

Lecture 3: Early History of Planning 2

Daban Abdullah Salam
College of Engineering
Architecture Department
History of Urban Planning
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Outlines

- Mesopotamian Towns
- Ur City
- Early Egyptian Towns
- Al Amarna City

Mesopotamian Towns

- Mesopotamia means “land between rivers”.
- Four broad segments of chronology will suffice to govern our discussion:
 - 1. Then Uruk Period** from 3500 - 3000 B.C.
 - 2. Early Dynastic Period** from 3000 - 2350 B.C.
 - 3. Sumerian Period** from 2350 - 1600 B.C.
 - 4. Assyrian Period** from 1350 - 612 B.C.

1. The Uruk period (Protoliterate Period) (3500 - 3000 B.C.)

- During this time, the towns, which had probably evolved from agricultural villages, acquired their battlements of ring walls; and the temple and the ziggurat began to gain architectural definition.

Political authority resided in an assembly of male citizens that selected short-term war leaders.

2. Early Dynastic Period (3000 - 2350 B.C.)

- When the role of these leaders was retained in times of peace as well, kingship, first elective and then hereditary, became established. With it raised the monumental palace, an administrative center which employed a large retinue of bureaucrats and entertainers & occupied itself with raising and supplying an army and maintaining the defensive system of the city.

3. Sumerian Period from (2350 - 1600 B.C.)

- This period saw the rise of empire, the collective rule of several city-states through the might of a sovereign king. The first part of the period is dominated by the Third Dynasty of Ur whose prodigious building activity includes the Ziggurate of Ur-Nammu, the high point of that building type.

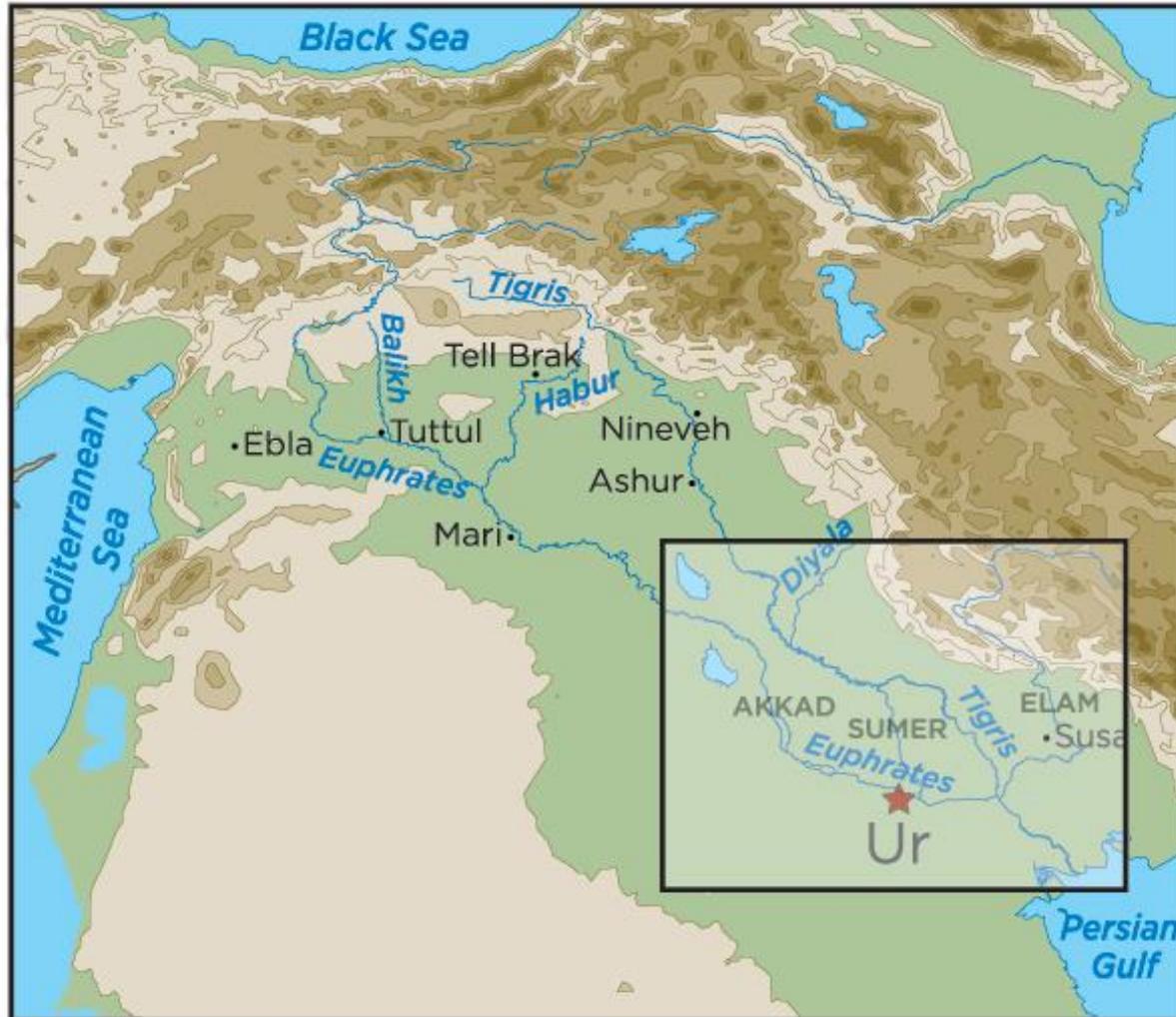


4. Assyrian Period from 1350 - 612 B.C.

- ▶ The northern region of the two rivers now flourishes at the expense of lower Mesopotamia. The Assyrian by their imposing state reliefs and their palaces, like the one at **Khorsabad**.

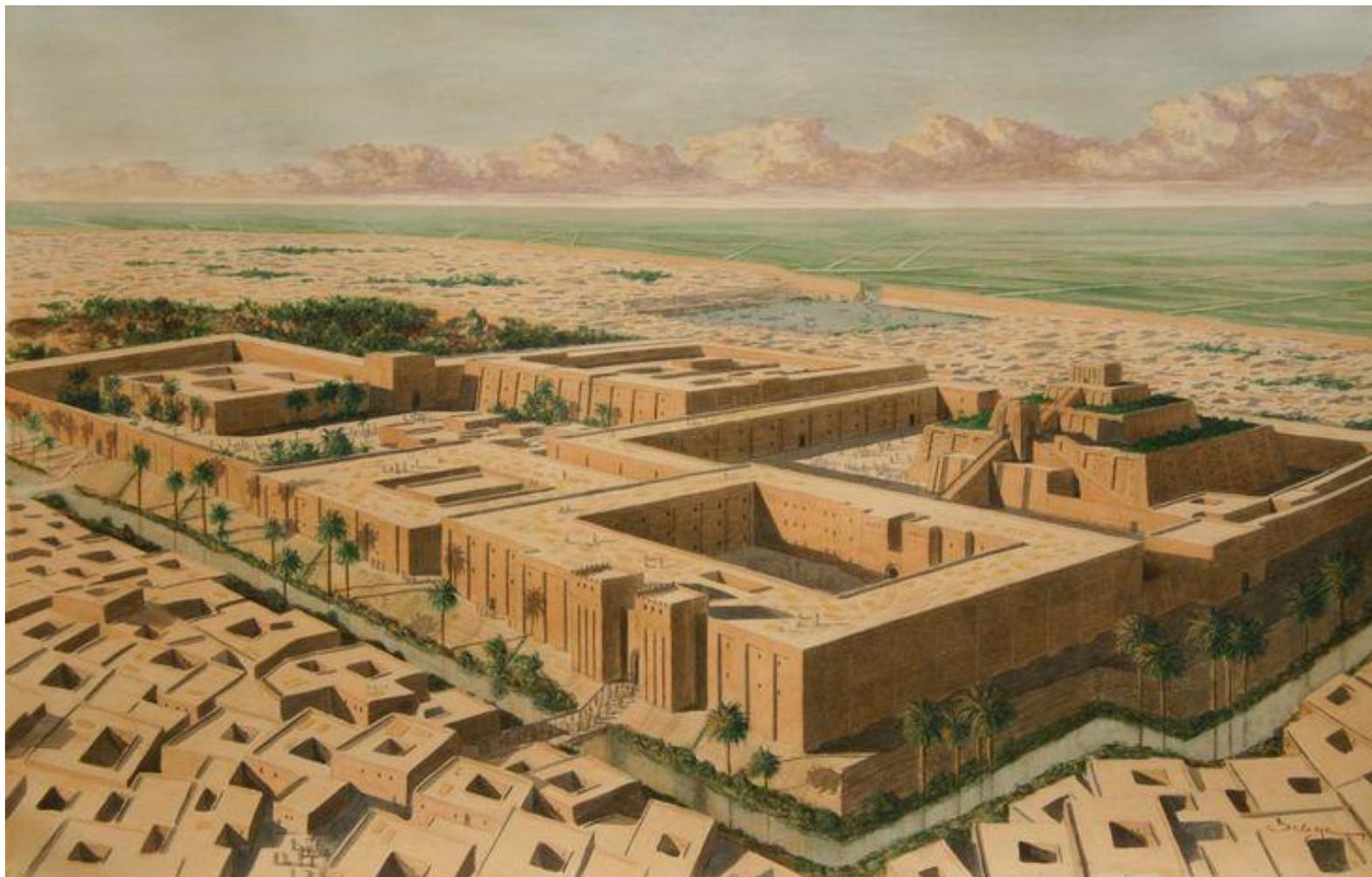


Ur City

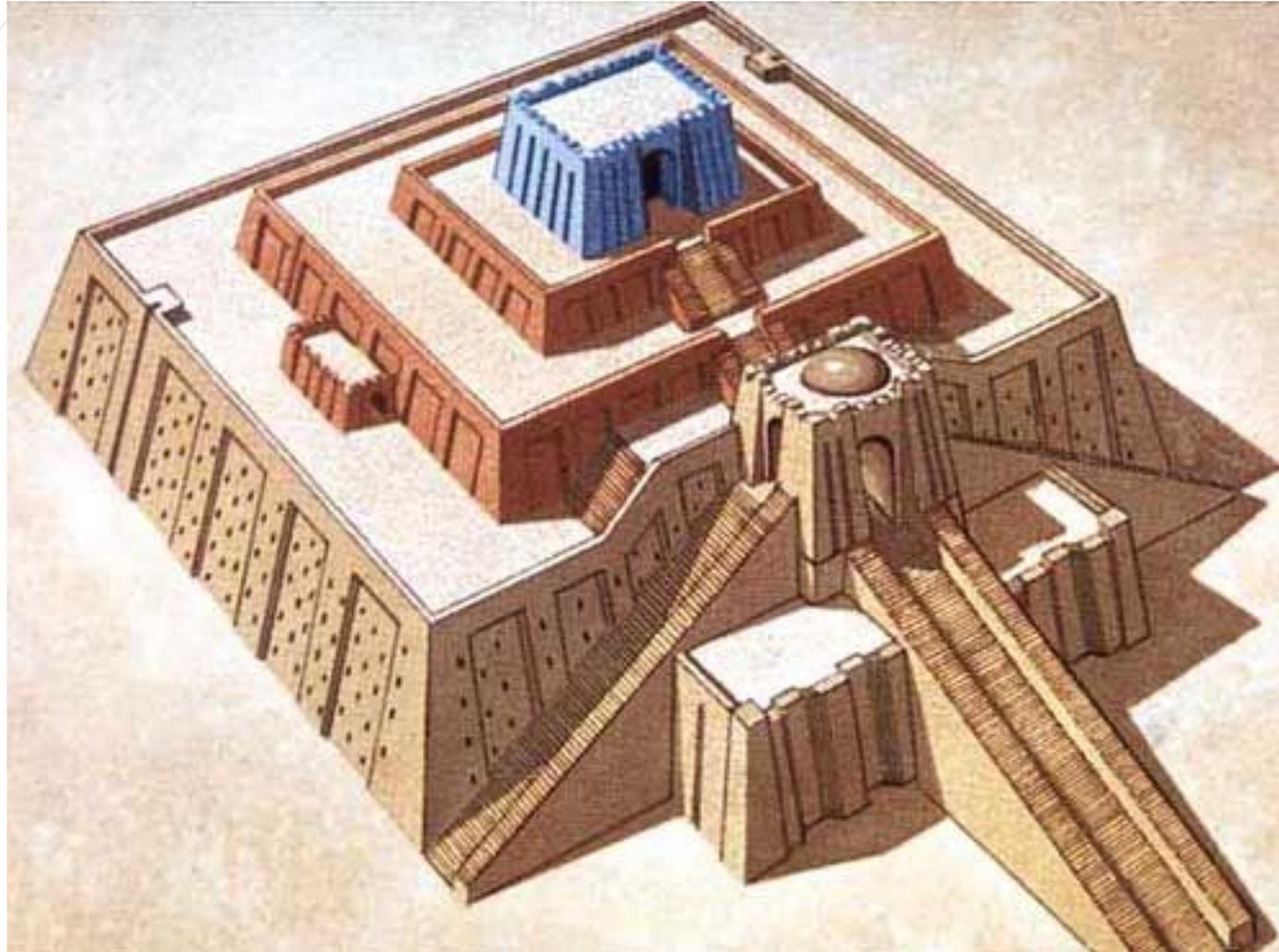


➤ Ur Location

Ur City



Ur City



➤ Ziggurat-
Nammu





Ur City

- Cities began to emerge in Mesopotamia around 4500 years ago. **Ur**, the capital of ancient **Sumerian**, was one of the world's first cities. It supported a complex and sophisticated society.
- The cities were closed by a wall and surrounded by suburban villages and hamlets.
- The two monumental centers were the **Ziggurat complex** with its own defensive wall, overseen by a powerful priesthood, and **Palace of the king**.
- Fewer temples were sprinkled here and there within the rest of the urban fabric, which was a promiscuous blend of residential and commercial architecture.
- Small shops were at times incorporated into the houses.
- In the later Sumerian period at Ur, an example of a **bazaar** was found.

Ur City

- According to one estimate, Ur was the largest city in the world from 2030-1980 BC. Its population was approximately 65,000.
- Traffic along the twisted network of unpaved streets was mostly pedestrian. At Ur, one sees on occasion a low flight of steps against a building from which riders could mount, and the street corners were regularly rounded to facilitate passage.
- Street width at the very most, would be 3 meters (9 feet) or so, and that only for the few principal thoroughfares that led to the public buildings. These would be bordered with the houses of the rich.

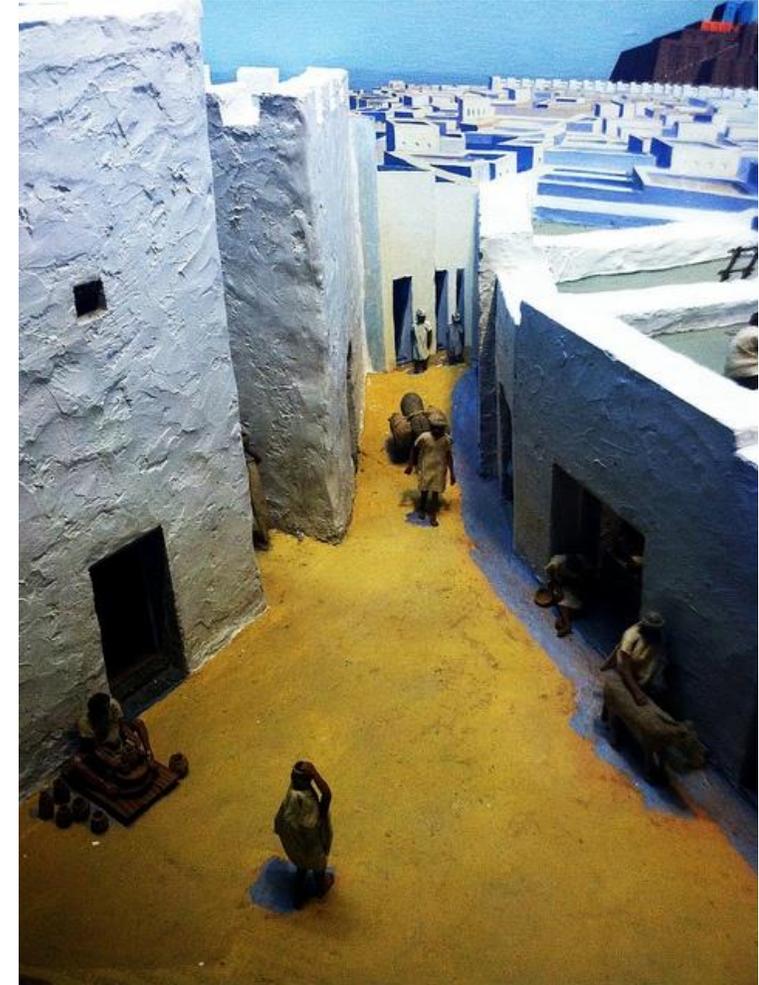
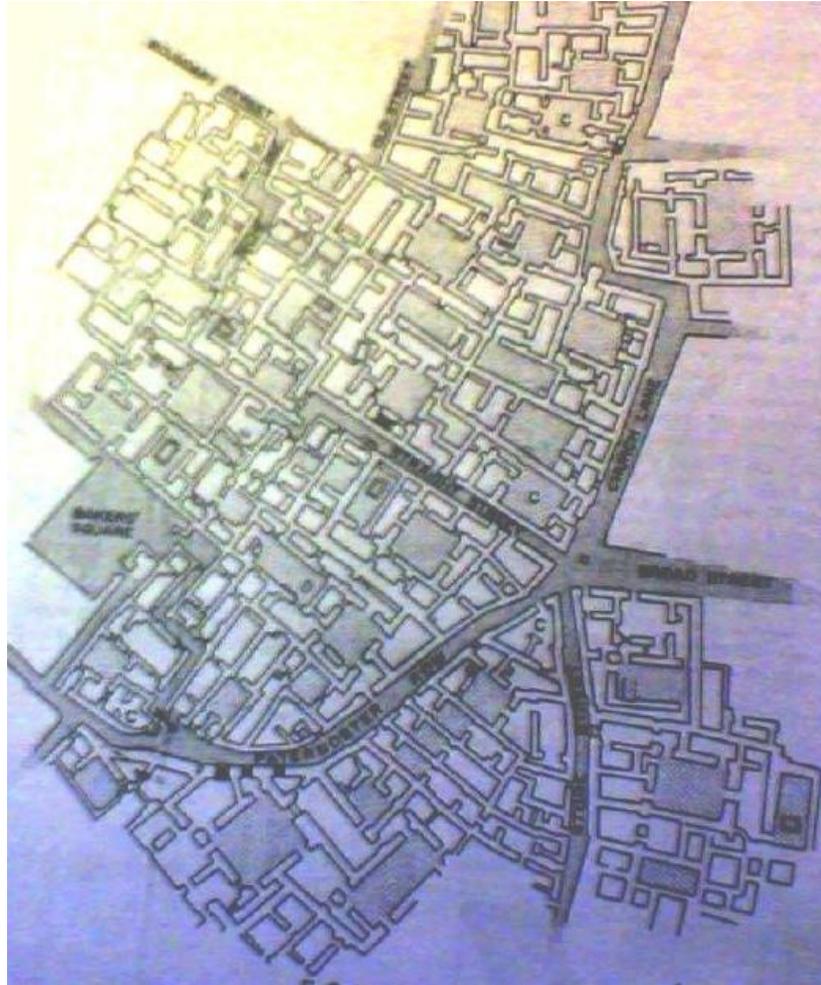
Ur City

- Poorer folk lived at the back, along narrow lanes and alleys. It is hard to imagine much wheeled traffic in this maze, though both service carts (with solid wheels) and chariots had been in use from an early date.
- Once walled the land became precious, and the high value of private property kept public space to a minimum. Ample squares or public gardens were very rare.
- The houses were grouped into congested blocks, where party walls were common.
- The houses were, for the most part, one-storey structures of mud-brick, with several rooms wrapped around a central court. There were usually no outside windows, no attempt to contribute to a street architecture.
- The wealthier classes of Ur lived in houses of dozen or so rooms, arranged on two stories, and whitewashed inside and out.

Ur Layout



Ur Residential Layout



Ur Street in 2100 B.C.



Ur City



Early Egyptian Towns

Early Egyptian Towns

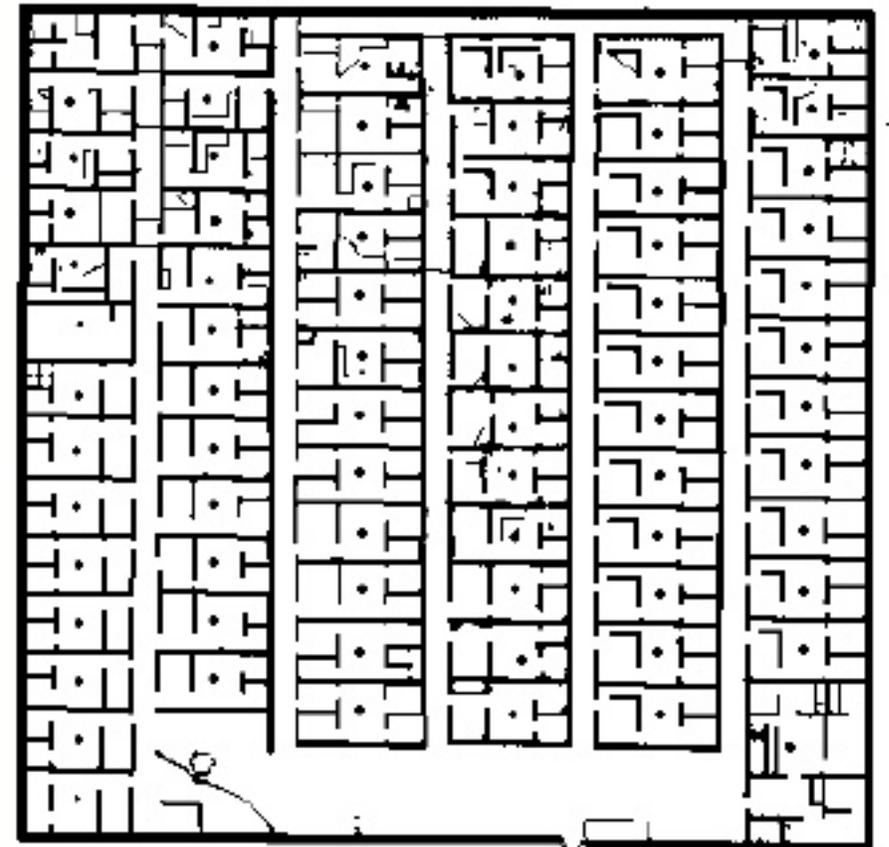
- **Social Structure :**
- Aristocratic : Pharaohs, Nobles, Priests
- Free (Middle Class) : Merchants, Professionals
- Peasants Class
- Slaves Class
- **Central area** : Temple and Palace.

Early Egyptian Towns

- **Al Amarna:**
- Royal road in the middle
- Public open spaces had trees.
- City quarters are gathered around palaces, temples and public buildings
- Houses of high classes lied on major roads and surrounded by gardens
- Workers city was far from the original city, had small homes.
- Any wall did not surround the temples, the palace, the royal residences, the barracks, the offices and the administration.

Early Egyptian Towns

- ▶ Houses occupied whole space inside the walls
- ▶ Workmen had to live in crowded houses of 60 m², or 100 m².
- ▶ The parallel streets were about two meters wide.



Workers' settlement at Akhetaten
After W.M. Flinders Petrie