

## REACHING FOR THE SKY

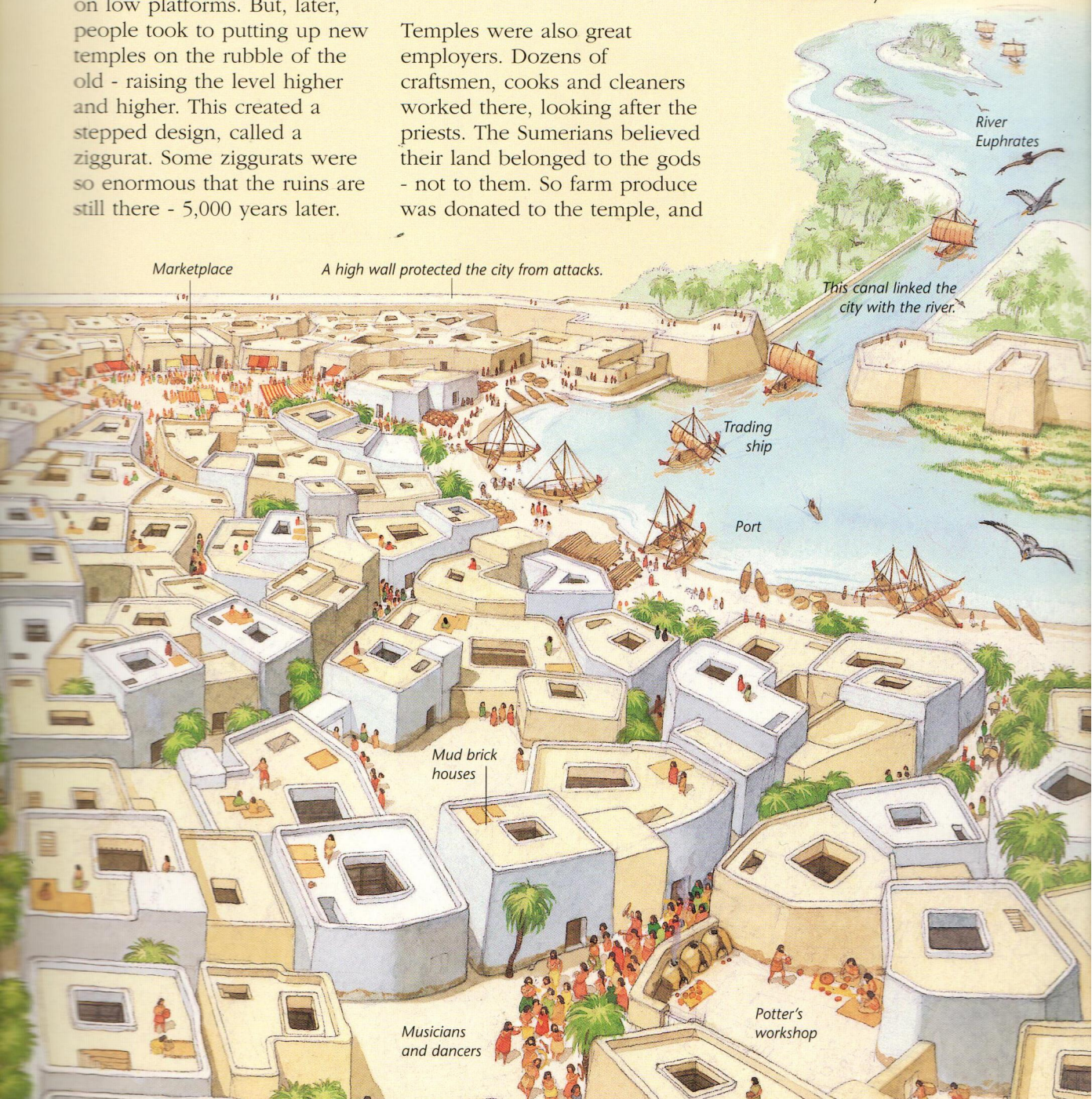
At the heart of every Sumerian city was a magnificent temple, dedicated to the city's patron god or goddess. The first temples were simple, rectangular buildings standing on low platforms. But, later, people took to putting up new temples on the rubble of the old - raising the level higher and higher. This created a stepped design, called a ziggurat. Some ziggurats were so enormous that the ruins are still there - 5,000 years later.

The Sumerians prayed to hundreds of different gods and goddesses. But each city had its own special one, and the temple was regarded as the god's home. Priests lived there too, performing ceremonies and reciting hymns and prayers.

Temples were also great employers. Dozens of craftsmen, cooks and cleaners worked there, looking after the priests. The Sumerians believed their land belonged to the gods - not to them. So farm produce was donated to the temple, and

the priests were put in charge of collecting, storing and distributing it to everyone. To organize this huge task, a small army of scribes and officials was on hand.

*Barley and wheat were grown in fields outside the city walls.*



Marketplace

A high wall protected the city from attacks.

This canal linked the city with the river.

Trading ship

Port

Mud brick houses

Musicians and dancers

Potter's workshop