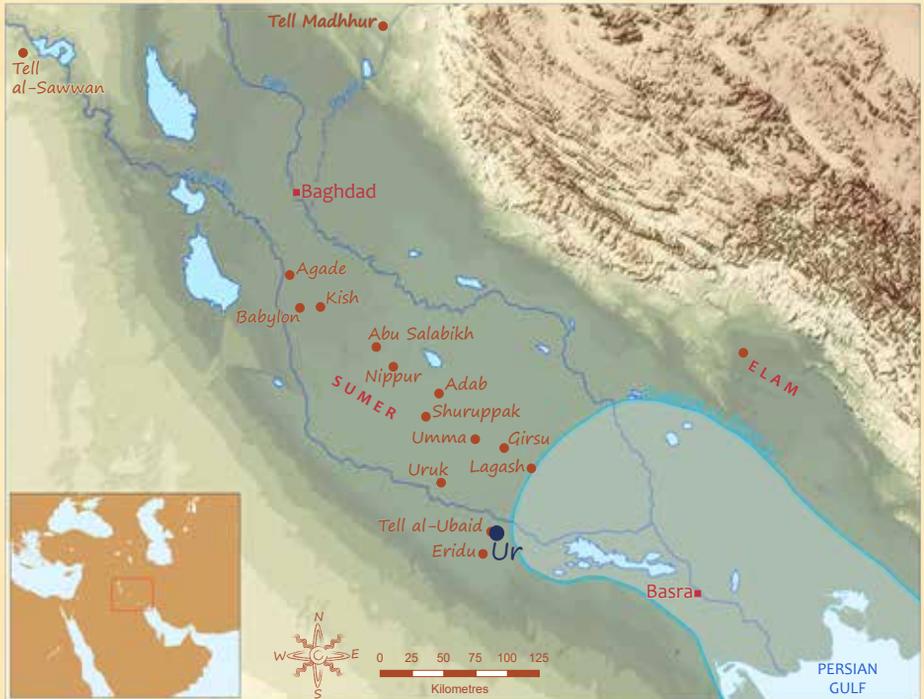


# Travel in Sumer!

Excerpt!



## Ur, The City That Never Sleeps



## Ekišnugal in the morning

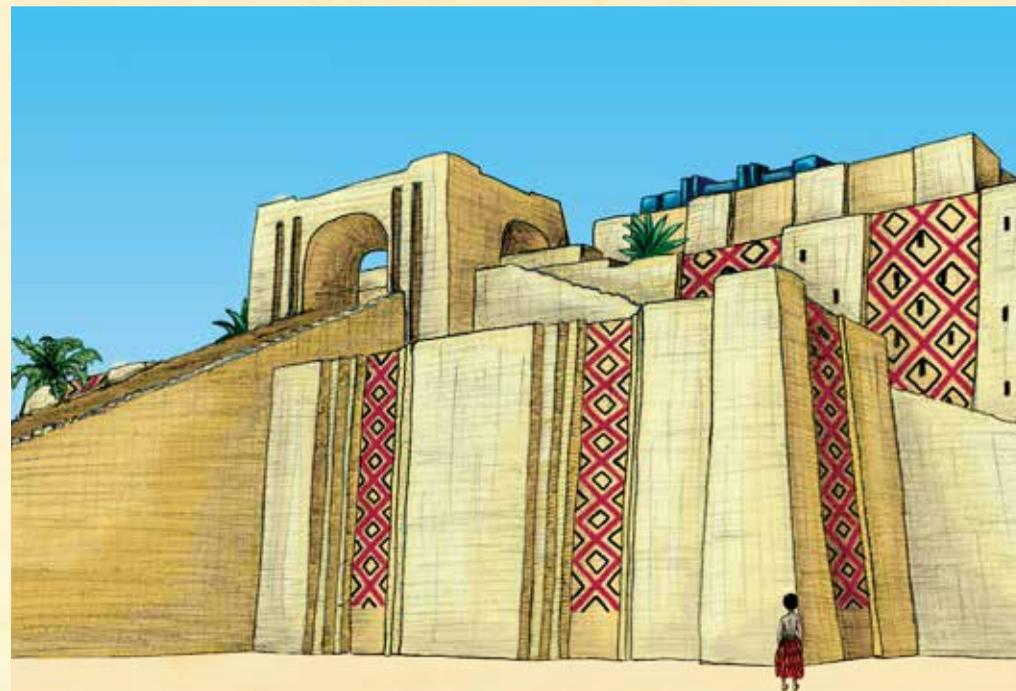
To get the most impressive full (first) view of the ziqqurat, the best is to go in the morning, at dawn. It is all illuminated by the rising sun, and shines so radiantly that it is almost painful to look at it. If you go early enough, before sunrise, the spectacle is magnificent: rays of the sun progressively dress the stages from top to bottom, brightening up the colours one after another. Just sit alongside the eastern wall of Nanna Court to enjoy the fabulous sight, even though you cannot see the ziqqurat in full from there. It is like admiring the god himself slowly waking up and stretching lazily.

Around you, Nanna court is busy with many people bustling around, all in a joyful and almost family atmosphere. They are cleaning, tidying up, sweeping around, putting up braziers and large copper vessels in the corner near the altar. Music school is scheduled in the morning and takes place in some of the rooms surrounding the court: sounds and songs, not as melodious as the evening ones, fill in the air together with children shouts and laughters. Apprentice jugglers and acrobats are training in the court, for the evening ritual. Other children are sitting in front of some stele to dutifully copy the inscriptions under the supervisions of their master.



### lú.kisal.luh - the courtyard-sweepers.

They are essential within the temple staff, and their status is very prestigious and envied. Thing is that cleanliness and tidiness of the "house of Su'en" (and all other gods) is fundamental for the well-being of the god, and all places for rituals must be perfectly pure (kù in Sumerian). So, the position of lú.kisal.luh is much sought-after. The charge is usually inherited: some families have held the status of lú.kisal.luh for several generations.



Your first view of Ur ziqqurat on a bright morning

The god usually bathes and has breakfast just before dawn – visitors are not allowed in the ziqqurat courtyard during those ceremonies, but access opens as soon as the sun is up.

In the ziqqurat courtyard, you are free to wander around. The atmosphere is almost relaxed even though it quickly becomes restless to frantic on *èš-èš* days. Bakers, butchers, brewers swiftly come and go to the "kitchens", with huge reed baskets or jars. Some priests are lightening up braziers, and the air soon fills up with a strange mixture of incense and cooking smells. The earlier you come, the longer you will be able to enjoy this atmosphere but as soon as all shadows quit the courtyard you feel like you do not want to stay much longer: too hot. The golden, enchanting hours of *Etemenniguru* do not last: if you wish to enjoy them, go without delay when you wake up.

