

ANCIENT ASSYRIAN-BABYLONIAN GARDENS.

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The countries of Mesopotamia - Assyria-Babylonia - occupied the territory of the basin of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, flowing into the Persian Gulf. In this area the plains are covered with dense forests. There are many canals in the forested areas, and fish and bird species are widespread. Large groves of wild palm trees have grown here. Fruit trees include figs, peaches, pomegranates and mulberries.

In the history of Mesopotamia, three important periods can be distinguished: Sumer-Akkad, Assyria and Neo-Babylon. Constant wars led to the accumulation of large sums of money and free labor in the hands of rulers. In ancient Mesopotamia, cities were built according to an ideal plan, with fortresses surrounded by walls and towers. A ziggurat (a stepped tower of a ritual temple) was installed in the center of the city - it was considered a symbol of supreme power. One of the oldest ziggurats was built in the city of Ur (24-23 centuries BC). It consists of three towers standing on top of each other, which gradually became smaller and terraced gardens were created. Drainage pipes for watering plants were found in the walls of the building. The only well-preserved ziggurat today is located in the center of Akarkuf (half an hour's drive from Baghdad). This city was once considered the capital of the tribe that conquered Babylon. Although the ziggurat was built 34 centuries ago, it is a seven-story stepped cone. The main area of the tower is the size of a football field. Many travelers mistake it for the legendary Tower of Babel. The ziggurat is built from mud bricks. Each row of the tower is covered with reed mats. Ancient craftsmen used bitumen mixed with lime as a solution. This solution covered the bricks and stones used in the construction and increased its strength.

The gardens of Mesopotamia in the Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian periods were distinguished by their large size and extraordinary luxury, which the rich rulers of the country could afford. Natural forests in the north of the country have been converted into hunting and recreational parks, most of which are enriched with imported plant species. Improving the irrigation system based on a clear plan created the basis for expanding the types and areas of crops. Artificial hills were created in the gardens, and small water features and pavilions were built on them. Pines, cypresses and other trees are planted in them.

The Assyrians loved artificial hills and terraces. The palaces were distinguished by their monumentality (they were built on high places). They are surrounded by gardens of large size and extraordinary luxury.

The terraced gardens of Sennacherib and Shuru-Kina were created in Nineveh, the capital of Assyria. A huge palace with a large park, artificial lakes and verandas was built on Kuyunjuk Hill. The park contains rare plants and animals brought by Sennacherib (Sinsapgon II) from his military campaigns. The Gil-Gameash epics found at Kuyunjuk contain a description of this palace with a garden and a sacred vineyard. It glorifies the wonderful cedar forest, the alleys leading to the palace, the flowers and shrubs growing among the cedars.



The creation of the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, which the ancient Greeks considered one of the seven wonders of the world, is associated with the semi-legendary Assyrian queen Semiramis. It was later expanded and rebuilt by King Nebuchadnezzar II.

Although the descriptions of these gardens at different times (Herodotus, Strabo, Diodorus Siculus, Berzous, Ruten, etc.) are very contradictory, they all point to the greatness of this structure. The terraces, supported by large domes, according to some sources formed a multi-level pyramid, according to others - a 4- or 7-level pyramid. The design of the terraces is as follows: stone slabs filled with lead are laid on strong pillars. A thick layer of reeds impregnated with bitumen was laid on top, and then two rows of bricks were laid, fixed with lime. Soil is laid on top of it. They are decorated with colored eyebrows. The terraces are connected by a monumental staircase made of white and pink marble. Cascades and fountains were used to discharge water. The best trees, shrubs and flowers collected in the territory of the Assyrian kingdom (from the Caspian Sea to the Mediterranean Sea and the Persian Gulf) were planted in the galleries. Plants are arranged according to a certain rule: the higher the height, the higher they are planted.

Archaeological evidence shows that these gardens consisted of four terraces, the first of which measured 45x40 meters and 8 meters in height, and the second 40x30 meters and 13 meters in height. The total height of the building did not exceed 22 meters. At the bottom of the garden there were 14 small rooms.

This is how religious gardens were created in Mesopotamia. For the first time, running water was used for aesthetic purposes. Large parks were also created, serving mainly for hunting wild animals. The most important thing is that they are based on forests that have preserved their naturalness.

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