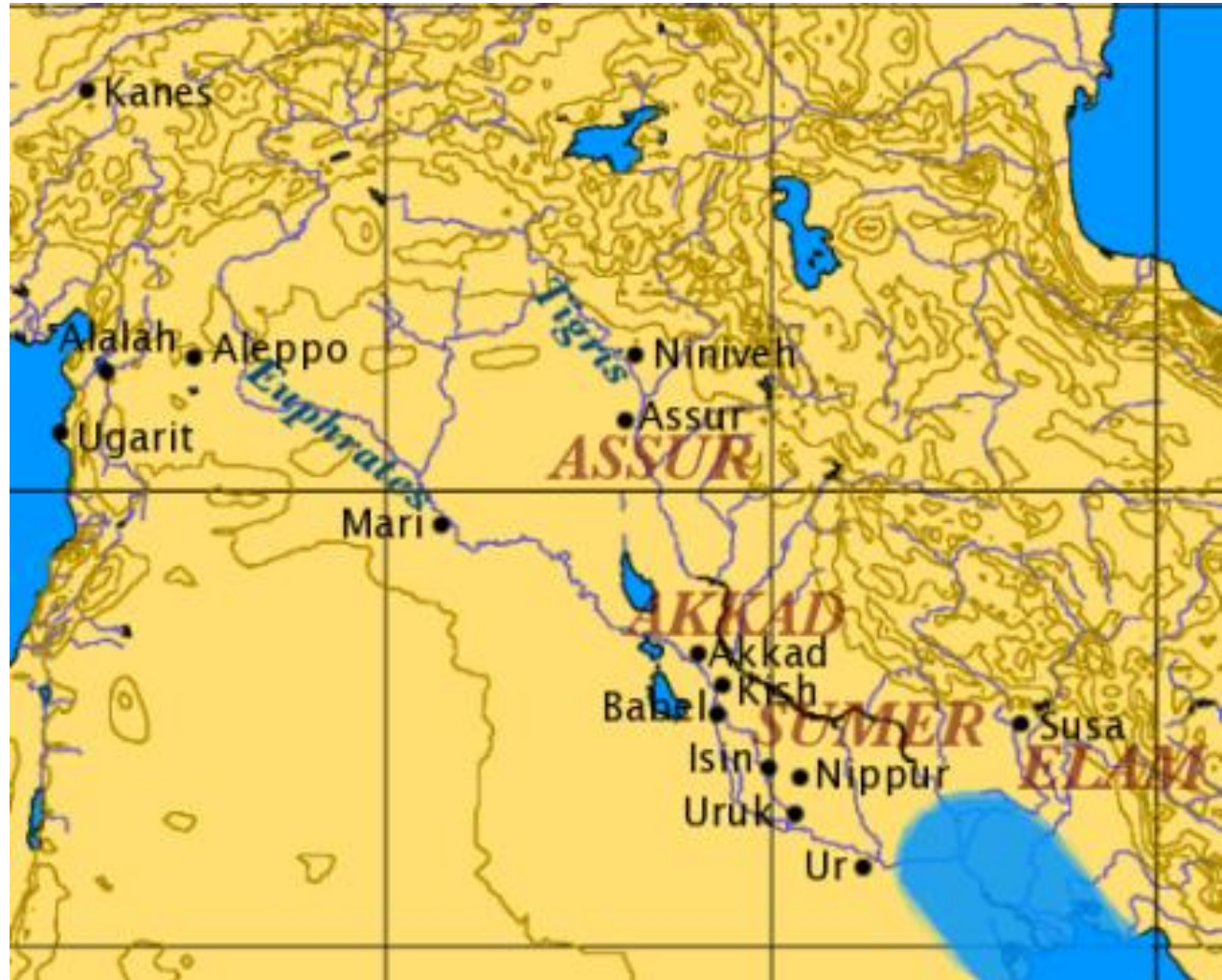
Mesopotamian Cities

Ur & Babylon

General Features Ur City

- Ur was a Sumerian city-state.
- The Mesopotamian city of Ur, known as Tell al-Muqayyar, was an important Sumerian city state.
- The city's patron deity was Nanna, the Sumerian moon god, and the name of the city is in origin derived from the god's name, URIM.
- Its ruins are approximately midway between the modern city of Baghdad (Iraq) and the head of the Persian Gulf, south of the Euphrates River, on the edge of the Al-ajarah Desert.
- In antiquity the Euphrates River flowed near the city walls.
- The prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) was thrown into the fire here.

Location of Ur





N

Mashhad

کرج
اسلامشهر
Eslāmshahr

قم
Qum

بغداد
Baghdad

Iraq

اصفهان
Esfahān

Iran

Ur, Iraq

اهواز
Ahvāz

Kuwait

مدينة الكويت
Al Kuwayt

شیراز
Shīrāz

Persian Gulf

محافظة بريدة
Buraydah

المدينة المنورة
Al Madinah

الجبيل
Al Jubayl

Arabic Gulf

Ad Dammam

Qusm Island

منامة
Manāma

رأس الخيمة
Ras Al-Khaimah

الدوحة
Doha

دبي
Dubai

أبو ظبي
Abu Dhabi

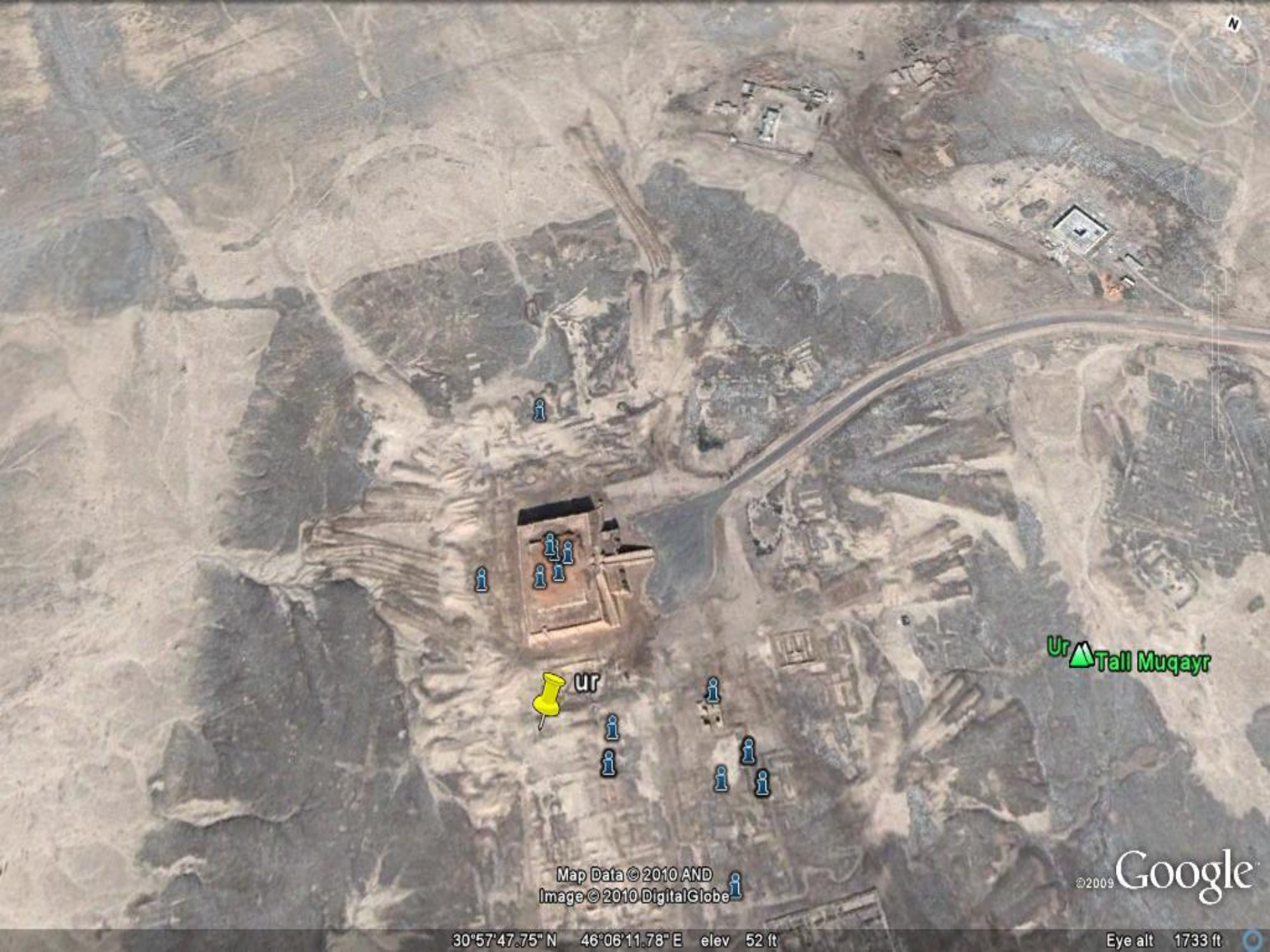
© 2010 Google
Map Data © 2010 AND
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30°26'57.21" N 47°30'19.18" E elev 225 ft

Google

©2009

Eye alt 1169.34 mi



Map Data © 2010 AND
Image © 2010 DigitalGlobe

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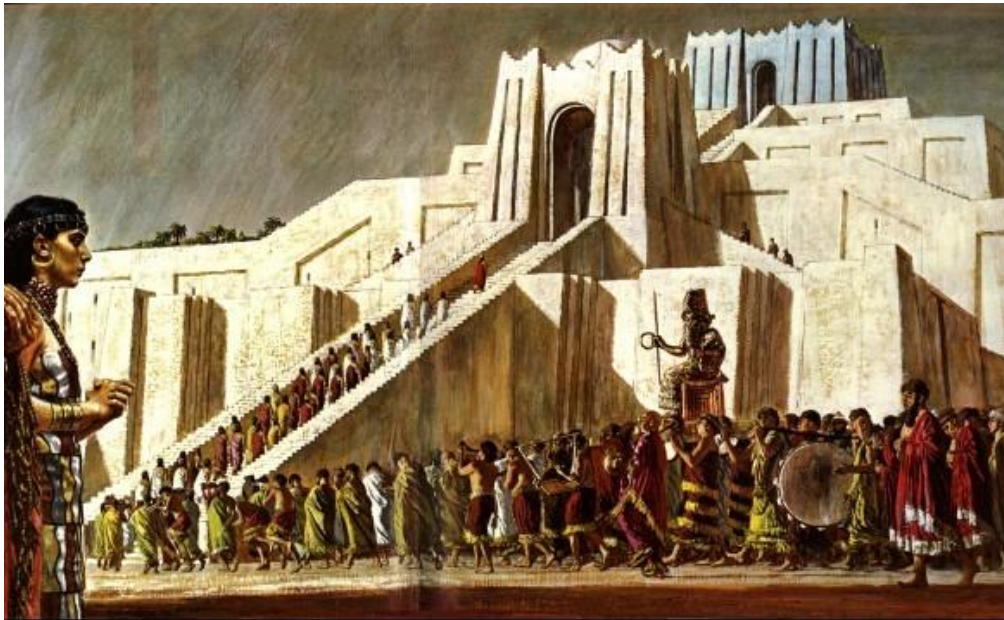
30°57'47.75" N 46°06'11.78" E elev 52 ft

Eye alt 1733 ft

Ur Tall Muqayr

Ur

Ur Ziggurat



Ur Ziggurat



Ur Ziggurat



General Features Ur City

- The ruins cover an area of 1,200 metres (3,900 ft) by 800 metres (2,600 ft) and rise up to about 20 metres (66 ft) above the present plain level.
- Ur was inhabited in the earliest stage of village settlement in the southern part of Mesopotamia, it later appears to have been abandoned for a time.
- Ur was favorably located for the development of commerce and for attaining political dominance.
- Ur became one such center, and by around 2600 BC, the city was again thriving.
- The massive ziggurat of this deity, one of the best preserved in Iraq, stands about 21 m (about 70 ft) above the desert.
- Before 2800 BC, Ur became one of the most prosperous Sumerian city-states.

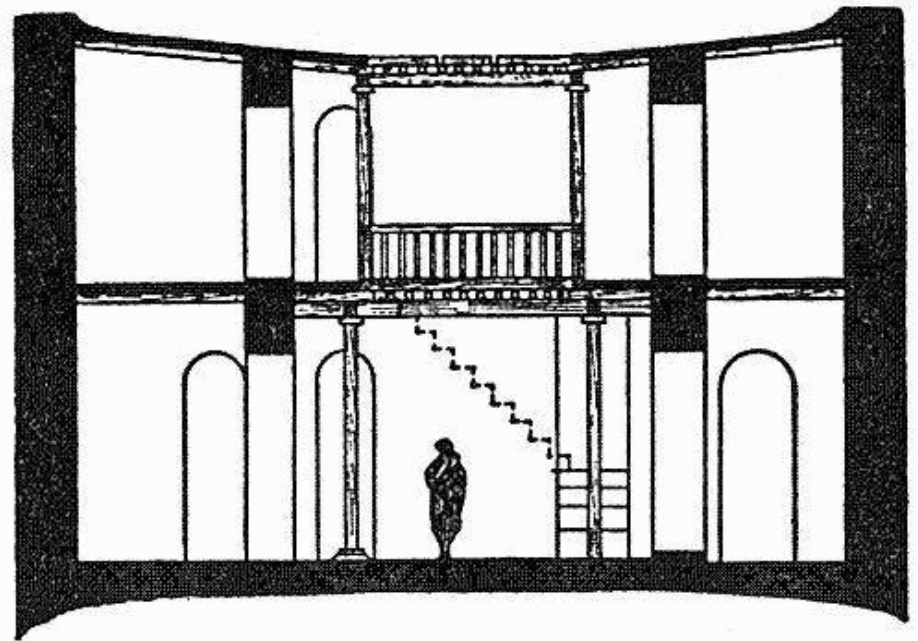
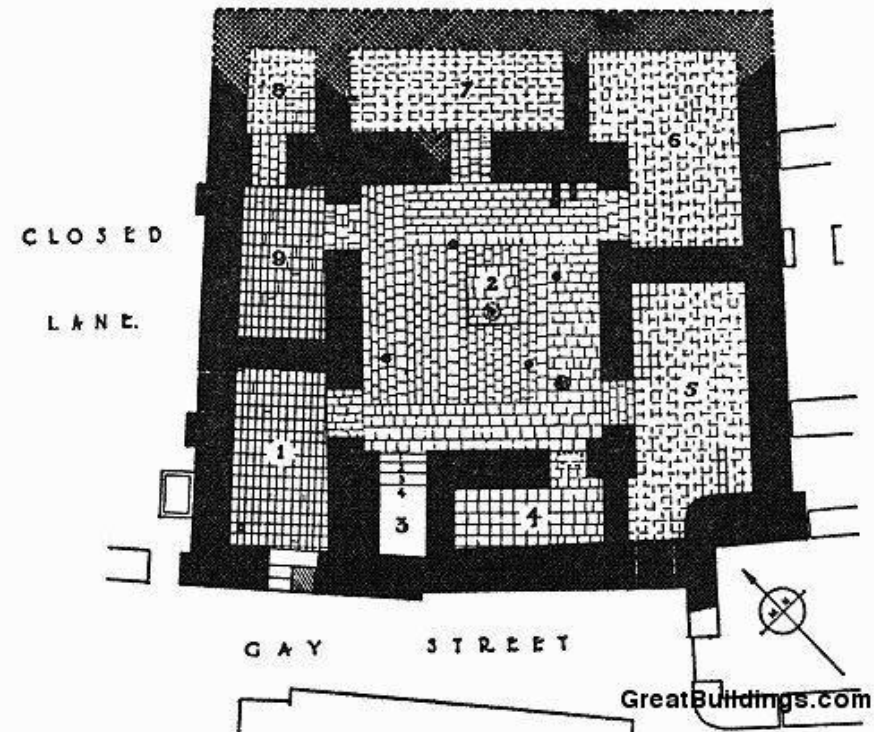
General Features Ur City

- In the year 4000 B.C., temples were built on top of mud-brick platforms. As the years passed and new temples were built, the remains of preceding temples were used to expand the platforms under new temples.
- Different bricks from various eras are found in the foundation platforms, some of which were stamped with the names and titles of the kings who built the temple complexes.
- According to one estimate, Ur was the largest city in the world from 2030 to 1980 BC. Its population was approximately 65,000.

City Layout Features

- Four main residential areas of the city included homes with baked mud brick foundations arranged along long, narrow winding streets and alleyways.
- Typical houses included an open central courtyard with two or more main living rooms in which the families resided.
- Each house had a domestic chapel where cult structures and the family burial-vault was kept. Kitchens, stairways, workrooms, lavatories were all part of the household structures.

House Layout



City Layout Features

- The houses were packed in very tightly, with exterior walls of one household immediately abutting the next one.
- Important discoveries at Ur included the Royal Cemetery, where rich Early Dynastic burials are found and thousands of clay tablets impressed with cuneiform writing which describe in detail the lives and thoughts of Ur's inhabitants.

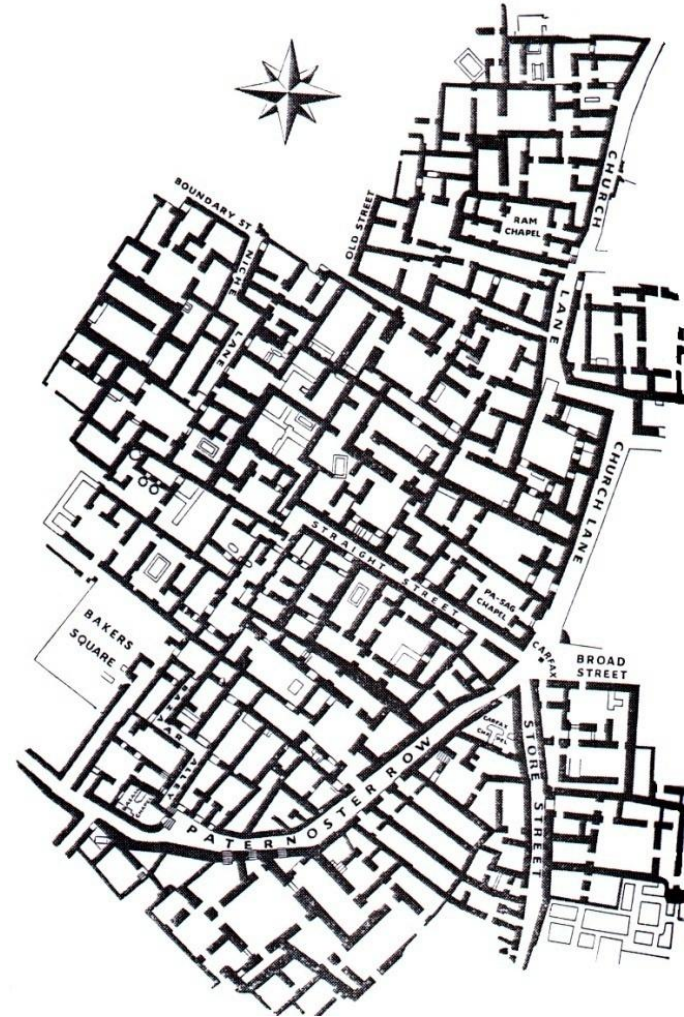
Layout of Ur City



Layout of Ur City



Residential area of Ur City



Ziggurat of Ur



Ruins of Ur



Archeological Findings at Ur

- The ruins of Ur were found and first excavated (1854-55) by the British consul J. E. Taylor, who partly uncovered the ziggurat of Nanna.
- Some of the areas that were cleared during modern excavations have sanded over again, the Great Ziggurat is fully cleared and stands as the best-preserved and only major structure on the site.
- The top is covered with debris and is at times a confusing mix of loose stones, broken pottery and partial reconstruction
- There are cuneiform on many walls, some entirely covered in script stamped into the mud-bricks. The text is sometimes difficult to read, but it covers most surfaces.

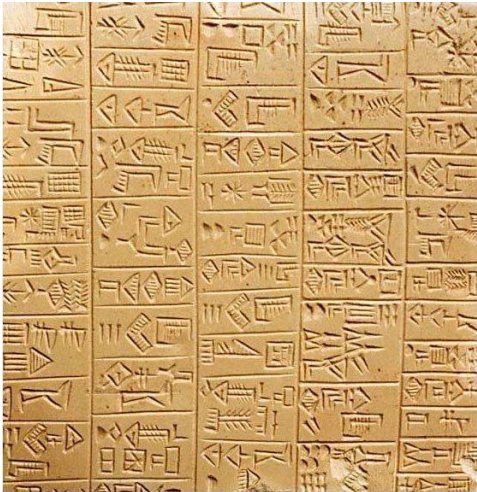
Ruling History of Ur

- According to ancient records, Ur had three dynasties of rulers who, at various times, extended their control over all of Sumer. .
- The first dynasty was ended by an attack of Sargon of Akkad around 2340 BC. Not much is known about the following second dynasty, when the city was in eclipse.
- The third dynasty was established when the king Ur-Nammu came to power, ruling between 2047 BC and 2030 BC. During his rule, temples, including the ziggurat, were built, and agriculture was improved through irrigation.

End of Ur City

- In the sixth century BC there was new construction in Ur under the rule of Nebuchadnezzar II of Babylon.
- The last Babylonian king, Nabonidus, improved the ziggurat. However the city started to decline from around 550 BC and was no longer inhabited after about 500 BC, perhaps owing to drought, changing river patterns, and the silting of the outlet to the Persian Gulf.
- In time, the inhabitants of Ur and the surrounding countryside depleted the soil. Where was once green fields is now barren wasteland. The once-great city of Ur is a seldom visited ruin in the sands of southern Iraq.

Cuneiform Tablets



Ruins of Ur



Ruins of Ur



Ruins of Ur

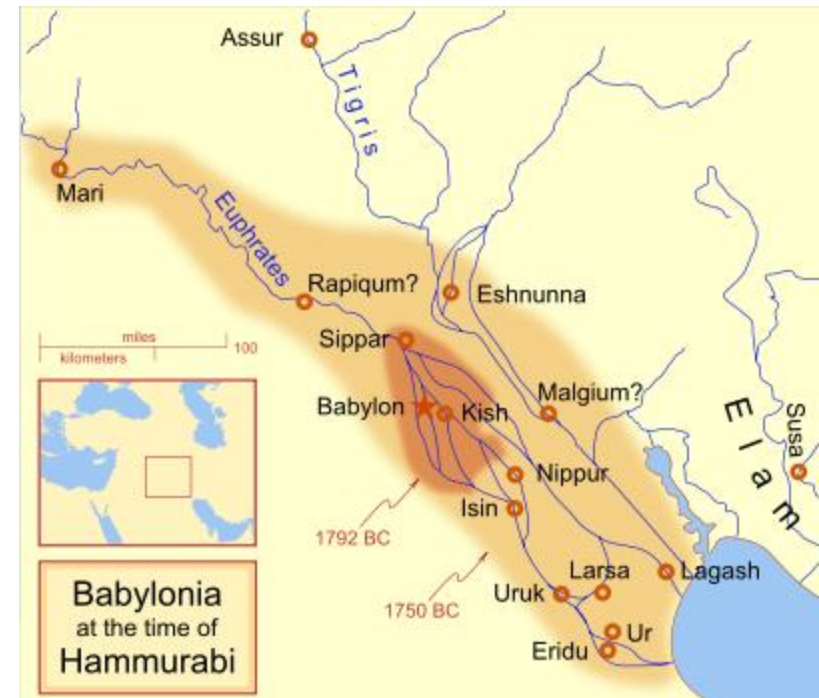


City of Babylon

City of Babylon

- The city of Babylon was the capital of the ancient land of Babylonia in southern Mesopotamia.
- It was situated on the Euphrates River about 50 miles south of modern Baghdad, just north of what is now the modern Iraqi town of al-Hillah.
- Historical resources inform us that Babylon was in the beginning a small town that had sprang up by the beginning of the third millennium BC.
- The town flourished and attained notable prominence and political repute with the rise of the first Babylonian dynasty.

Location of Babylon





Iraq

babylon

ur

US Dept of State Geographer
© 2012 Cnes/Spot Image
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Al Hudud Ash Shamaliyah

lat 31.579845° lon 45.645217° elev 31 ft

Kuwait

Kuwait City مدينة الكويت

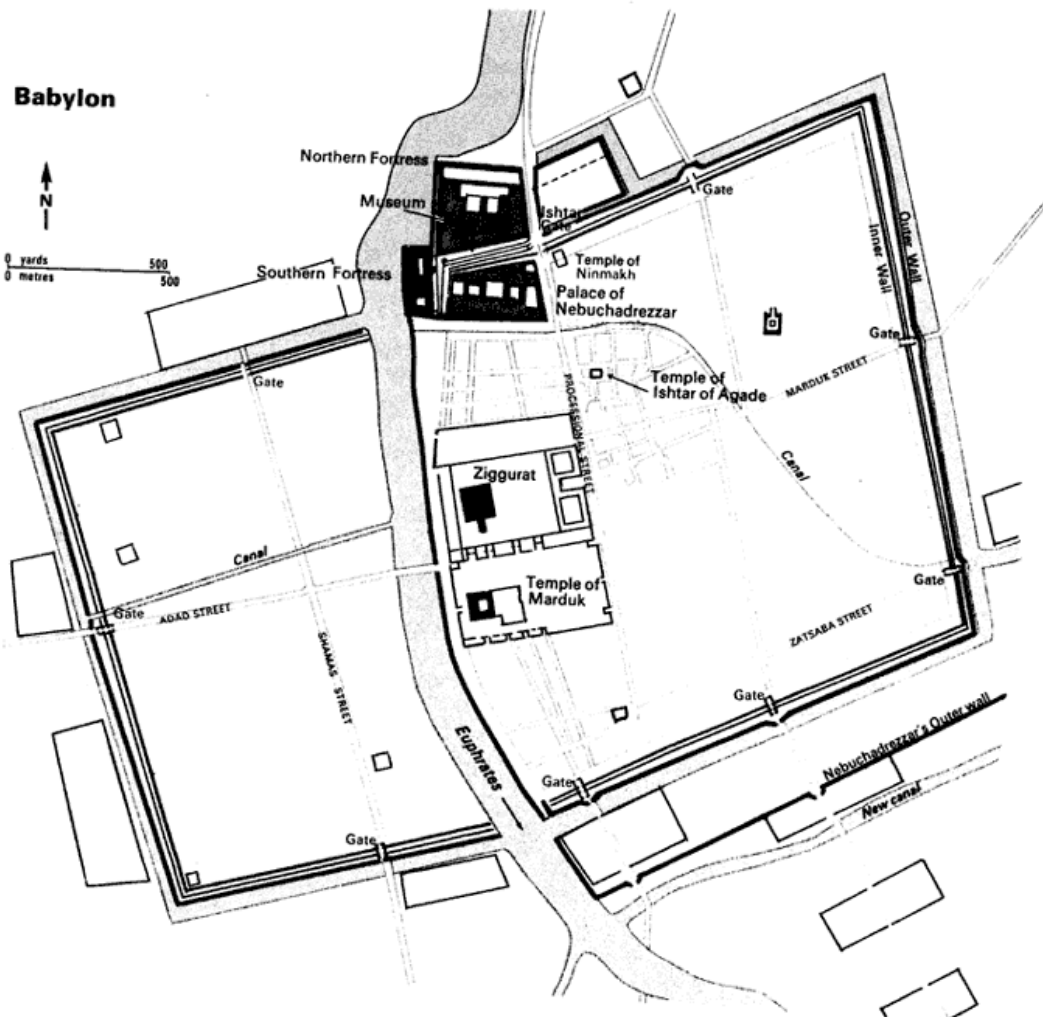
Google earth

Eye alt 523.24 mi

Prominent Babylonian Rulers

- Eleven kings ruled Babylon.
- The most famous was King Hammurabi. He ruled Babylon for 42 years (1792-1750 BC).
- He triumphed over all the small state-lets to unify Iraq and established firmly its security.
- Hammurabi also paid great attention to matters of irrigation as well as the religious, economic and justice affairs of the state and people.
- The period of King Nebuchadnezzar II (604-562 BC) is among the distinguished periods of reign in the ancient history of Iraq.

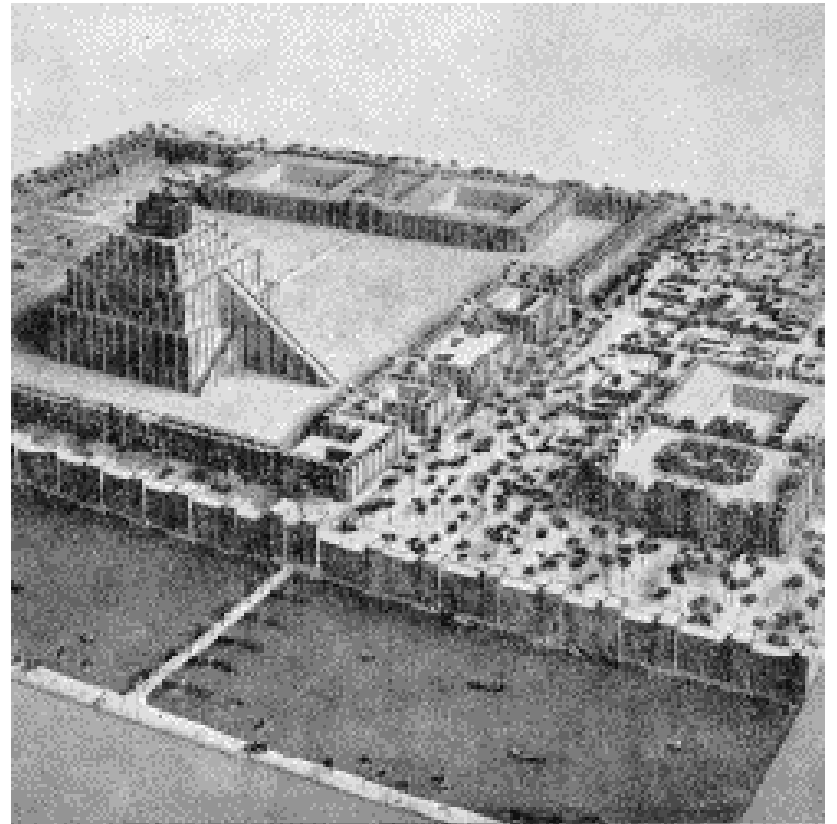
Layout of Babylon



Imaginary Pictures of Ancient Babylon



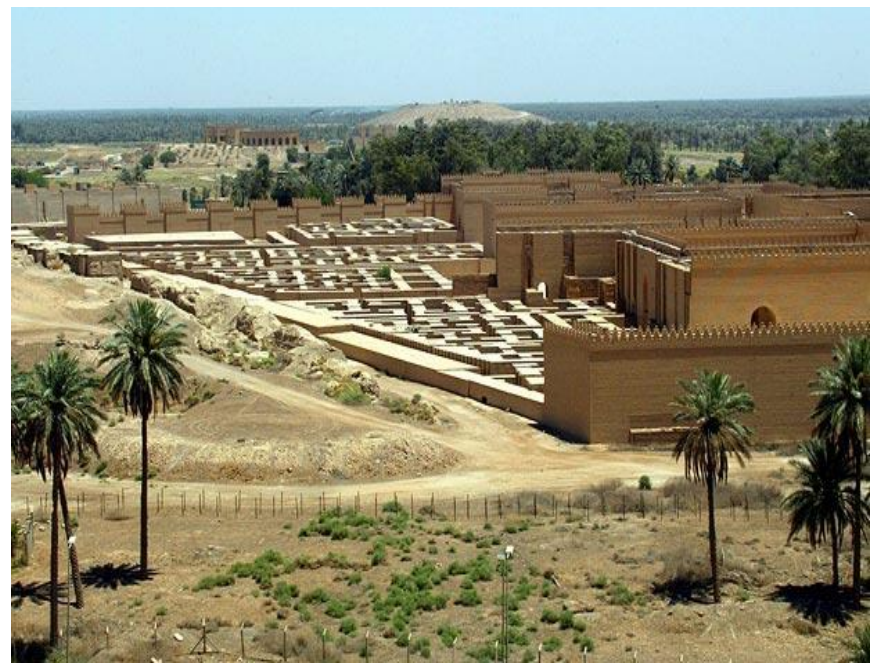
Imaginary Pictures of Ancient Babylon



Ruins of Babylon



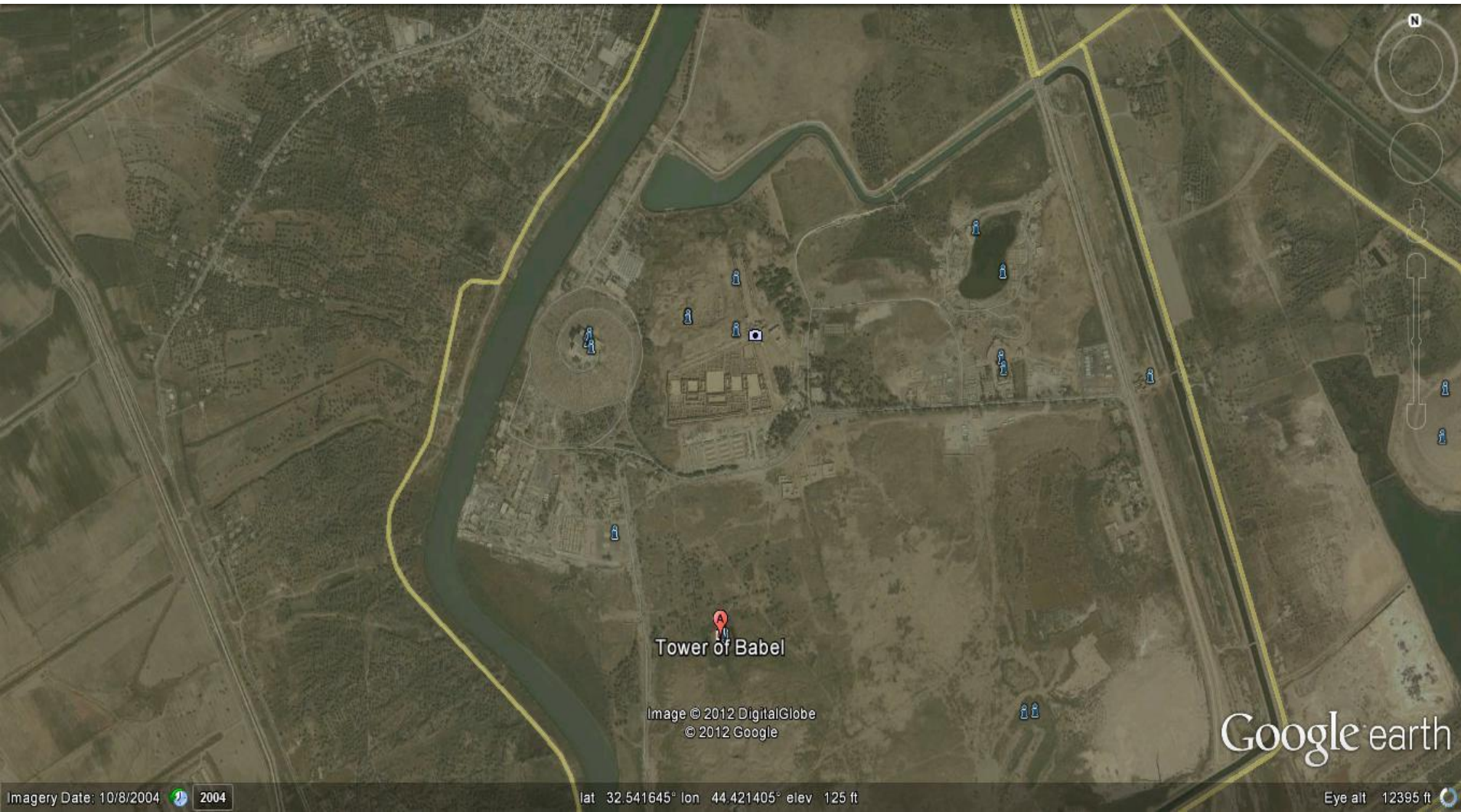
Ruins of Babylon



Babylon Today



Babylon Today



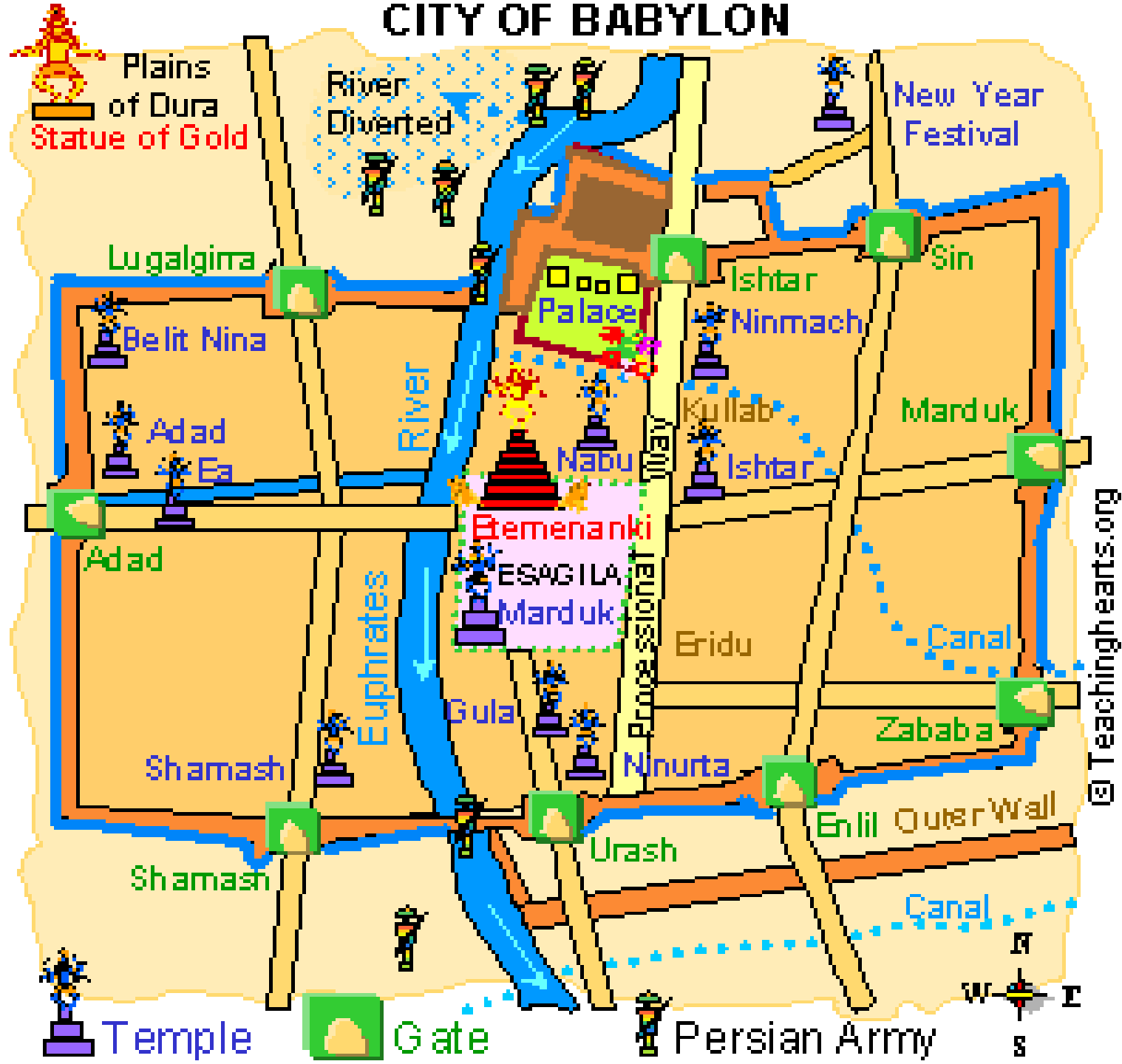
City Layout Features

- There were 24 streets in Babylon, running either parallel to the river or at a right angle to it.
- These streets were narrow, irregular, ranging from about 4 to 24 feet in width with high windowless walls on each side.
- The streets were not paved, with the exception of the Processional Way, but instead created with raw earth.
- Streets also carried the burden of becoming the dumping grounds for the city.

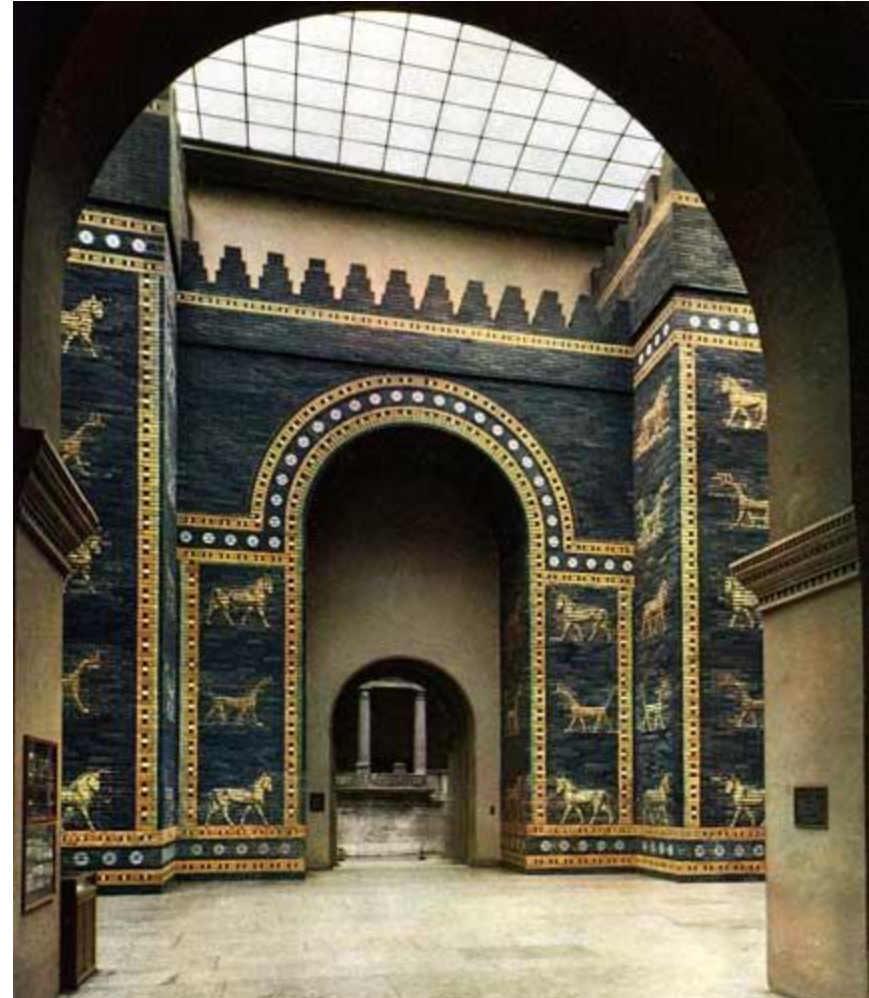
City Layout Features

- The citizens of Babylon, not unlike those of Renaissance England, threw their garbage and filth into the streets. Then, they covered it up with layers of clay. As a result, the streets of Babylon began to rise, and eventually, houses needed to be built on higher ground.
- The most famous street was the "Processional Way" which ran along the eastern side of the southern palace, through the Ishtar gate and outside the inner town to a special festival house situated to the north.
- The road climbs gently upwards towards gate. Center of the roadway was laid with huge flagstones of limestone, each paving stone has an inscription of Nebuchadnezzar's dedication.

CITY OF BABYLON



Ishtar Gate



City Layout Features

- Everywhere, construction was of baked brick, not the usual sun-dried brick that had dominated Mesopotamian architecture for millennia.
- Whole regions of the city, such as the processional way leading to the Ishtar Gate, were faced with glazed bricks in a vivid blue, decorated with images of lions and dragons sculpted in relief and glazed in bright shades of yellow, black, and white.
- The way was lined with figures of some 120 lions, the symbol of Ishtar in molded glazed bricks.
- The Hanging Gardens of Babylon are alluded to in many ancient historical texts, but it is the one Wonder which we are unsure even existed. Current day archeologists are still examining the evidence and trying to determine if and where these Gardens existed.

City Layout Features



Imaginary Pictures of Hanging Gardens



Tower of Babylon



City Layout Features

- Defensive towers were built all along the outer wall which itself was surrounded by a moat filled with water.
- There were a great many buildings inside the wall of which some relics still stand.
- Among the still surviving buildings are the Southern Palace, the Northern Palace, Ishtar Gate, the Procession Street and the Babylon Tower.
- There were eight main gates in the city of Babylon.
- In execution of the order of President Saddam Hussein the Southern Palace has been rebuilt and with it also the walls of the Procession Street and several temples. A Babylonian theater has been built with tourism facilities. Three mounts have been put up one bearing the name of Saddam along with vast lakes, gardens and orchards.

Religion and Culture

- **Babylonian religion was temple-centered, with elaborate festivals and many different types of priests, who mainly were trained to drive away evil spirits.**
- **One of the main aspects of Babylonian culture was a codified system of law. Hammurabi's famous code was the successor of earlier collections of laws going back to about 2050 BC.**
- **Babylonian literature was well developed, and records have been found of highly developed religion, history and science. Medicine, chemistry, alchemy, botany, zoology, maths and astronomy were practiced.**
- **This religion and the cuneiform writing were derived from the older culture of Sumer. These symbols were written on wet clay tablets and baked in the hot sun.**
- **The Babylonians divided the day in the way that we do, with 24 hours of 60 minutes each and each minute lasting 60 seconds.**

End of Babylon

- The city Babylon has reached its cultural peak during the rule of Hammurabi and his son. After this period, it was a whole mess as the city was invaded by the Hittites first followed by others.
- It saw the occupation by Alexander the Great. Eventually this city lost its importance when it was removed from the title of "Capital" by the subsequent rulers.