The Animated Temple and Its Agency in the Urban Life of the City in Ancient Mesopotamia *Beate Pongratz-Leisten, NYU, ISAW*

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Abstract: In ancient Mesopotamia, the functions of the temple were manifold. It could operate as an administrative center, as a center of learning, as a place of jurisdiction, as a center for healing, and as an economic institution, as indicated in both textual and archaeological sources. All these functions involved numerous and diverse personnel and generated interaction with the surrounding world, thereby turning the temple into the center of urban life. Because the temple fulfilled all these functions in addition to housing the divinity, it acquired agency in its own right. Thus, temple, city, and divinity could merge into concerted action. It is this aspect of the temple that lies at the center of the following considerations.

Keywords: temple; divinity; community; agency

"Arbela, O Arbela, heaven without equal, Arbela! . . . Arbela, temple of reason and counsel!" (Livingstone 1989, no. 8).[1] This Neo-Assyrian salute to the city of Arbela stands at the end of a long history of texts that ponder the origin of temples and cities and their role in the cosmic plan. Glorifying the city, it conflates it with both the divine realm and the temple in terms of agency in a manner that is typical of the ancient world view and that appears as a leitmotif in literary texts, economic texts, prayers, and incantations as late as the Hellenistic period, as can be seen in one of the prayers addressed to Marduk during the New Year Festival:

Be forgiving to your city, Babylon,

Grant mercy to your temple, Esagila,

With your exalted word, lord of the great gods,

May light be set (again) before the citizens of Babylon. (Linssen 2004, pp. 219, 228, ll. 246–49)

The archaeological design as well as the economic and religious functions of the temple have received much attention in scholarship (Fales 2013, with bibliography), as has the description of the temple in literary texts (Löhnert 2013, with bibliography). In ancient Mesopotamia, the functions of the temple were manifold. It could operate as an administrative center, as reflected in the name of the Nabû Temple in Assur (Assur Directory, George 1992, pp. 178–79, ll. 158–59); as a center of learning, as attested by the libraries and the administrative archives of the Nabû Temple in Kalkhu (Villard 2019), Dur Sharru-ken, and Babylon; as a place of jurisdiction, as indicated by the ceremonial names, hymns, and the *Codex Hammurabi*;[2] as a center for healing, as in the case of the Gula Temple at Isin; and as an economic institution, as indicated in both textual and archaeological sources. All these functions involved numerous and diverse personnel and generated interaction with the surrounding world, thereby turning the temple into *the* center of urban life. Because the temple fulfilled all these functions in addition to housing the divinity, it acquired agency in its own right.[3] Thus, temple, city, and divinity could merge into

concerted action. It is this aspect of the temple that lies at the center of the following considerations.

1. The Temple as Mirror of Domestic Life

In ancient Mesopotamian scripts, the Sumerian sign read as é and in Akkadian as *bītu* means "house," "household," "family," or "dynasty." It is also used to denote a temple, as in the ceremonial term é.sag.íla, that is, "house/temple whose top is high" (George 1993, p. 139, no. 967), and in the Sumerian term for palace é.gal/Akkadian *ekallum* or "large house or palace." Early Mesopotamian temples may originally have resembled the reed huts typical of the marshes in Southern Mesopotamia (Figure 1).
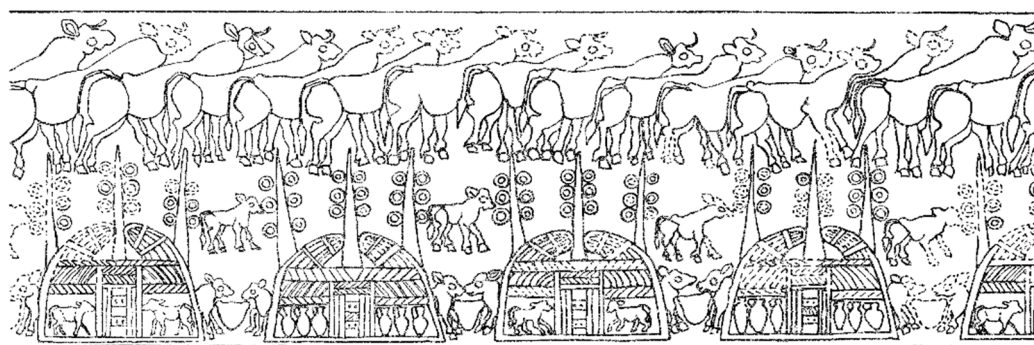
Figure 1. Seal impression depicting rows of cattle and reed huts (Adapted from ref. (Hamilton 1967, Figure 1)).

Mudbrick architecture evolved during the seventh millennium BCE, and the earliest remains of temple structures of the Chalcolithic Period have come to light in Mesopotamia. During the fourth millennium, their ground plan started resembling that of a tripartite house with a large central room "running the width of the building with rows of smaller room on both sides" or "a courtyard house with an open courtyard and rooms on all sides" (Figure 2) (Roaf 1995, p. 426). The resemblance of the temple to the house reflects the ancient notion of the temple as a household or socio-economic unit that engages in productive and commercial activities similar to those of any secular household or palace (Postgate 1992, p. 115; Fales 2013).

In the fourth millennium BCE, temples as well as their storage facilities and workshops were often elaborately decorated with niches and set on raised platforms bound by enclosures that separated them from residential areas and thus established them as the most prominent points of the city. As Mario Fales observes, "the temple with its religious annexes (from ziggurats to cultic courtyards to chapels, etc.), and its attendant administrative structures (storerooms, granaries, workshops, etc.), and even its gardens could represent a fundamental determining agent for the topographical layout of the city, at times even overshadowing the palace or competing on an equal footing with it and other civilian of military establishments" (Fales 2013, p. 91). The temple itself contained one or more cellae with a raised platform for accommodating the divinity (represented by his/her statue), who, according to the iconography of later cylinder seals (Figure 3), we should probably imagine seated on a throne.[4]

Later directories of temple names,[5] which survive primarily from the first millennium BCE, as well as ritual texts and offering lists reveal that temples housed many divinities. To some extent, these represented the "family" and retinue of the patron deity, whose court was modeled on those of human rulers, and also included minor deities of the local pantheon.[6] The perception of divinity and the pantheon as sociomorphic (Pongratz-Leisten, forthcoming b) and the fact that the materiality and operation of the temple mirrored the human way of life lay the groundwork for investigating the conflation of temple, divinity, and city as promoted in the texts of ancient Mesopotamia.
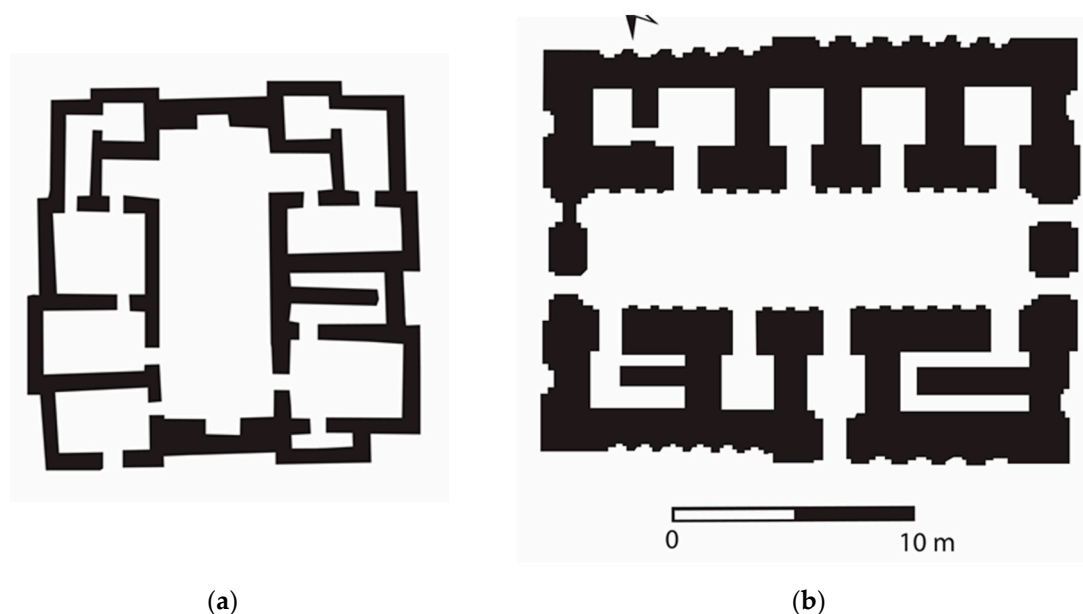
Figure 2. (**a**) Courtyard House (after Roaf 1995, 426 Figure 3e); (**b**) Tripartite Temple (White Temple) of the Uruk Period (after Roaf 1995, 430 Figure 7). © Copyright 2021 OCLC, Inc.

Figure 3. The Janus-faced god Usmû introducing a supplicant before the god Enki sitting in a shrine guarded on two sides by the *lahmu*, Old Akkadian Period (Adapted from ref. (Porada 1993, Figure 15)).

2. Temple and Urban Communities

In the Archaic period (3200-2900 BCE), the logographic writing of the names of cities such as èš-utu (sanctuary of (the sun god) Utu/Shamash) for the city of Larsa, èš-ùri (sanctuary of (the moon god) Nanna) for Ur, and èš-mùš (sanctuary of (the goddess) Ishtar) for Zabalam, already reveal a close link between the temple as the economic center and dwelling of the divinity who served as patron deity of the city and the community settled around it (Englund and Nissen 1993; Szarzynska 1993, p. 24, n. 13; Sallaberger 2010, p. 33).[7] As can be seen in so-called city seals, the pictograph for èš is a building on an elevated platform and surmounted by the sign of a divinity. The city seals of this period (Matthews 1993, pp. 40–47 and Figures 12–125; Steinkeller 2002, p. 253f.; Wang 2011, pp. 219–22), which contain multiple names in various constellations, indicate that a number of urban communities were defined by temples that served as their focal points. In some cases, this particular manner of writing the name of a city with reference to its patron deity survived throughout the history of Mesopotamia and thus, along with city seals, indicates the strong

sense of communal identity that bound these cities to their patron gods. The tie between temple and urban community is evident once again in the *Hymn to Keš*:

> (ll. 14–18) House Keš platform of the Land, important fierce bull! Growing as high as the hills, embracing the heavens, growing as high as Ekur, lifting its head among the mountains! Rooted in the Apsu, verdant like the mountains! Will anyone else bring forth something as great as Keš? . . . (59–73) It is indeed a city, it is indeed a city! Who knows its interior? The house Keš is indeed a city! (After Wilcke 2006, p. 221)

as well as in the name iri-ku$_3$^{ki} or "sacred city" for the temple of the goddess Bau in Girsu (Selz 1995, pp. 5–6, 122, 237; cited by Löhnert 2013, p. 265).

Much later, this identity-shaping power of the temple and its divinity surfaces in thirteenth/twelfth-century BCE textual records of real estate transactions in the city of Emar in Syria, in which the patron deity Ninurta and either the city elders or the city as community appear as a corporate body distinct from the palace and use Ninurta's seal as their official seal (Yamada 1994). The social conscience of the temple emerges most clearly in the temple of the moon god Sîn in Khafajah, where "some of the loans of barley to individuals are free of the usual one-third interest, implying a role as a charitable neighbor in times of famine. More poignant are a few sale documents in which the high-priest of the temple buys children . . . taking on extra mouths to feed when their families were unable to feed them, and reflects a long-standing tradition whereby the temples gathered under their wings the rejects and misfits of society—orphans, illegitimate children" (Postgate 1992, pp. 135–36).

When Naram-Sîn, king of Akkade (2254-2218 BCE), requested that a shrine be built for him after his defeat of the cities in the southern alluvial plain, the consent of the respective local elites was framed in a religious metaphor so that the patron gods of the cities rather than the people granted their consent.[8] Such theologizing of historical events occurred equally in times of war whenever a city was defeated by its enemy. The so-called *City Laments* ascribe such defeats or even the destruction of cities to an angry patron divinity's abandonment of a city.[9] Restoration of the temple, in turn, was inextricably intertwined with the patron divinity's relenting and return to the city.

3. Conflation of Temple, Divinity, and Community as Translated into the Temple's Agency

Literary texts reveal that according to the ancient world view, the temple and community overlapped; the divine owner of the temple was the third party in this tangled relationship between the immaterial, the material, and people (Hodder 2012). This conflation of the temple, its divine owner, and the community meant that the temple and the city too could convey terrifying and awe-inspiring splendor (me-lim$_9$), one that could reach far into foreign territories (Edzard 1997, E3.1.1.7.CylA ix 16–17). Once again, such interpenetration or conflation of temple, divinity, and the astral body as an extension of the divinity, shows all of them radiating light, brilliance, and awe, making the divinity manifest in the world (Rochberg 2009, p. 49). Like the divinity, the temple and the city possess special powers (Sumerian: me), have agency, and can make decisions for other lands, as is in the case of Ekur, the temple of Enlil, chief deity of the Sumero-Babylonian pantheon, which is described in a hymn addressed to King Ishme-Dagan.[10] This belief goes back at least as far as the Early Dynastic period as is clear from the section dedicated to Inanna's temple at Ulmash in the collection of *Temple Hymn*:

> $^{507-513}$O Ulmash, upper land, . . . of the Land, terrifying lion battering a wild bull, net spreading over an enemy, making silence fall upon a rebel land on which, as long as it remains insubmissive, spittle is poured! House of Inana of silver and lapis lazuli, a storehouse built of gold, your princess is an *urabu* bird, the Mistress of the Nigin-jar.

[514–518] Arrayed in battle, jubilantly (?) beautiful, ready with the seven maces, washing her tools for battle, opening the door of battle and . . . , the extremely wise one of heaven, Inana, has erected a house in your precinct, O house Ulmash, and taken her seat upon your dais.

[519] 12 lines: the house of Inana in Ulmash. (Sjöberg and Bergmann S. J. 1969; Black et al. 1998–2006)

The belligerence of the temple conveyed by the metaphor of a raging lion in battle with a wild bull evokes the imagery of the cylinder seals of the time, which frequently depict conflicts between the two animals, thereby reflecting those arising from competition over natural resources—water, in particular—between the city states of Sumer. However, this antagonistic quality is also denoted by the materiality and physical appearance of the temple, which always dominated the urban skyline thanks to its sheer monumentality, elevation on a platform, or pairing with a ziggurat. Its combative nature was further intensified by its gates, which were protected by guardian figures that ranged from lions to genies in the shape of winged bulls throughout the first millennium BCE.

This rather unusual aspect of the temple—from the western perspective—is further reflected in the belief that removal of parts of the temple could lead to negative consequences for the one responsible,[11] as the scholar Bel-ushezib explains in a letter to Esarhaddon. In it, he informs the king that the governor of Nippur is making common cause with anti-Assyrian rebels by removing a dais in the temple and performing apotropaic rituals to shift the resulting bad omens from himself to the king.[12] The danger of removing parts of or even relocating a sanctuary are described in the headings of two rituals: "evil resulting from a sanctuary or sacred place may not approach a man or his house"[13] and "evil from a sacred place or a temple may not approach the king" (Caplice 1970, p. 132). Interestingly, most building rituals deal with procedures that should be undertaken if a temple collapses due to a god's anger (Ambos 2010, pp. 224–26). The insight that we modern scholars can gain from such information is that the temple in its material form was regarded as an extension of the divinity's body and acting on its behalf, as Irene Winter has observed on the relationship between king and palace (Winter 2010, p. 258).

4. The Temple and Its Performance in Jurisdiction

The temple's agency was not restricted to protecting its community from external hostile forces. It was equally capable of ensuring security within the community by establishing what was right and just. Legal decisions were pronounced at the temple's main entrance known from literary texts by the term dub-lá.[14] While temple gates could be decorated with wild bulls, dragons or lions that served an apotropaic function, the main entrance gate may also have accommodated the image of the king. This possibility is suggested by the *Hammurabi Stele*, in which the king tells us that he set up his stele in the presence of his image in Esagila, the Marduk temple in Babylon (Roth 1997, 2nd ed., pp. 133–34, xlvii 59–78).[15] The stele combines the image of the king before the sun god Shamash, the divine judge, with an inscription drawn from the law code that confirms his potential right "to decide punishment that may include the ability to end the identity and the life of a citizen" (Bahrani 2008, p. 118). Image and text thus join forces to convey the king's executive power to dispense justice. If Hammurabi's stele was, in fact, erected by the outer temple gate (dub-lá) rather than the cella,[16] or in the courtyard as told in copies of statue inscriptions in the Ekur at Nippur, then we can imagine a scenario in which the judge, the *šangû* (the chief cultic functionary and administrator of the Babylonian temple), or even the king himself exercised jurisdiction. Consequently, the stele of Hammurabi's *presencing* the juridical power sanctioned by the gods would have reinforced that the pronouncement of justice made by one of these officials was a *re-actualization* of the law perpetually proclaimed by the king in the stele as testimony before the gods of his role as the king of justice. Thus, the very placement of the stele at the temple gate reinforced human judgment—not only because it was performed under the supervision of the gods, but also because it was

pronounced within the physical environment of the temple. Material, divine, and human agency thus bolstered the pronouncement of justice. The ceremonial names of certain parts of Inanna's temple in Isin mentioned in a royal hymn of Iddin-Dagan that celebrates his encounter with the goddess in the Sacred Marriage Rite speak precisely to this juridical function of the temple:

> Iddin-Dagan A 169–171
>
> In the palace (é.gal, "House, Advice for the Land of Sumer," neck-stock of the land, "House of the River
>
> Ordeal," a dais is set up for Ninegal.[17]

It is not altogether clear whether this particular passage of the hymn refers to the temple with the term é.gal for palace,[18] or palace of the king, in which a sanctuary is set up for Ninegal/Bēlet-ekalli. The latter is attested at the palace of Mari, for example. A third possibility is that the text, in its literarization of a cultic ritual, deliberately conflates the institutions of the palace and the temple. Other Old Babylonian texts, such as the Sumerian *Enki's Journey to Nippur* and the Akkadian *Codex Hammurabi* presence the temple's agency by having its brickwork speak, give advice[19] or offer propitious portents to the king.[20] Statements such as "during the night the temple praises its lord and offers its best to him" transpose a cultic performance of the night into an image of the temple acting on its own, thereby illustrating the ancient understanding of an animated world, in which anything could come alive in a particular context.

Returning to the legal aspect of the temple, yet another cultural practice of the ancients needs to be stressed, namely, the tradition of preserving oaths of loyalty and treaties in the temple. Such practice is attested in Hittite treaties[21] and by the spectacular archaeological finds at Tell Tayinat (Harrison and Osborne 2012; Lauinger 2012). Not only does it reflect the belief that the gods were the ultimate supervisors of the treaty, but it also reveals faith in the agency of the temple as a physical environment that imbues treaties with divine sanction and authority.

5. The Temple's Agency Anchored in the Times of Yore

Texts from early on present the temple as a creation of the gods and, with this narrative, establish a world view aimed at anchoring the temple in the primordial past. This concept is intertwined with the possibility that the patron divinity himself/herself may have built the temple, a trope attested for the god Enki particularly in Old Babylonian Sumerian literary texts, including *Enki and the World Order*, *Enki's Journey to Nippur*, and *Enlil in the Ekur*, for textual references, see (Löhnert 2013, pp. 265–66).

Incantations performed during temple-building rituals that include *historiolae* continue this notion of the temple's origin. Very often these stories combine the story of the temple's origin with the charge placed on the king to provide for its prosperity as in the following bilingual from the Seleucid period:

> When An/Anu, Enlil, and Enki/Ea created heaven and earth,
>
> Had their sanctuary built in the country to soothe their heart,
>
> Had built their palaces and taken abode (in them),
>
> Had [imposed?)] the carrying basket upon the black-headed people,
>
> They appointed the shepherd (the king) in the country, who provides for the sanctu aries of the gods.
>
> The great gods joyfully entered the Ubšukinna and
>
> Ordained his destiny in a superb way, they [assigned to him(?)] (the ability)
>
> To make decision(s). (Mayer 1978, pp. 438–43)

Not only was the temple believed to have originated with creation, but it was also thought to physically bind heaven and earth. This idea is conveyed by numerous passages in royal inscriptions that refer to its ideal cosmic dimensions, with its top reaching the

heavens and its foundations being anchored in the Apsû, the realm of primeval purity and the seat of the god Enki/Ea. In *Gudea's Temple Hymn,* as transmitted in cylinders Gudea A and B, the plan of Ningirsu's temple revealed to Gudea is said to have been designed by the god Enki (Gudea E 3.1.1.7.CylA xvii 16–17). The term used for the plan is giš-hur, which, in addition to meaning "drawing, plan" in contexts such as this one, conveys the idea of a primeval plan designed by gods in mythic times.[22] This idea of the god Enki/Ea as representing the master mind behind any construction of a temple survived throughout Mesopotamian history into the sixth century BCE as Nabopolassar claimed that Ea even more so than Marduk was the one who inspired him to design the profile of Etemenanki, the ziggurat of Marduk in Babylon:

> (ii 9–20) Through the sagacity of Ea, through the intelligence of Marduk, through the wisdom of Nabû and Nissaba, by means of the vast mind with which the god who created me endowed (me), I deliberated in my great wisdom and I commissioned skilled experts, and the surveyor measured the dimensions with the twelve-cubit rule. (ii 21–30) The master builders stretched the measuring cords, they established the outlines. I inquired through extispicy by consulting Šamaš, Adad, and Marduk and, where my mind deliberated (and) I pondered (unsure of) the dimensions, the great gods revealed (the truth) to me by the procedure of (oracular) confirmation.

Consequently, any restoration of the temple is tied to its construction in primordial times, as related in a cosmological introduction to a building ritual from the Hellenistic period (i.e., the fourth or third century BCE):

> When the god Anu created heaven,
>
> (when) the god Nudimmud (=Ea) created the apsû, his dwelling,
>
> the god Ea pinched off a piece of clay in the apsû,
>
> created Kulla (brick god) for the restoration of [temples],
>
> created the reed marsh and the forest for the work of their construction,
>
> created the gods Ninildu (carpentry), Ninsimug (god of metal workers), and Arazu (god of prayer)
>
> to be the completers of their construction work,
>
> created mountains and oceans for everything . . . ,
>
> created the deities Gushkinbanda (god of goldsmiths), Ninagal (god of metal-workers), Ninzadim (god
>
> of engravers), and Ninkurra (goddess of stonecutters) for their work,
>
> (created) the abundant products (of mountain and ocean) to be offerings . . . .,
>
> created the deities Ashnan (grain goddess), Lahar (cattle god), Siris (wine god-dess), Ningizzida (god of
>
> vegetation), Ninsar (vegetation goddess) . . .
>
> for making their revenues abundant . . .
>
> created the deities Umunmutamku (Marduk's cook) and Umunmutamnag (Mar-duk's cupbearer)
>
> to be presenters of offerings,
>
> created the god Kusig, high-priest of the great gods,
>
> to be the one who completes their rites and ceremonies.
>
> Created the king to be the provider . . .
>
> Created men to be the makers. (Wyatt 2001, pp. 224–25)

This passage also reveals that the temple was thought to be permeated by and to represent cosmic dimensions due to the association drawn between building materials from which it was constructed, and offerings made to divinities. Through the link drawn

between materials, the divine realm (as in the case of the clay used to make bricks and Apsû), and particular divinities, this text further ties the temple to its mythical archetype. By listing various groups of craftsmen, including goldsmiths, metalworkers, engravers, stonecutters, etc., the text implicitly references the ritual performance of depositing "gold, silver, gemstones from the mountains and the sea" (Nabopolassar: Etemenanki ii 37–39), as well as the pouring of libations of sweet-scented oil mixed with aromatics and red soil into the foundations (Nabopolassar: Etemenanki ii 41–43; Da Riva 2013) in order to assuage the gods of the netherworld and Apsû, as well as to guarantee the purity of the earth. A foundation inscription from the time of Sargon II written on several tablets made of various metals and semi-precious stones, including gold, silver, copper, tin, lead, lapis lazuli, and alabaster, extends this notion of purity to the communication between the ruler and the gods by virtue of the presence of his writing, and perpetuates it to eternity (Frame 2021, *RINAP* 2, 236, Sargon 45: 40–43).

Nabopolassar also insists that he, like many kings before him, has relied on extispicy to validate the ground plan laid out by his architects, and thus ties himself to the original construction of the temple performed by the gods in primeval times. Altering an original ground plan conferred by the gods and building a temple without proper divine approval were regarded as serious offences and infringements of the cosmic order. King Esarhaddon tells us, for example, that he was "worried, afraid, (and) hesitant about renovating that temple. In the diviner's bowl (=lecomancy), the gods Šamaš and Adad answered me a firm "yes" and they had (their response) concerning the (re)building of that temple (and) the renovation of its cult room written on a liver." (Leichty 2011, *RINAP* 4:125 57, iii 42–iv 6). Shifting the site of a temple or moving it to another location are both covered in the omen collection "When a city is seated on a height," of which several tablets list omens related both to various aspects of the building process, and to the renovation or relocation of a sanctuary, see further Winter (2000).The text genre known as hemerologies reveals that construction of a temple had to be initiated on an auspicious day in an auspicious month (Livingstone 2013). Hemerologies, as well as particular omen collections specify the time frame in which a temple should be erected or demolished.

The Mesopotamian view of the temple as something animate due to the conflation of a divinity and a population closely recalls the Christian idea of Transubstantiation, through which the Host of the Eucharist is transformed into the body of God, as well as the statues, relics, paintings, and other objects that come alive and serve as intercessors for communicating with the divine through acts such as blessing, bleeding, weeping, glowing, winking, or even descending from their pedestals and walking around during the Medieval period (Bynum 2013, 2015, p. 78).[23] The ancient concept of the animate temple not only compares to animate miraculous icons and the Christian Eucharist. Moreover, the church assumes the cruciform shape of Christ on the cross and has the power to bring salvation just as Christ does. The church is equally associated/conflated with the Virgin since her womb is the receptacle of the savior, just as the church is the receptacle of the Eucharist. In addition, the Church, like the Virgin (or any patron saint), serves as the intercessor between man and God. Finally, as Ecclesia, it is the community of believers and not simply the building. This is captured in the Gothic Cathedrals, in which the figures, which represent all levels of society on earth and all the celestial creatures of heaven, are literally carved into the stone and thus serve a supportive function; as a collective, they are the church. This is true only of Catholics and Orthodox since Protestants deny the sanctity of the structure and see the church solely as a community of believers.[24]

Animism, it seems, covers the full range of ways in which objects and monuments can have affect, come alive, and interact with the human world. As Julian Droogan aptly observes, "A monument in the landscape, such as a temple, is at once a real solid material thing, a social agent," and "a support for ideology" (Droogan 2012, p. 166).

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[2] See below.

[3] On agency see further Winter (2007) and Pongratz-Leisten and Sonik (2015).

[4] Very few divine statues survive since these were made out of precious materials that had to be imported to Mesopotamia, which was poor in natural resources.

[5] The most prominent ones are TINTIR^{ki}, which encompass the temples of Babylon, the *Assur Directory,* and the *Nippur Compendium*, all published together with other texts of the same genre in (George 1992).

[6] See also Meinhold (2013) for a case study of the temples in the city of Assur.

[7] Sallaberger reads AB as "place" in a more general sense as in UD.GAL.NUN orthography AB/UNUG corresponds to ki "place." His argument that because the office of the *sanga*, generally considered an administrator of the temple, is also associated with the é-gal in Lagash, AB should be interpreted as a profane institution, is unconvincing as the administrative complex of the queen in Lagash is dedicated to the goddess Bau, and so our modern distinction between sacred and profane does not apply here. Wang assumes that early on Nippur was written as EN.KID in the Archaic City Seal designating the toponym /nibru/ and was only later read as /ellil/; (Wang 2011, pp. 41–59, 218–19).

[8] RIME 2, E2.1.4.10: 5-57: "When the Four Quarters (of the World) together revolted against him, through the love Ishtar showed to him, he was victorious in nine battles in (only) one year, and he captured the kings who had risen against him. In view of the fact that he protected the foundations of his city from danger, (the citizens of) his city requested from Ishtar in Eanna (in Uruk), Enlil in Nippur, Dagan in Tuttul, Ninhursag in Kesh, Ea in Eridu, Sin in Ur, Shamash in Sippar, (and) from Nergal in Kutha that he be (made) the god of their city, and they built a temple for him in the midst of Akkade."

[9] For a summary of the various Sumerian City Laments, see (Tinney 1996, pp. 19–25).

[10] Ishme-Dagan W ll. 1–13. (Ludwig 1990, pp. 93–160 and ETCSL 2.5.4.23): "City whose terrifying splendor (melem$_4$) extends over heaven and earth, whose towers are exceptionally grand, shrine (èš) Nippur! Your power reaches to the edges of the uttermost extent of heaven and earth. Of all the brick buildings erected in the Land, your brickwork is the most excellent. You have allowed all the foreign lands and as many cities as are built to receive excellent divine powers" (my translation).

[11] As Michael Roaf reminds me that also applied to the lightning that struck Durham cathedral which was attributed God taking action against the alleged atheism of the bishop. Similar explanations were given for the burning of Notre Dame.

[12] SAA 10 no. 112.

[13] LKA no. 126 = BAM no. 341, Maul (1994, p. 555).

[14] See the passage in Gudea's building hymn in (Edzard 1997, CylA xxiv 18–19).

[15] The Akkadian text suggests that there was a stele and image, possibly in the form of a statue or a relief; the upper part of the stele, however, contains an image of the king before the sun god, so the text may refer to this combination of text and image on the stele.

[16] For a discussion of these two alternative possibilities, see (Pongratz-Leisten, forthcoming a). The stele of Adad-nirari III in the temple of Tell Rimah in Syria exemplifies the latter possibility.

[17] After Claus Wilcke in Janowski and Schwemer (2013, p. 669): "Im Palast, dem Hause >Weisung für das Land Sumer<, dem Zwingstock (aller Fremdländer, im >Hause Ordalfluss<, errichteten die Schwarzköpfigen, das Volk, nachdem es sich versammelt hatte, der Herrin des Palastes einen Hochsitz."; for a different translation see ETCSL 2.5.3.1 Iddin-Dagan A: "When the black-headed people have assembled in the palace, the house that advises the Land, the neck-stock of all the foreign countries, the house of the river ordeal, a dais is set up for Ninegala."

[18] For a list of terms denoting the temple, see von Soden (1975).

[19] *Enki's Journey to Nippur*, ETCSL 1.1.4: 14 šeg$_{12}$-bi inim dug$_4$-dug$_4$ ad-gi$_4$-gi$_4$.

[20] (Roth 1997, 2nd ed., 135, xlviii 39–58): "May the protective spirits, the gods who enter the Esagil temple, and the very brickwork of the Esagil temple make my daily portents auspicious before the gods Marduk, my lord, and Zarpanitu, my lady, *šēdum lamassum ilū ēribūt Esagil libitti Esagil igirrê ūmišam ina mahar Maduk bēlija Zarpanītum bēltija lidammiqū.*

[21] See the treaty between Tudhaliya IV and Kurunta of Tarhuntašša (Kitchen and Lawrence 2012, no. 73, iv 44–51): "Now, this tablet has been prepared as the 7th copy, and with the seal of the Sun-goddess of Arinna, and with the seal of the Storm-god of Hatti has it been sealed. Thus, one tablet (deposited) before the Sun-goddess of Arinna; one tablet before the Storm-god of Hatti; one tablet before Lelwani; one tablet before Hepat of Kizzuwatna; one tablet before the Storm-god of lightning(?); one tablet in the Royal Palace, deposited before Zitkhariyas; and one Tablet, Kurunta, King of the land of Tarhuntassa, keeps in his house."

22   A similar notion of giš-hur comes up in the *Sun God Tablet* of Nabû-apla-iddina, where the term is used for the archetypal image of the god (Woods 2004, iii 19–31); see also my discussion in Pongratz-Leisten (forthcoming c).

23   And even for the present, see https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3747166/Worshippers-remote-Bolivian-chapel-declare-miracle-statue-Virgin-Mary-begins-bleeding-eyes.html (accessed on 5 May 2021).

24   I am grateful to Irina Oryshkevich for drawing my attention to these aspects of the medieval church. On Medieval church architecture suggestive of the impenetrable spaces of the forest and its profuse vegetal ornamentation in its metaphorical as well as literal meaning see Doquang (2018).

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