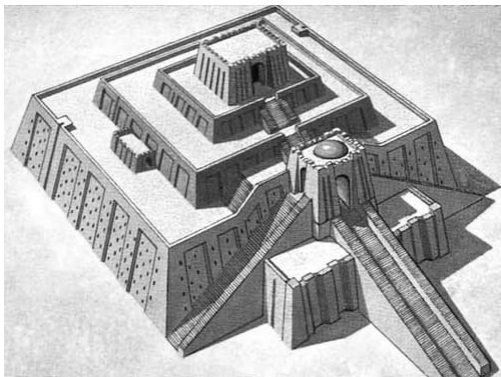


### **Text 1**

Ziggurats played an important role in the cultures of many cities in ancient Mesopotamia. Researchers from Baghdad University have discovered nineteen of these buildings in sixteen cities spread over an area of 1000 square kilometers of modern day Iraq. According to Professor Ali of Baghdad University, the ziggurat was typically the most visible building in the city and could be easily seen by visitors wherever they entered the city.

The ziggurats were a religious symbol, and all the citizens were very proud of these buildings, claims professor Ali. These ancient structures were huge “stepped” buildings, often with a temple on the top. The temples were dedicated to the god of the city in which they were built. At the time, ziggurats were considered extremely large buildings.



**Ziggurat. n.** A temple tower of the Babylonians or Assyrians consisting of a very tall pyramidal structure and very often with a temple at the top.

**Source : Osman, J.P. (2011). *Ziggurat*. The Gulf Times. Retrieved from <http://thegulftimes.com/2011/yrhejek.html>**

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### **Text 2**

The Hanging Gardens of Babylon had many unusual plants, which were imported, from foreign lands by King Nebuchadnezzar. Research has shown that the plants and trees included cedar, cypress, myrtle, juniper, almond, and date palm amongst many others. The gardens were planted on a terraced ziggurat and plants hung down from one terrace to the next. They covered the terrace walls and the arches, which supported the terraces. This ‘mountain’ of greenery created a magical environment, especially as the city of Babylon was surrounded by flat, empty desert.

Historians claim that there were two ways of growing plants in the Hanging Gardens. One way involved the technique of hydroponics whilst the other way used earth. The first way, hydroponics, is a method of growing plants in water without using soil. The plants are fed by adding special minerals to the water. The second way was more traditional. Soil was laid on the terraces and the flowers, bushes and trees were planted in it.

The Hanging Gardens of Babylon were an impressive example of ancient architecture. They were as tall as the city walls, which were reported to be 110 meters high, and the entire structure measured 130 square meters.

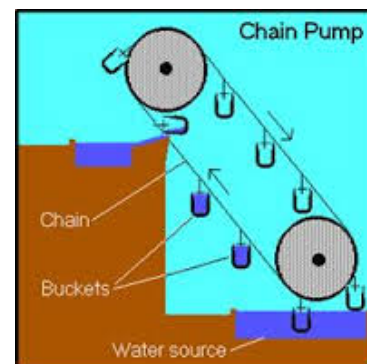
**Source : Kattin, C. P. *Babylonian Wonder*. Retrieved from <http://www.wonderworld.ed>.**

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### Text 3

The Hanging Gardens were as much of a technological achievement as they were an architectural success. Since Babylon rarely received rain, the gardens had to be irrigated. The irrigation of the gardens showed great technical sophistication. There are two points to consider regarding the irrigation of the gardens: how the water was raised to the top of the ziggurat and the insulation of the ziggurat so that the water did not destroy the building.

Getting the water to the top of the ziggurat was a big problem. The original source of the gardens' water was from the Euphrates River. Archeologists claim that water was brought to the top terrace of the garden by a tunnel and pulley system. A chain pump, consisting of two large wheels, one at the top and one at the bottom, distributed the water. Buckets hanging from the chain collected water from a reservoir at the base of the gardens. The wheels used in the system were powered by slaves who turned handles to make them move. The water from the pool at the top of the gardens could be released into channels acting as artificial streams. These streams watered the garden.



With so much water running over the brick terraces, how did the Babylonians stop the ziggurat collapsing? The stone terraces of the ziggurats were covered with layers of different materials such as rocks and straw. Sheets of metal - lead - were placed on top of these materials. Finally, soil was laid smoothly and evenly and a variety of trees were planted. This construction enabled the Hanging Gardens to stand for hundreds of years.

**Source : *Irrigating the Hanging Gardens*. Retrieved from <http://www.ancientworld.org>**

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#### **Text 4**

The Seven Wonders of the Ancient World are among the most amazing structures in history. One of these wonders was the Hanging Gardens of Babylon. There were various reasons why the gardens were included in the list of Wonders, which first appeared in



the 3rd century CE. These gardens showed the importance of the Babylonian culture and the advanced technology of its people. The gardens were built on a ziggurat. The terraces of the ziggurat were home to many beautiful plants and contained many fountains.

King Nebuchadnezzar II ordered this wonder to be built during his reign of 43 years between the years of 604-562 CE. He built it to please his homesick wife, Amyitis. She was from Media, which was a green and mountainous country. When she moved to Mesopotamia, her new home as wife of Nebuchadnezzar, she became very unhappy. Patrick Gough of the British museum believes that the mainly flat desert depressed her and that Nebuchadnezzar hoped to make his wife happier by building a huge artificial mountain with rooftop gardens.

The mainly flat desert depressed her. Nebuchadnezzar hoped to make his wife happier by building a huge artificial mountain with rooftop gardens. This became known as The

Hanging Gardens of Babylon. What made the Hanging Gardens special was that it was a man-made paradise. In a dry, desert region, Nebuchadnezzar succeeded where nature had failed, and the gardens resembled the natural scenery of Media.

Nebuchadnezzar's man-made mountain, covered with many different types of trees and plants, satisfied his wife's passion for mountainous surroundings. The plants and trees hung down over the sides of the ziggurat making it look like a natural hillside. The beautiful landscape of the Hanging Gardens helped make it a special structure, transforming the desert-like environment into a green paradise.

The Hanging Gardens of Babylon lasted hundreds of years. This great construction with its original architectural style, covered in beautiful plants and trees, deserves its place amongst the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. Nebuchadnezzar was a great king in many ways. The beauty of the Hanging Gardens of Babylon demonstrates his leadership and his great architectural and engineering foresight.

**Source : Samir, M. (2001). *The Hanging Gardens of Babylon*. Beirut: Wordpress.**

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### **Text 5**

One of the most famous buildings used by the Babylonians was the ziggurat. It had a unique design. For instance, the ziggurat had a core of mud brick and an exterior of baked brick. It had no internal chambers (though it was sometimes built over other, more ancient structures) and was usually square or rectangular. An exterior triple stairway or a spiral ramp led to the top of the ziggurat. The terraces were often filled with trees and shrubs, and this is probably the origin of the Hanging Gardens of Babylon. Most ziggurats were about 60 square meters at the base reaching a height of up to 50 meters.



**Source: Ali, A. (1997). What is a Ziggurat? *Journal of Architectural History*. Vol. 26, pp. 25-29.**