



Aerial view of Ur showing archaeological remains uncovered during earlier excavations.

Photo by © Global Heritage Fund

Ur, Iraq

One of the Earliest Cities in the World

Site Significance

The site of Ur in southern Iraq is famed as the birthplace of Abraham – the founding father of Judaism, Christianity and Islam – and contains the best preserved ziggurat in the Middle East. Occupied over the course of 4000 years before being abandoned around 400 BC, the site reached its peak during the so-called Ur III period 4000 years ago and is the time when the ziggurat was first built by the king Ur-Nammu, who is also credited with creating a law code that predates the famous Code of Hammurabi by some 300 years.

Project Goals

Preservation by Design®

Planning

In addition to comprehensive site documentation, the creation of an informed and scientifically grounded Master Plan to guide the site's long-term conservation and management will enable sustainability and can serve as a model for other sites' stewardship.

Project Partnerships

- Iraq Ministry of Culture
- State Board of Antiquities and Heritage (SBAH)
- Dhiqar Antiquities Office

Conservation Science

A number of structures at Ur have been identified as facing grave threats, and it is proposed that the current project initially focus on stabilizing and conserving two of them:

1. Royal Cemetery:
Threatened by soluble salt mobilization as well as rain, sand and wind damage.
2. Ziggurat:
Stabilization needed at base and summit.



Threats

- Erosion
- Neglect
- Inappropriate restoration
- War & Conflict

Start Date

2009

Community

Training in site conservation and tourism management will be provided to the local communities, while the creation or updating of site interpretation panels and/or the production of a visitors' guidebook will allow tourists to gain the most from their visit.



Ziggurat. Photo by © Global Heritage Fund



Soluble salt mobilization is a major conservation challenge at Ur, leading to the degradation of ancient bricks.
Photo by © Global Heritage Fund



An aerial view of the Royal Cemetery, looking southward.
Photo by © Global Heritage Fund



The sagging walls of the Royal Tomb entrance require support to prevent collapse. Photo by © Global Heritage Fund

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