**KISH**

**Kish** ([Sumerian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sumerian_language): Kiš; transliteration: [Kiŝ](http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/%F0%92%86%A7%22%20%5Co%20%22wikt%3A%F0%92%86%A7)[ki](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ki_%28earth%29); cuneiform: ;[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kish_%28Sumer%29#cite_note-1) [Akkadian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Akkadian_language%22%20%5Co%20%22Akkadian%20language): kiššatu[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kish_%28Sumer%29%22%20%5Cl%20%22cite_note-2)) is modern **Tell al-Uhaymir** ([Babil Governorate](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Babil_Governorate%22%20%5Co%20%22Babil%20Governorate), [Iraq](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iraq)), and was an ancient city of[Sumer](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sumer). Kish is located some 12 km east of [Babylon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Babylon), and 80 km south of [Baghdad](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baghdad) ([Iraq](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iraq)).

History

Kish was occupied beginning in the [Jemdet Nasr period](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jemdet_Nasr_period%22%20%5Co%20%22Jemdet%20Nasr%20period) (ca. 3100 BC), gaining prominence as one of the pre-eminent powers in the region during the early dynastic period.

The [Sumerian king list](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sumerian_king_list) states that it was the first city to have kings following the deluge,[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kish_%28Sumer%29%22%20%5Cl%20%22cite_note-howwhit-3) beginning with [Jushur](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jushur%22%20%5Co%20%22Jushur). Jushur's successor is called [Kullassina-bel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kullassina-bel%22%20%5Co%20%22Kullassina-bel), but this is actually a sentence in Akkadian meaning "All of them were lord". Thus, some scholars have suggested that this may have been intended to signify the absence of a central authority in Kish for a time. The names of the next nine kings of Kish preceding [Etana](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etana%22%20%5Co%20%22Etana) are all Akkadian words for animals, e.g. [Zuqaqip](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zuqaqip%22%20%5Co%20%22Zuqaqip) "scorpion". The [Semitic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Semitic) nature of these and other early names associated with Kish reveals that its population had a strong Semitic component from the dawn of recorded history.[[4]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kish_%28Sumer%29#cite_note-4)

The 12th king of Kish appearing on the list, [Etana](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etana%22%20%5Co%20%22Etana), is noted as "the shepherd, who ascended to heaven and consolidated all the foreign countries". Although his reign has yet to be archaeologically attested, his name is [found](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kish_%28Sumer%29%22%20%5Co%20%22Click%20to%20Continue%20%3E%20by%20Savings%20Sidekick)in later legendary tablets, and Etana is sometimes regarded as the first king and founder of Kish himself. The 21st king of Kish on the list, [Enmebaragesi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Enmebaragesi%22%20%5Co%20%22Enmebaragesi), said to have captured the weapons of [Elam](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elam), is the first name confirmed by archaeological finds from his reign. He is also known through other literary references, where he and his son [Aga of Kish](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aga_of_Kish) are portrayed as contemporary rivals of [Dumuzid, the Fisherman](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dumuzid%2C_the_Fisherman%22%20%5Co%20%22Dumuzid%2C%20the%20Fisherman) and [Gilgamesh](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gilgamesh), early rulers of [Uruk](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uruk%22%20%5Co%20%22Uruk).

Some early kings of Kish are known through archaeology, but are not named on the King list. These include Utug or Uhub, said to have defeated [Hamazi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hamazi%22%20%5Co%20%22Hamazi) in the earliest days, and [Mesilim](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mesilim%22%20%5Co%20%22Mesilim), who built temples in [Adab](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adab_%28city%29%22%20%5Co%20%22Adab%20%28city%29) and[Lagash](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lagash), where he seems to have exercised some control.

The Third Dynasty of Kish is unique in that it begins with a woman, previously a tavern [keeper](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kish_%28Sumer%29), [Kubau](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kubaba%22%20%5Co%20%22Kubaba), as "king". She was later deified as the goddess [Kheba](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hebat%22%20%5Co%20%22Hebat).

Afterwards, though its military and economic power was diminished, it retained a strong political and symbolic significance. Just as with [Nippur](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nippur) to the south, control of Kish was a prime element in legitimizing dominance over the north. Because of the city's symbolic [value](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kish_%28Sumer%29), strong rulers later added the traditional title "*King of Kish*", even if they were from [Akkad](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Akkad_%28city%29), [Ur](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ur), or [Babylon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Babylon). One of the earliest to adopt this title upon subjecting Kish to his empire was King [Mesannepada](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mesannepada%22%20%5Co%20%22Mesannepada) of Ur. A few governors of Kish for other powers in later times are also known.

[Sargon of Akkad](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sargon_of_Akkad) came from the area of Kish. The city's [patron deity](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patron_deity) was [Zababa](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zababa%22%20%5Co%20%22Zababa) (or Zamama) in Akkadian times, along with his wife, the goddess [Inanna](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inanna%22%20%5Co%20%22Inanna).

Kish continued to be occupied through the old Babylonian, [Kassite](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kassite%22%20%5Co%20%22Kassite), and [Neo-Assyrian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neo-Assyrian) periods, and into classical times, before being abandoned.

Archaeology





[Murex](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Murex) bearing the name of "[Rimush](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rimush%22%20%5Co%20%22Rimush), king of Kish", ca.[2270 BC](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2270_BC), [Louvre](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Louvre)

The Kish archaeological site is actually an oval area roughly 5 miles by 2 miles, transected by the dry former bed of the Euphrates River, encompassing around 40 mounds, the largest being Uhaimir and Ingharra. The most notable mounds are:-

* Tell Uhaimir - believed to be the location of the city of Kish. It means "the red" after the red bricks of the [ziggurat](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ziggurat) there.
* Tell Ingharra - believed to be the location of Hursagkalamma, east of Kish, home of a temple of [Inanna](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inanna%22%20%5Co%20%22Inanna).[[5]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kish_%28Sumer%29#cite_note-5)
* Tell Khazneh
* Tell el-Bender - held [Parthian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parthia) material.
* Mound W - where a number of [Neo-Assyrian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neo-Assyrian) tablets were discovered.

After illegally excavated tablets began appearing at the beginning of the last century, François Thureau-Dangin identified the site as being Kish. Those tablets ended up in a variety of museums.

A French archaeological team under Henri de Genouillac excavated at Kish between 1912 and 1914, finding 1400 Old Babylonian tablets which were distributed to the[Istanbul Archaeology Museum](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Istanbul_Archaeology_Museum) and the [Louvre](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Louvre). [[6]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kish_%28Sumer%29#cite_note-6)

Later a joint [Field Museum](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Field_Museum) and [Oxford University](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oxford_University) team under [Stephen Langdon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stephen_Herbert_Langdon) excavated from 1923 to 1933, with the recovered materials split between Chicago and the[Ashmolean Museum](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ashmolean_Museum) at Oxford.[[7]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kish_%28Sumer%29#cite_note-7) [[8]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kish_%28Sumer%29#cite_note-8) [[9]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kish_%28Sumer%29#cite_note-9)? [[10]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kish_%28Sumer%29#cite_note-10) [[11]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kish_%28Sumer%29#cite_note-11) [[12]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kish_%28Sumer%29#cite_note-12) [[13]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kish_%28Sumer%29#cite_note-13)

The actual excavations at Kish were led initially by E. MacKay and later by L. C. Watelin. Work on the faunal and flora remains was conducted by [Henry Field](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry_Field_%28anthropologist%29).[[14]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kish_%28Sumer%29#cite_note-14) [[15]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kish_%28Sumer%29#cite_note-15)

More recently, a Japanese team from the [Kokushikan University](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kokushikan_University%22%20%5Co%20%22Kokushikan%20University) led by Ken Matsumoto excavated at Kish in 1988, 2000, and 2001. The final season lasted only one week.[[16]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kish_%28Sumer%29#cite_note-16) [[17]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kish_%28Sumer%29#cite_note-17) [[18]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kish_%28Sumer%29#cite_note-18)