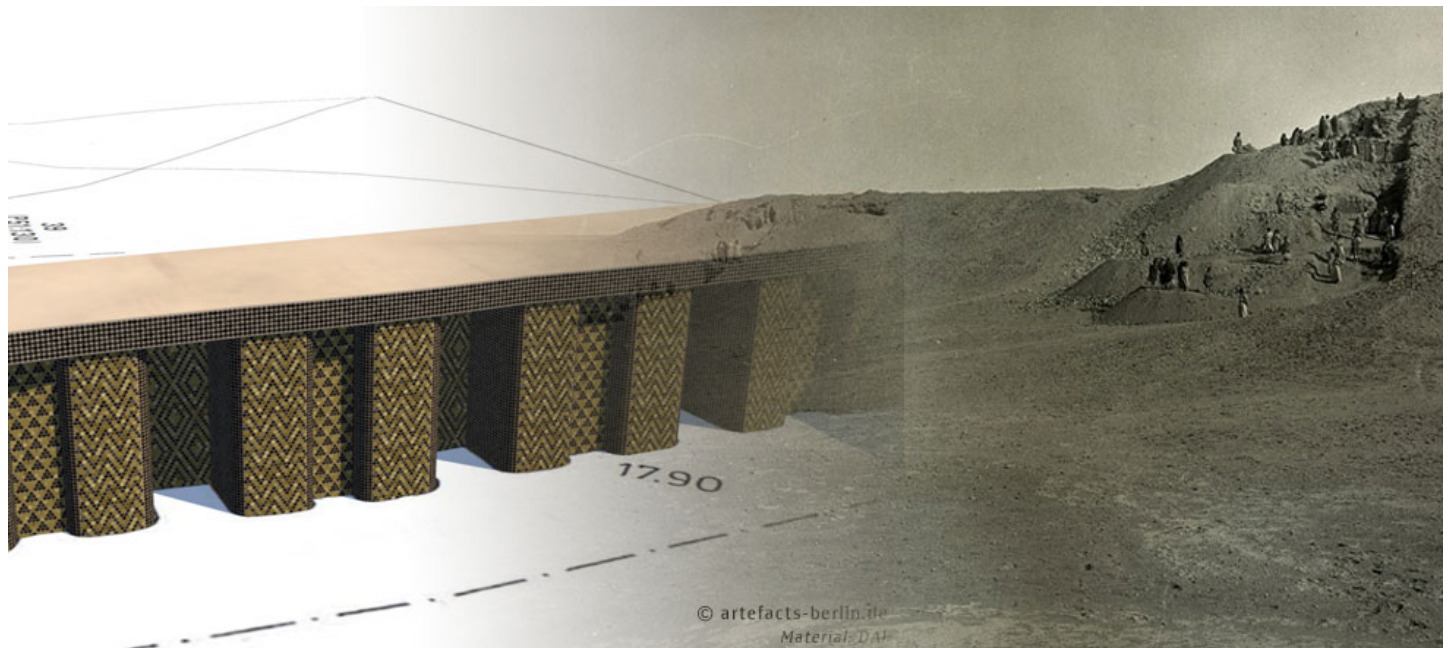


## Uruk rises again in digital 3D

Past Horizons



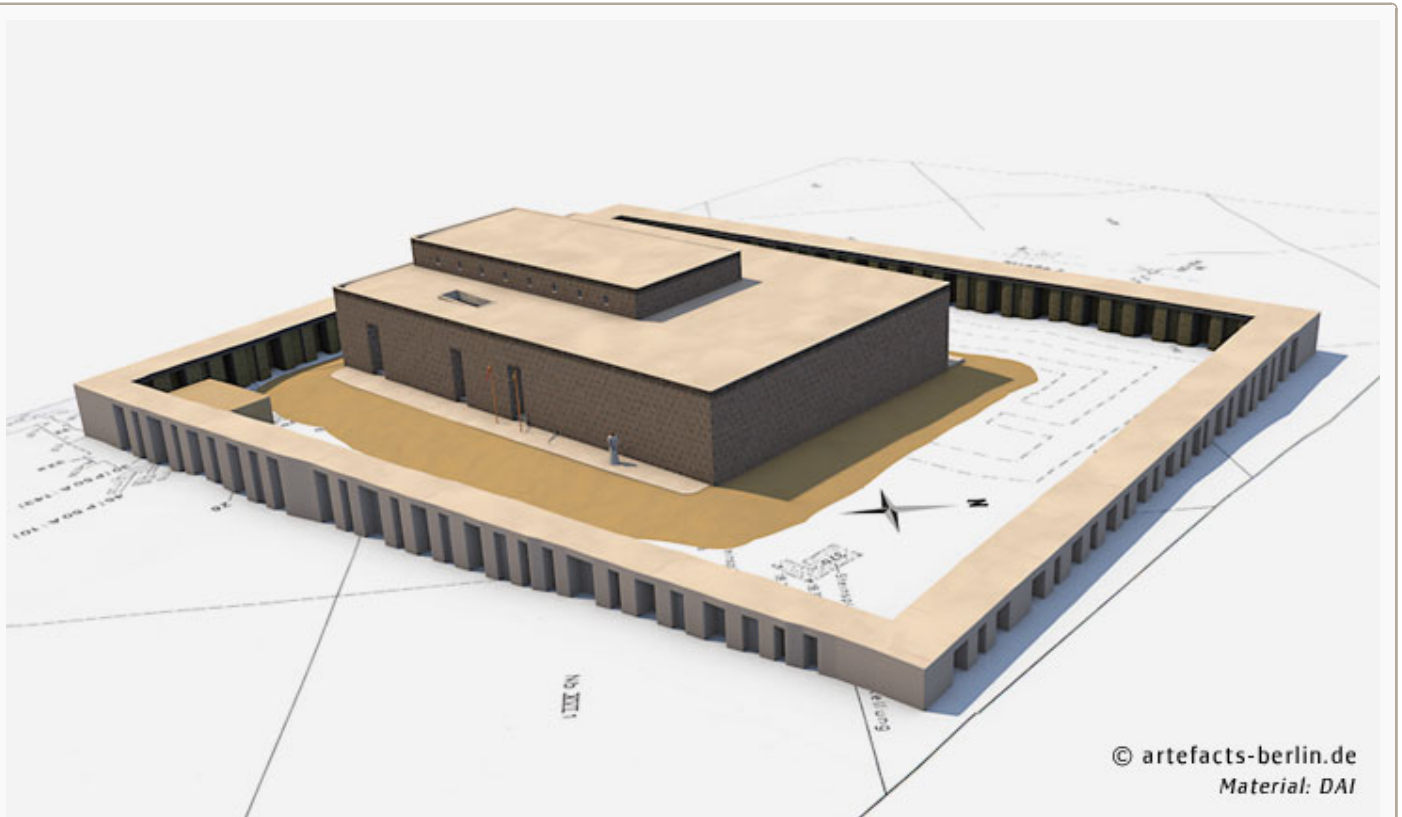
Part of the enclosure wall were also decorated with mosaic cones/Excavations at Uruk in the 1920s. © artefacts-berlin.de; Scientific material: German Archaeological Institute (DAI)

Article created on Friday, May 10, 2013

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Uruk, in modern-day Iraq, is one of the first cities in the world and was populated almost without interruption for over 5,000 years – from the 4th millennium BC to the 1st millennium AD.

The city is famous for the invention of cuneiform writing at the end of the 4th millennium, in the “late Uruk period”. During this creative flourishing the city already covered an area of 2.5 square kilometres and many distinctive architectural features were invented and developed.



View of the reconstructed "Stone-Cone building" with surrounding walls. © artefacts-berlin.de; Scientific material: German Archaeological Institute (DAI)

## Recreating the architecture of innovation

Today, little is known with certainty about the purpose and function of this early representative architecture, among which the so-called "Stone-Cone Building" is perhaps one of the most puzzling.

The construction technique utilised on this building is without parallel, and is found neither in Uruk itself nor anywhere else in the world. While all other buildings in the region use mud brick as the primary building material, its walls are made up of an artificial cement-like material that was applied, layer after layer.

Thousands of carefully formed and perforated slabs of ceramic were placed in-between each layer in order to provide the basis for the outer plastering, while, within the plastering, hundreds of thousands of coloured stone cones were set into the walls in geometric patterns to make up the mosaic decoration of the building.

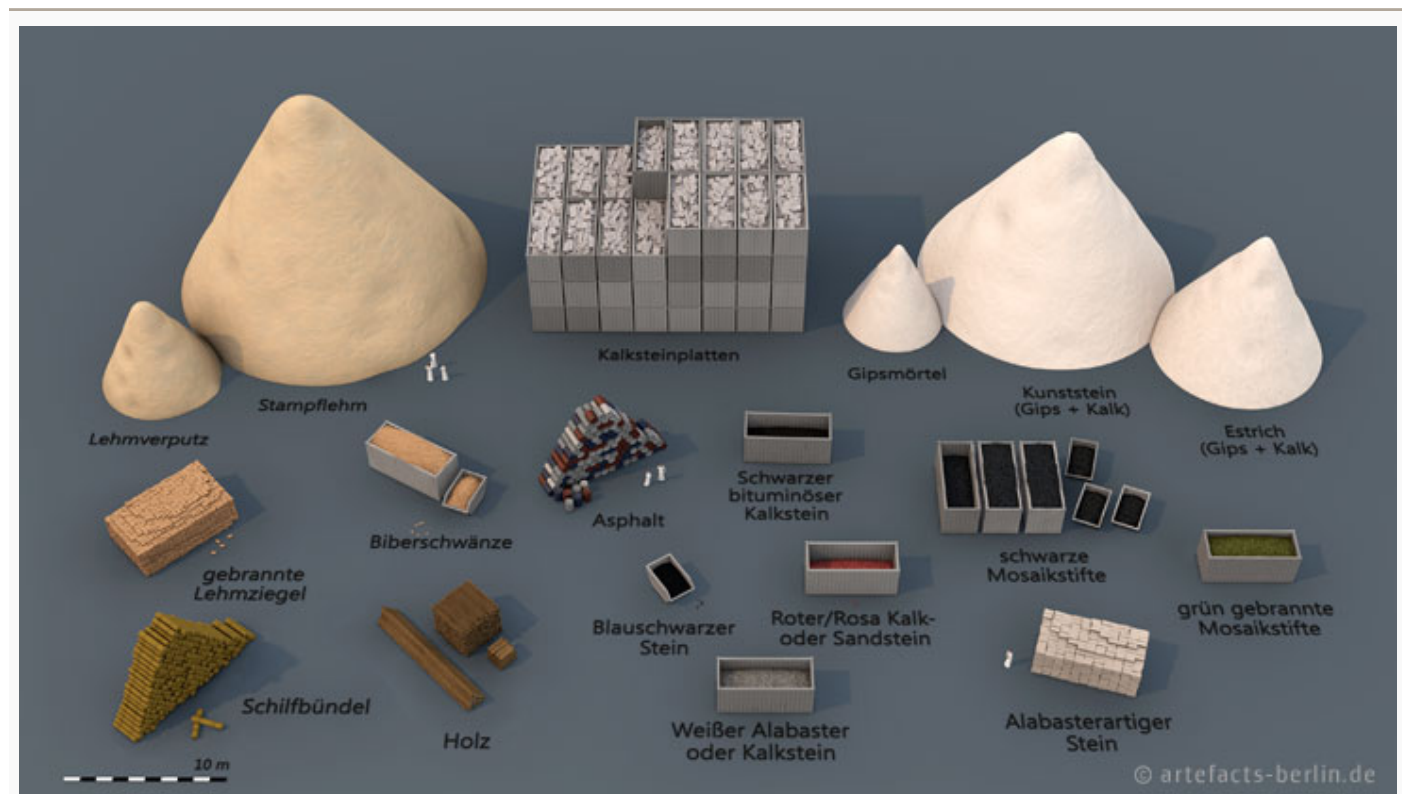
Understanding the construction was an important step in understanding the building and architectural make-up of the structure and this is where German based conceptual design agency [Artefacts Berlin](#) came in. The team specialise in the visualisation of archaeological and scientific content, creating informative graphics and animations for exhibitions and research projects.

## Based on excavated evidence

Together with Prof. Dr. Eichmann, who has been studying the "Stone-Cone Building" for many years, the Artefacts team, who are archaeologists themselves carefully reconstructed the building process on the basis of the evidence.

The results were visualised in a compelling animation that captured the building's entire construction process, from its complex foundation design to more interpretive reflections regarding its inner installations. Each step of the building process is shown in detail in order to give an informative overview of the construction of this outstanding building.

There was also a further benefit to utilising this 3D architectural rendering process- the digital model allowed for calculations to be made on the total amount of building material used in this large-scale building project.



Infographic showing the total amount and type of building material that was used in the construction of the "Stone-Cone Building". © artefacts-berlin.de

## A monumental exhibition

The digital model of this and other structures is now showcased at the exciting exhibition *Uruk: 5000 Years of the Megacity that* marks the 100th anniversary of the first excavations at Uruk

The Staatliche Museen's Vorderasiatisches Museum (Museum of the Ancient Near East) and the Reiss-Engelhorn-Museen, Mannheim collaborated with the German Archaeological Institute's Orient Department and the German Oriental Society to create a comprehensive display, featuring objects from the Vorderasiatisches Museum's own collection and the Uruk-Warka collection of the German Archaeological Institute, which is maintained by the University of Heidelberg. The German-held works will be supplemented by further extraordinary objects from other museums, including the British Museum in London and the Louvre in Paris.

The exhibition – along with these stunning digital models of the buildings promises to be an impressive demonstration of the emergence and blossoming of one of the oldest known cities in human history and will reveal how the many facets of urban life known to have first evolved in Uruk impacted not just on the ancient Near East, but the wider world as a whole.

Video is © artefacts-berlin.de; Scientific material: German Archaeological Institute (DAI)

Source: *Artefacts Berlin*

## More Information

- [Artefacts Berlin](#)
- [URUK: 5000 years of a Megacity](#)

Boehmer, R.M. 1990: *Zur Funktion des Steinstifttempels in Uruk nach Befunden der Kampagne 39*, in: *BaM* 21, 49-66. Eichmann, R. 2007: *Uruk. Architektur I. Von den Anfängen bis zur frühdynastischen Zeit* (=AUWE 14), Textteil und Beilagen, Rahden.

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