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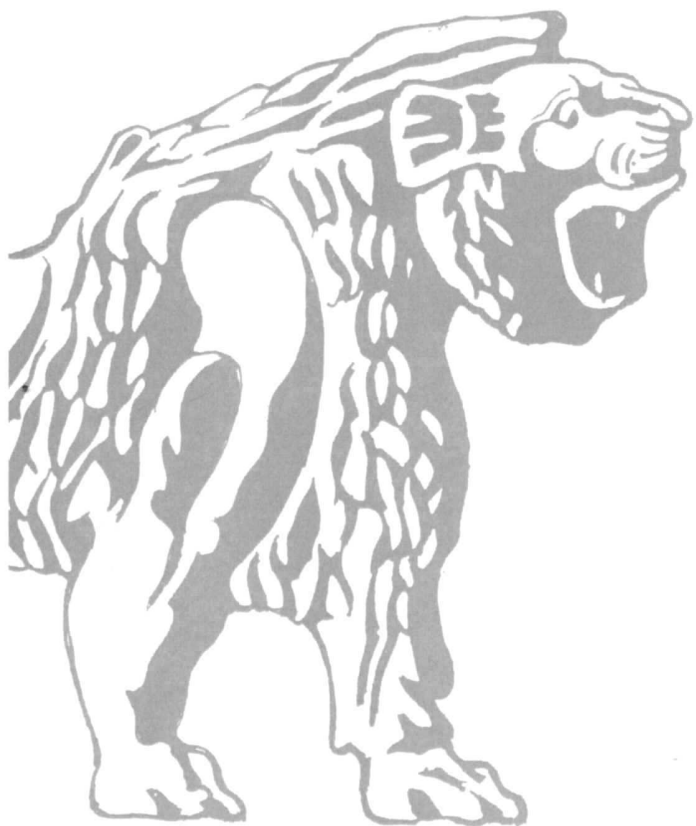
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*Offprint*

## Third Millennium BC “Pseudo-Temples” from the Diyala Region?

Dorota Ławecka (Warsaw<sup>1</sup>)

*Abstract* : In an interesting, but controversial article J.-D. Forest tried to prove that (with the exception of the Oval Temple) all Early Dynastic buildings discovered in the 1930s in the Diyala Valley, traditionally interpreted as temples (e.g. the so-called temples of Sin in Khafajah and temple of Abu in Tell Asmar) were of a secular character, and the alleged *cellae* with stepped platforms by the walls were rooms where local notables held office and received their subordinates. This article is a polemic with the views presented by J.-D. Forest, a polemic which leads its author to the conclusion that the original interpretation by P. Delougaz and S. Lloyd, who saw the buildings as small urban sanctuaries, remains more convincing.

*Key words* : temples, Diyala, Early Dynastic, Mesopotamia, *cella*

In 1996, J.-D. Forest published a controversial paper in which he proposed that buildings dating from the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC discovered in the Diyala region and traditionally regarded as temples had not, in fact, served any religious purpose. Instead, he saw them as public buildings and places of secular gatherings, and the so-called “*cellae*” – as audience rooms, where local officials received their underlings.<sup>2</sup> The author presents arguments (upheld in his further publications) against the widely accepted interpretation; arguments which I find disputable. These theses are sometimes cited by other authors (but, to the best of my knowledge, they still have not received a thorough response) which is why I think the question of these buildings’ function deserves renewed attention.<sup>3</sup>

The only certain examples of Early Dynastic temples brought to light in the course of archaeological excavations are, according to J.-D. Forest, the oval temples (Khafajah, Al-Ubajd, Al-Hiba) and Ningirsu temple in Tello.<sup>4</sup> Admittedly, the function of the buildings from the Diyala region may be the object of discussion, however I am mystified as to why the author does not take into consideration the Inanna sanctuary from Nippur which seems a hardly-questionable example of temple architecture. Its link with the goddess in the Early Dynastic period is confirmed by dedication inscriptions on twenty-eight artifacts (mostly stone vessels but also some votive figurines)<sup>5</sup>. By the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC, another building was erected at

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<sup>2</sup> FOREST 1996. This pertains to the temples of Sin, Nintu, the Small Temple in O 43, the Small Single Shrine in S44 in Khafajah, temple of Abu in Tell Asmar and Shara temple in Tell Agrab, DELOUGAZ, LLOYD 1942.

<sup>3</sup> See e.g. THALMANN 2003, 61, where Forest’s hypothesis is brought forward as an argument in the interpretation of the function of a niche in the façade of building B33.

<sup>4</sup> FOREST 1996, 99; 1999, 2 *sq.*, 25; 2005, 195). In J.-D. Forest’s opinion, neither the Ubaid-period tripartite structures built on platforms nor the Painted Temple in Uqair and the White Temple in Uruk are to be considered temples. They are interpreted as meeting places, where eminent persons gathered in order to manage public affairs, FOREST 2005, 190, 193.

<sup>5</sup> Artifacts from this period, coming from the Inanna temple, carry forty-four inscriptions. On twelve of the remaining sixteen the name of the deity was not written or is illegible. Four inscriptions present some difficulties

the same spot. It was identified based on inscriptions engraved on door sockets found *in situ* and on Shulgi's foundation deposits that confirmed the king's building a temple for Inanna.<sup>6</sup>

The structures J.-D. Forest does acknowledge as temples were probably the most important sanctuaries of the cities, hence their monumental appearance. However, in Early Dynastic cities there must have been other, presumably much less grand, sanctuaries<sup>7</sup>. We do not have at our disposal any relevant written sources on the towns of the Diyala valley, yet if we reach for the documents referring to the Early Dynastic III city-state of Lagash, the texts will prove to be full of names of various gods' sanctuaries. In many cases, it is hard to be sure in which city a given temple (é, household of the god<sup>8</sup>) was located. Nonetheless, we know that, for example, in Girsu – apart from the surely monumental cultic center of Ningirsu – Ur-Nanshe built also temples of Nanshe, Baba and Gatumdug, En-anatum erected a temple for Hendursag and URU-KA-gina raised temples for Hegir, Igalima and Ninshar. There was also the E-babbar temple destroyed by Lugal-zage-si.<sup>9</sup> The author claims that only large, monumental features could have fulfilled sacral functions, and that a temple was a secretive and inaccessible place, as it was not possible to approach a deity without facing danger or even death. The wall of the temenos, inside which the common people were denied access, would thus serve as a protection for the city and its inhabitants against the fearsome presence of a god who invoked awe and dread rather than piety and respect.<sup>10</sup>

I do not oppose the idea that a division between the *sacrum* and the *profanum* was necessary, but I also think that in reality it was not so categorical and straightforward. Numerous footprints of human feet and hooves of sheep and cattle, probably sacrificial animals, preserved on the courtyard of the Oval Temple II show that, at least sometimes (during holidays?) a crowd of mere mortals could enter the sacred precinct without the risk of being struck down by divine radiance.<sup>11</sup> Gods obviously did evoke awe, but on the other hand, onomastics based upon the concept of a “personal god” point to very close connections between people and deities. The names probably invoked a specific deity traditionally worshipped by a clan or a family, with whom the worshipper formed an intimate and private relationship.<sup>12</sup>

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as to their interpretations. One of them probably does not contain a god's name, another carries a word that could be an epithet of Inanna. On the other two (a vessel and a plaque) the name NIN.SAR appears (<sup>d</sup>Nin-mú according to D. P. Hansen); it is known from a list of temples from Nippur. According to Hansen, the sanctuary of this deity could have been located within the Inanna temple, HANSEN 1963, 155, footnote 47; TUNCA 1984, 203. Two figurines from a set published by A. Goetze, which carry inscriptions with god's names, are dedicated to Inanna, GOETZE 1970, 43, 7N-137; 44, 7N-191.

<sup>6</sup> Shulgi's inscriptions mention the king's building a temple for Inanna in Duranki, a part of Nippur, ZETTLER 1992, 16, 39-41, 239.

<sup>7</sup> BOTTÉRO 2001, 115 *sq.*; CRAWFORD 2002, 47; LAMBERT 1998, 55.

<sup>8</sup> POLLOCK 1999, 117-123; SUTER 2000, 21 *sq.*

<sup>9</sup> GEORGE 1993, 70 *sq.* nr 99 (Ebabbar); 122 nr 755 (Igalima temple); 134 nr 897 (Eninnu); 146 nr 1047 (Nanshe temple); 148 nr 1085 (Baba temple); 164 nr 1314 (Gatumdug temple); 164 nr 1322 (Hegir temple); 165 nr 1323 (Hendursag temple); 169 nr 1398 (Ninshar temple). Cf. list of Girsu temples mentioned in Gudea's building inscriptions in SUTER 2000: 18-26.

<sup>10</sup> FOREST 1999, 99 *sq.*

<sup>11</sup> DELOUGAZ 1940, 80-83.

<sup>12</sup> DI VITO 1993, *passim*.

This problem is connected with the alleged accessibility of the *cella*, postulated by J.-D. Forest, and the openness of the structures in question.<sup>13</sup> It is not known who (apart from the priests), when and under what circumstances could enter the interior of a sacred abode. A large majority of temples from the Diyala region, even small urban sanctuaries or chapels, consist at least of a walled courtyard and a *cella*. They are distinctive for the presence of various installations ("altars", rounded podia, described as sacrificial tables, and basins) and connected, most likely, with some ritual activities taking place in the yards. Inside the *cella*, apart from the "altar" (a stepped platform built against the back wall of the room) there was nothing but a hearth.<sup>14</sup>

Perhaps the worshippers were granted – permanent or limited to certain circumstances – access to the courtyard, where they could participate in making sacrifices or in other kinds of religious activities, they were not, however, allowed to enter the *cella*. I am not certain as to the conditions that must be fulfilled to render a *cella* "inaccessible"; would a closed door and a religious prohibition suffice, or is a huge temenos wall also required?

In fact, in the more elaborate temples, there is a marked tendency to place the most sacred elements of the precinct furthest from the entrance. The late levels of the Sin Temple VII in Khafajah, erected on a terrace, stood out from the surrounding buildings due to the monumentality of its architecture. Its courtyard was reached by steps leading up to a massive, buttressed gate and a vestibule with second doorway on the courtyard side (Fig. 1 : a, b). To reach the *cella* of the Archaic Temple IV in Tell Asmar four rooms and four doorways had to be crossed (Fig. 1 : c). Access to the Shara Temple – being part of a much larger (temple or palace) complex, and therefore a special case – was even more difficult (Fig. 1 : d).

One of J.-D. Forest's arguments is the presence of ovens (quite sizable in some cases) in the courtyards or rooms adjacent to the yards, which were used, in his opinion, for the preparation of meals consumed by people gathered in the rooms equipped with platforms.<sup>15</sup> It should, however, be mentioned that large ovens that could have served as cooking stoves have been also found in the Oval Temple (Fig. 2). In addition to the ovens in the so-called "House D" another one was located in room N 45 : 1-2, both in the first, and in the second phase of the Temple's existence. In the first phase, there was also yet another oven in the outer yard of the temenos, near the entrance to the whole complex (K 44 : 3).

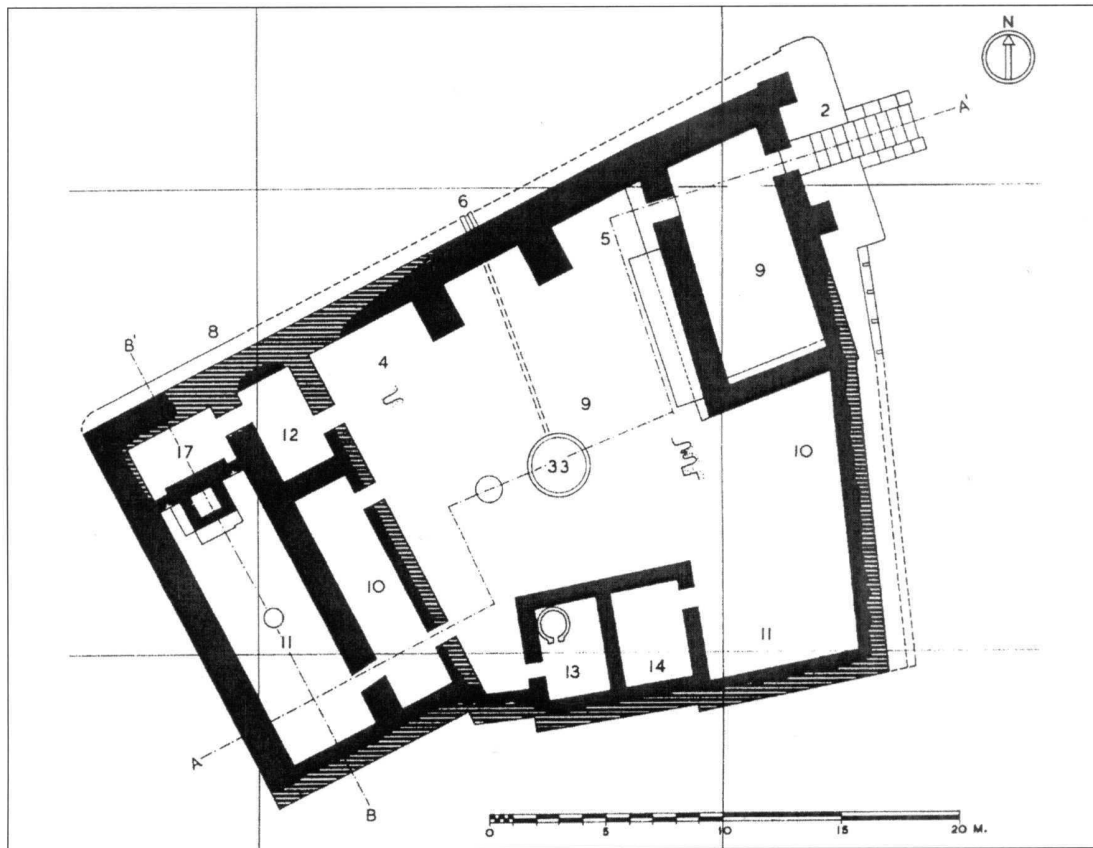
These features, rectangular or oval in plan, were quite large (approx. 2.5 m long), had a fire chamber and a grill. They yielded no fragments of slag or other post-production residues (except for one oven or kiln from "House D", bearing traces of burning limestone for wall plaster). It is therefore probable that these ovens – also because of their locations – were used for cooking. Significantly, ovens of similar construction were discovered in one of the rooms adjacent to the courtyard of Sin Temple IX and in the temenos of Ninhursag Temple in

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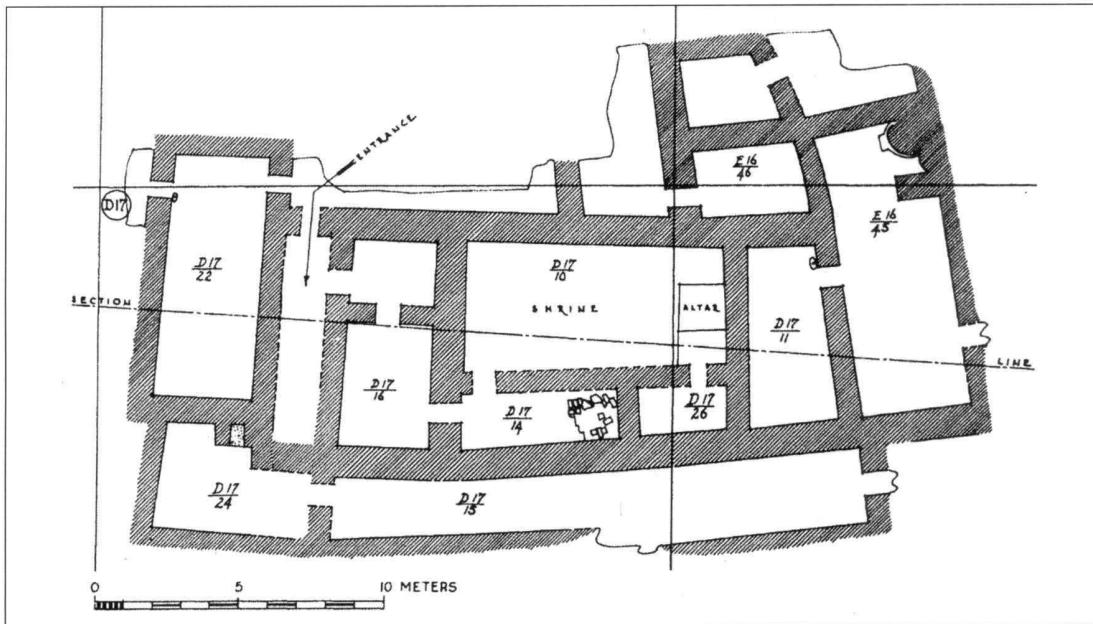
<sup>13</sup> FOREST 1999, 100 sq.

<sup>14</sup> A rectangular platform in the Temple of Sin V and two round podia in the Archaic Temple III are exceptional. Worth mentioning in this context are also the numerous similar installations in the courtyard of the Oval Temple. Apart from the "altar" and the hearths, the *cella* could be also equipped with rows of brick posts, dividing off a part of the room.

<sup>15</sup> FOREST 1999, 104.

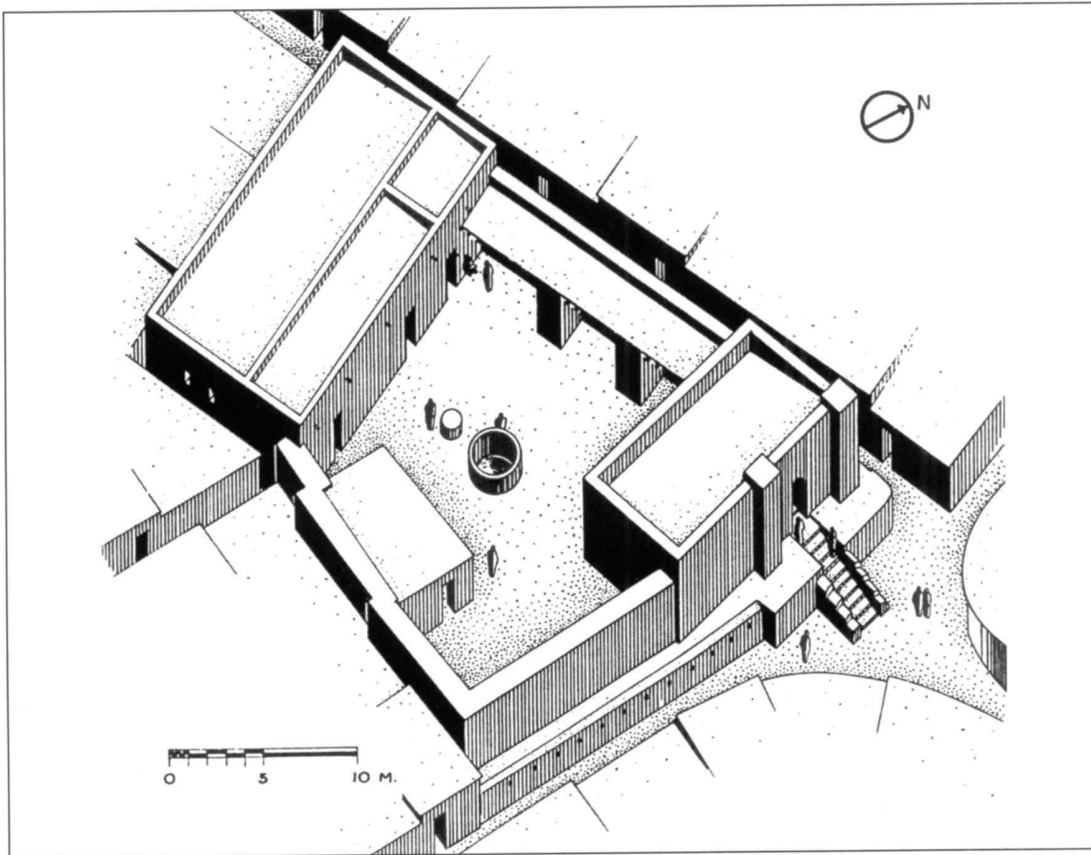


a.



c.

Fig. 1. Early Dynastic temples from the Diyala region : a, b – Khafajah, Sin Temple VII, plan and isometric reconstruction, DELOUGAZ, LLOYD 1942 : 51, fig. 44, pl. 8 ; c – Khafajah, Abu Temple, Archaic Shrine IVC, *ibid.* (pl. 21 : B) ; d – Tell Agrab, Shara temple, main level, TUNCA 1984, fig. 8.



b.



d.

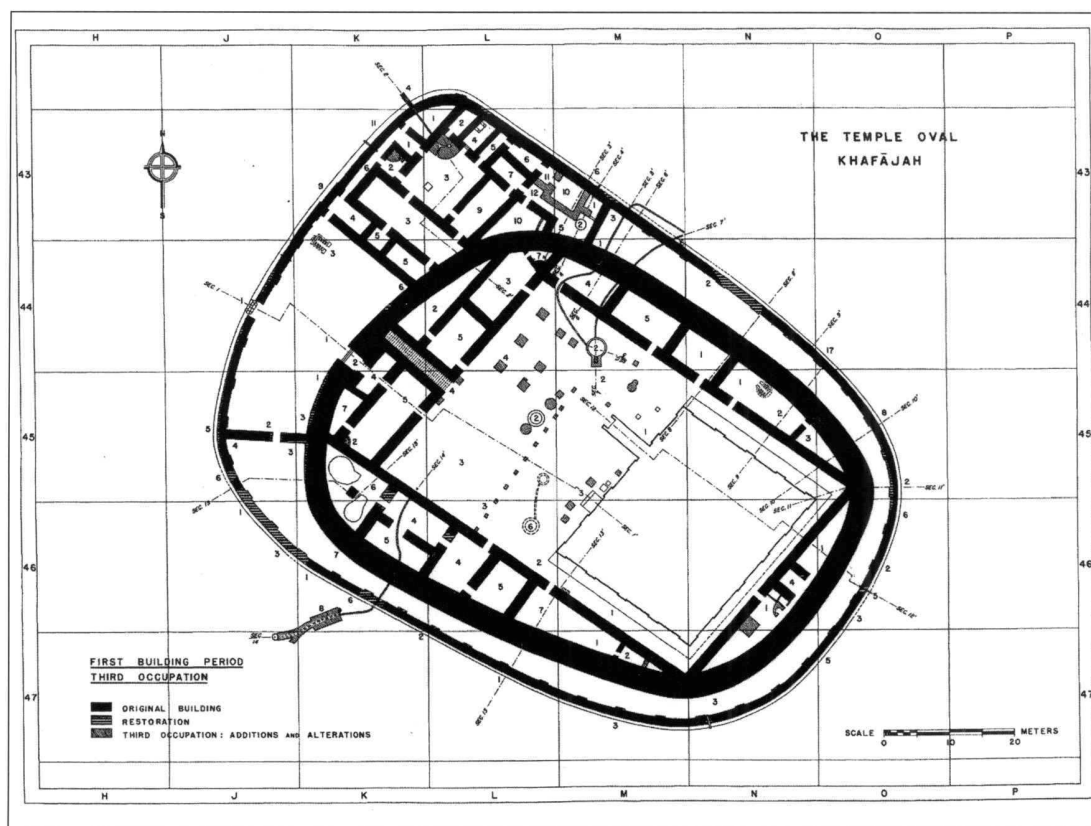


Fig. 2. Khafajah, plan of Oval Temple I, third occupation, DELOUGAZ 1940 : pl. IV.

Al-Ubaid.<sup>16</sup> Round ovens that might have been used for cooking were found also in the courtyard of Ibgal II in Al-Hiba<sup>17</sup> and in various parts of the Temple of Inanna in Nippur – among others in its southern part, near the cella. Buildings with ovens similar to those from later “kitchen temples” were found in the temenos in Ur and in the Bagara temple precinct in Al-Hiba ; rooms furnished with ovens and a water container were discovered in the vicinity of a platform in Adab.<sup>18</sup> Cooking installations were an integral part of temple complexes and the preparation of meals for the deities was one of everyday cultic activities.

<sup>16</sup> The Oval Temple : DELOUGAZ 1940 : 130-133 ; Sin temple : DELOUGAZ, LLOYD 1942 : 69, pl. 11 ; Al-Ubaid : HALL, WOOLLEY 1927 : 75, pl. 2.

<sup>17</sup> HANSEN 1970, 66. Only one of them is briefly described and illustrated (*ibid.*, fig. 5). The central prop was made of a reused potstand (a “fruit stand”) ; nothing but sherds and bones was found inside it.

<sup>18</sup> Nippur : ZETTLER 1992, figs 4-8 ; Ur : TUNCA 1984, 173 ; Bagara : HANSEN 1980-1983, 428 sq. ; Adab : WILSON 2002, 287 fig. 2, 290 sq. Cf. also a fragment of the Sumerian temple hymn to Enki’s temple in Eridu : “Shrine Abzu, your place is a great place./ In your place where they call upon Utu./ Where the oven brings bread, (good) to eat”, SJÖBERG *et al.* 1969, 17, TH No. 1. : 15-17.



Another question that drew J.-D. Forest's attention was the presence of hearths in the *cellae*. The author writes that rooms in which people stay only briefly do not require heating and therefore the presence of hearths proves that people remained in these rooms for longer periods of time.<sup>19</sup> However, the presence of hearths can be explained by various factors, not necessarily by constant attendance of people in the rooms. The fire could have been started occasionally, as required by rituals taking place in the *cella*. We do not know if the podia in the *cellae* of buildings from the Diyala regions served as dais of cultic statues. Information from southern Mesopotamia tells us of their existence since, at least, the Early Dynastic III period.<sup>20</sup> Yet it was the god, not his statue, that resided in the temple. As M. B. Dick puts it: "the Mesopotamian gods need nourishment, drink, clothing, jewelry, cleansing, travel, music, perfume and sex."<sup>21</sup> They probably needed also a warm room that could be heated in the cold season. We do not know the details of cult and ritual in northern Babylonia. The examples are just cited to point out that the presence of hearths in *cellae* can be explained in various ways.

J.-D. Forest devotes much space to the discussion of platforms which are located in at least one room (in the *cella* and sometimes also in the courtyard) of every building described by its discoverers as a temple. These platforms, stepped, but differing in size and number of steps, were built at the back of the rooms, against their shorter sides. It is on such podia that the notables would sit presiding over gatherings or festivities involving the local people.<sup>22</sup> According to the author, the platforms were very easily accessible thanks to the one or two steps leading up to them. And indeed, most of the podia can be effortlessly climbed and sat upon as if on a honorary place. It is not, however, the case with all of the features.

Presentation in publications and the state of preservation do not always allow for a precise estimate of the dimensions of the various constructions, but judging by the photographs and reconstructions, some of them were relatively high. For example, it would be impossible to climb the platform in Sin Temple IX and X (Fig. 3: a, b) with dignity appropriate for a person of a high official rank, unless an additional step or stool were used. A similar problem arises, for example, with the "altar" in the square temple of Abu in Tell Asmar (sanctuary I). The structure was divided into two steps; during one of the temple's phases, the bottom step was 0.76 m high and there was no lower footrest adjacent to it.<sup>23</sup> If the platform was intended as a seat, it can be assumed that it would be permanently furnished with comfortable steps in brick and clay. Other constructions of this kind also do not seem to have been designed for sitting on. This observation applies especially to the "altar" from the Nintu Temple (Fig. 3: c, d)<sup>24</sup> which is elaborate and definitely not functional, as far as sitting or standing upon it is concerned. Worth mentioning in this context are also two terracotta architectural models (probably

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<sup>19</sup> FOREST 1999, 104.

<sup>20</sup> DICK 2005, 47-51; LAMBERT 1997, 2.

<sup>21</sup> DICK 2005, 47. A statue was a living embodiment of the deity inhabiting the temple; it was the god, not his likeness. If this interpretation be accepted then J.-D. Forest's (1996, 104) comparison between a Mesopotamian temple and a Christian church (and churches were not – until quite recently – heated, because rooms where people do not stay long, never are) seems unjustified.

<sup>22</sup> On platforms and their interpretation, cf. FOREST 1996, 103-106.

<sup>23</sup> DELOUGAZ, LLOYD 1942, 182 sq.; see also "altar" in sanctuary II, *ibid.*, 185, fig. 146.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. photos – *ibid.*, 87, fig. 78; 88, fig. 79.



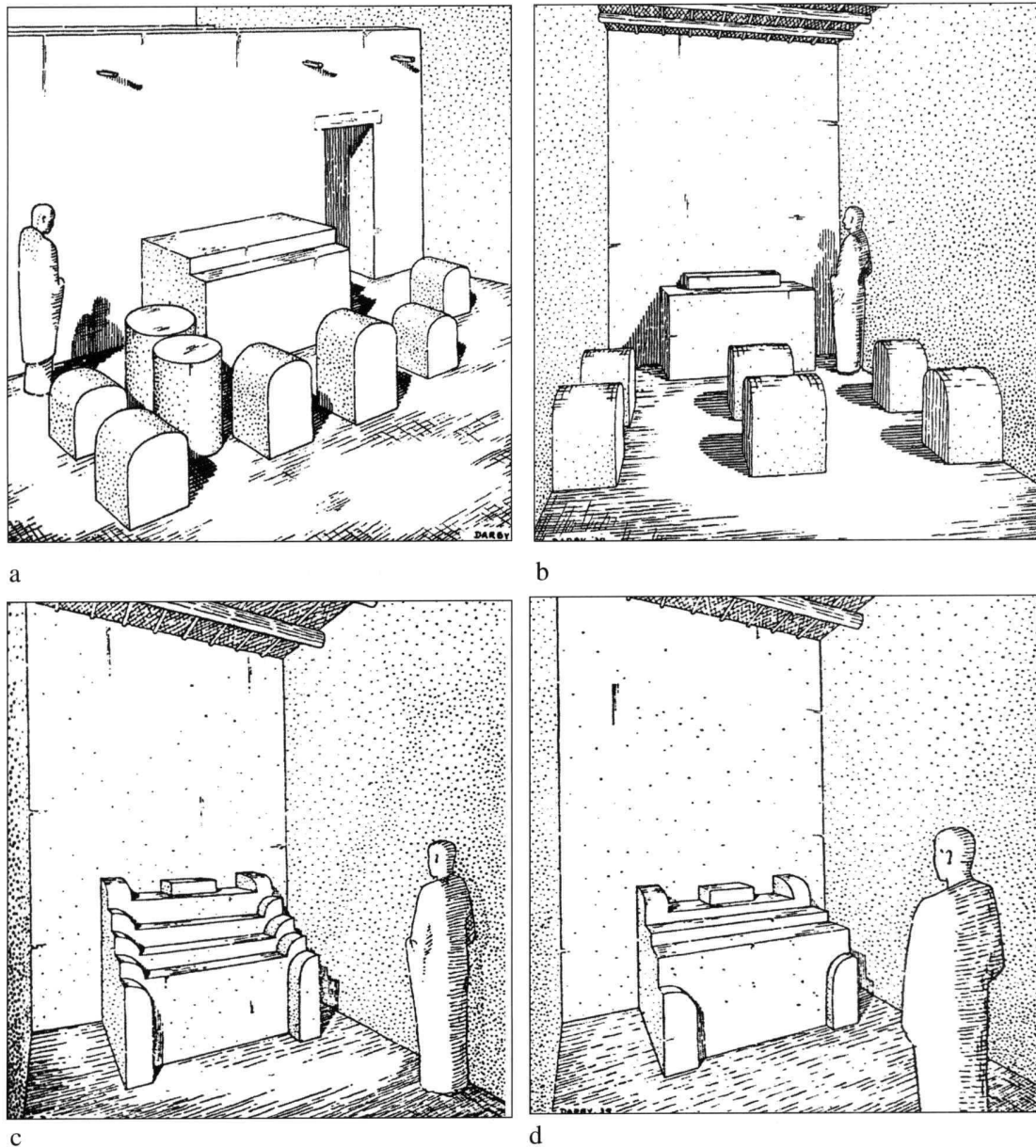


Fig. 3. Reconstructions of the “altars” from Khafajah temples : a – in the courtyard of Sin Temple IX (Q 42 : 32), DELOUGAZ 1942 : 64, fig. 56 ; b – south end of sanctuary R 42 : 18 of Sin Temple X, *ibid.*, 76, fig. 69 ; c – north end of sanctuary P 45 : 51, first occupation of Nintu Temple VI, *ibid.*, 88, fig. 80 ; d – same “altar”, second occupation of Nintu Temple VI, *ibid.*, 88, fig. 81.

found in the Diyala Region) in form of rectangular containers with stepped platforms against the shorter sides (Fig. 4). Applied snake figurines suggest ritual function ; possibly those models depict temple’s *cellae*<sup>25</sup>.

<sup>25</sup> WEYGAND 2001, 20 sq., 25 sq.

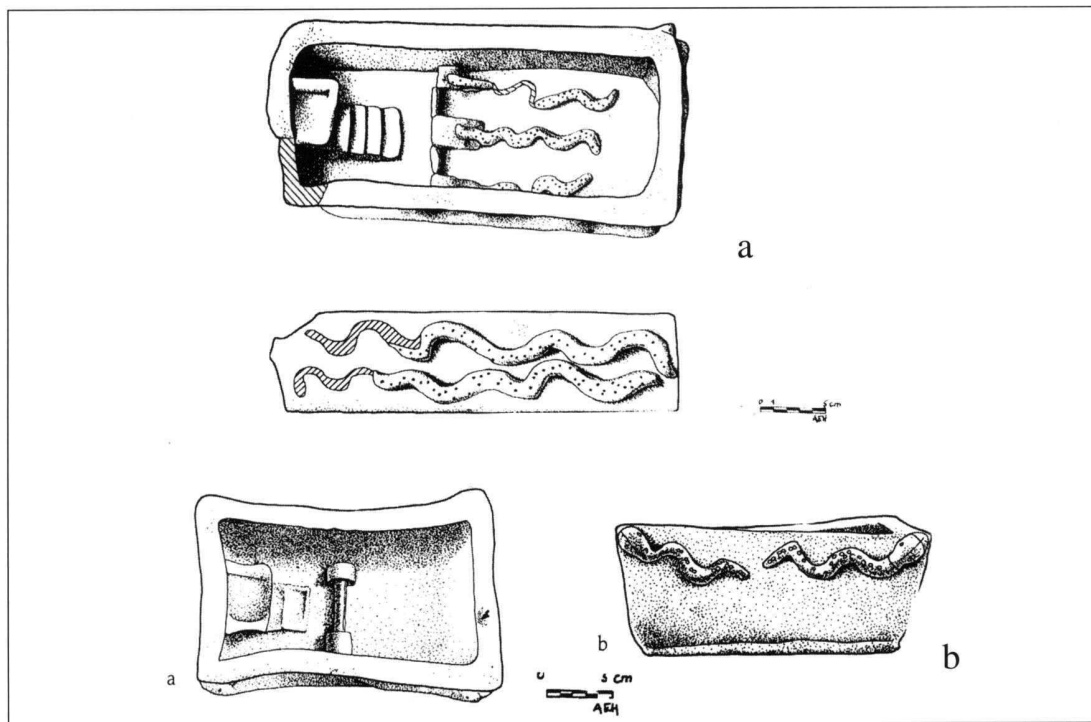


Fig. 4. III<sup>rd</sup> millennium terracotta architectural models, WEYGAND 2001, 21 fig. 4, p. 26, fig. 8.

The “altar” from the courtyard of Sin Temple IX is of the same shape as the structure adjacent to the façade of the platform in the courtyard of the Oval Temple (M 45 : 3, fig. 2). Similarities in shape need not necessarily prejudice of an identical function, but one detail seems to be meaningful: at the base of the platform’s northern corner, by the lower step, a jar was installed, partly protruding from the construction. The surface of the lower step, as is clearly visible in a picture, is inclined towards the vessel.<sup>26</sup> As observed by P. Delougaz, a similar installation was located in a room (considered a shrine) in the so-called “House D” (L 43 : 4) in the temenos of the Oval Temple,<sup>27</sup> as well as in the Sin Temple, in layer VI, where vessels (a cylindrical one and a jar) had been placed at the corner of an altar, just like in “House D”. One of the vessels was sunk into the floor up to its rim.<sup>28</sup> Level V yielded another cylindrical vessel, this time not by the “altar”, but also partly sunk in the floor, at the base of a rectangular brick platform occupying the center of the room and described as an “offering table”.<sup>29</sup> Presumably, these installations were used in libations during rituals taking place in the *cellae*.

<sup>26</sup> DELOUGAZ 1940, 41, fig. 38 (close-up of the corner with the vessel) and fig. 37 (view of the double-stepped “altar”).

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 47-49, fig. 44.

<sup>28</sup> DELOUGAZ, LLOYD 1942, 42, fig. 37. Perhaps also in this case the inclination of one of the “altar’s” steps towards the vessel was not accidental.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 32 sq., fig. 28.

Room L 43 : 4 in “House D” (Oval I), interpreted by its discoverers as a private sanctuary for the members of the household, stands clearly out among the other parts of the building. Situated away from the entrance, by a central courtyard, it is a small, narrow room measuring approx. 4.5 x 2 m. A few steps led down to it, because its floor was about half a meter lower than the courtyard. In its northern corner, by the wall, a brick, white-plastered platform was discovered. It was 0.86 m high, not furnished with steps, surrounded on the sides with low walls with rounded tops. As in other temples in Khafajah, this structure can be interpreted as an “altar”. The difference with other *cellae* lies in the location of its entrance – on a shorter side, which may have resulted from the need to adjust its plan to that of the house. Still, the bent axis between the entrance and the platform was preserved. In this case the interpretation of the room’s function as a gathering place would not be adequate, both for the small surface of the room and the placement of the platform – vis-à-vis a wall that is just one meter away. Among findings from the room, apart from the orant figurines mentioned below, there was a mace-head, two seals and four objects, described as amulets, in the shape of animals.<sup>30</sup>

Analogous installations, presumably connected with libations, can be also found at Tell Asmar ; for example in the Archaic Temple of Abu III, the surface of the altar was inclined towards a corner with a groove leading to a jar placed below it.<sup>31</sup> A similar groove, caulked with bitumen, ran near a corner of the “altar” in sanctuary I of the Square Temple ; in one of the phases, the vessel at the foot of the “altar” was substituted with a bitumen-lined hole.<sup>32</sup> Another example can be found in Inanna Temple IX in Nippur. One of the altars in the smaller *cella* (IXA, room 248) had in its front a vertical groove leading down to a half-buried vessel.<sup>33</sup> In the larger *cella* (256), one of the “altar’s” walls and an adjacent podium were equipped with grooves leading into a brick-lined drain hole in the floor.<sup>34</sup>

Certain finds from the sanctuaries of Early Dynastic Mari also seem to be connected with libation rituals. Among the most characteristic are round or oval bowls (called *barcasse* by their discoverers) made of fired clay, gypsum or bronze. They were found in the Ishtar, Ishtarat and Ninni-zaza Temples ; they were partly sunk into the ground at the bases of podia, or otherwise incorporated into the podia’s top surfaces.<sup>35</sup> Three stone libation plates, equipped with drains leading to bronze or gypsum containers buried beneath the floor, as well as three bronze vessels, also interred up to their rims and surrounded with baked bricks, were found in the central room of a sanctuary in Palace P2.<sup>36</sup>

Another argument in favor of recognizing the buildings from the Diyala Region as temples are, in my opinion, deposits that are sometimes found in the “altars”. Such sets of artifacts (including stone and pottery vessels, cylinder seals, beads, amulets, figurines and mace

<sup>30</sup> For a description of room L43 : 4 in the Oval Temple I see : DELOUGAZ 1940, 47-49, 156.

<sup>31</sup> DELOUGAZ, LLOYD 1942, 162, fig. 121, 165, cf. Archaic Temple IV - *ibid.*, 167.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 172, 174, fig. 131. Cf. the stone trough and a bowl found by the “altar” in the Shara Temple in Tell Agrab, *ibid.*, 233, 236, fig. 183. Another example of vessels that were partly sunk into the floor at the corners of “altars” comes from the eight level of a small shrine in square O :43 in Khafajah, *ibid.*, 110 *sq.*, fig. 102.

<sup>33</sup> HANSEN, DALES 1962, 82.

<sup>34</sup> ZETTLER 1992, 25.

<sup>35</sup> PARROT 1974, 68 *sq.*

<sup>36</sup> MARGUERON 2004, 204-206.

heads) were found in Khafajah (three, in the Nintu temple), Tell Asmar (in the Square Temple) and in Tell Agrab (three, in the Shara Temple). Similar discoveries come from Nippur (from the Northern and Inanna Temples). The richest deposits come from the Shara Temple in Tell Agrab. They included up to seventy items, which clearly indicates that they could not have found their way into the platforms by accident, but had been intentionally deposited there.<sup>37</sup>

Even without going into details as to the meaning and role of these deposits, I still think it is easier to explain their presence in a temple *cella* than in a platform serving as a seat for a clan leader in a gathering house.<sup>38</sup> The same can be said, I think, of the "orant" statues often found in troves under the *cellae* floor. J.-D. Forest does not pay much attention to these objects, without denying their religious function. He just writes that as the social order of Mesopotamia was the reflection of an order set by a god, every institution guarding this order automatically gained religious character. And thus, a building in which such a secular official resided was a place where the presence of any deity watching over a group of its subjects would become more intense than elsewhere, despite the place not being a cultic abode; so intense in fact, as to deserve being named after its protective deity.<sup>39</sup> It would thus be necessary to assume that a lay official, an intermediary between the realms of gods and men, although not a priest himself, fulfilled a function that was of a religious character in a building strongly connected with a certain god; a building, where the presence of the god was felt very strongly and which – as can be deduced from the presence of the orant statues – did have some sacral functions, without being a temple. This hypothesis (which has not been supported by any analogies or additional arguments by its author) seems to me much too complicated and unconvincing; moreover it does not find confirmation in written sources.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> BJÖRKMANN 2008, *passim*. The deposits in the Shara Temple consisted, in one case of several, and in another – of sixty objects. The third, richest, deposit included seventy artifacts, i.a. forty-three mace heads, eleven cylinder seals, copper tools, weapons and beads, *id.*, 362, 367; DELOUGAZ, LLOYD 1942, 237 *sq.*, fig. 184. Unlike the other sets, which were deposited at the time when the "altars" were being built, this one was inserted into the podium while it was already in use. Significantly, the deposits did not include only objects, which – even if they were broken, as in the case of figurines or scraps of copper – still represented some material value, but comprised also some vessels and sherds, BJÖRKMANN 2008, 362.

<sup>38</sup> FOREST 1996, 99, footnote 12, also takes issue with the "constantly changing" number of rooms with platforms inside the various temples: "La présence de dyades ou de triades divines n'a en soit rien de rédhitoire dans un univers polythéiste tel qu'on l'imagine, mais il n'est pas normal que le nombre des *cellae* varie sans cesse d'un état à l'autre d'un même édifice". In the cases in which we are able to trace the sequence of temples (Abu, Sin), the number of "altars" and *cellae* in the Early Dynastic period does not change randomly; it *increases*. An assumption that a decision had been made to include into the sanctuaries some chapels of other deities seems to me quite as likely an explanation as that the multitude of urgent affairs required the constant presence of three or four local officials in separate audience rooms of one building. Moreover, the Temple of Inanna in Nippur also had two *cellae*.

<sup>39</sup> FOREST 1996, 110 *sq.* "Le bâtiment correspondant, en raison du rôle qu'il joue dans la gestion de l'ordre social, pourrait alors être conçu comme un lieu où la présence divine est plus intense qu'ailleurs (sans être pour autant un lieu de culte), au point de justifier que le gens de l'époque aient songé à lui donner un nom évoquant la divinité de tutelle, Temple de Sin, d'Abu, ou de Nintu éventuellement. Les statues placées dans ces bâtiments, duplicats durables de leur modèle vivant, pourraient ainsi adresser leur muet message aux vrais maîtres des lieux, plutôt qu'à leurs représentants terrestres, car naguère comme de nos jours, sans doute valait-il mieux s'adresser au Bon Dieu qu'à ses Saints", *ibid.*, 111.

<sup>40</sup> MARCHETTI 2006, 121-125.

The sacral function of the orant statues does not need proof owing to the many examples carrying dedicatory inscriptions for various deities. The figurines from the towns in the Diyala Region are rarely inscribed, yet the few that are state clearly that the statue was offered to a certain god (for Nintu, Sin, for Shara, for Abu).<sup>41</sup> That the statues found in temples had been dedicated to a specific god worshipped in that sanctuary is confirmed also by the consistency – as far as the deity's name is concerned – among the inscriptions on the statues of Ishtar and Ishtarat and Ninni-zaza in Mari.<sup>42</sup> It seems therefore logical that the figurines were deposited in the place where the god was thought to reside rather than where a clan leader presided over meetings. Analogies from Nippur clearly show this connection.<sup>43</sup>

The temenos of the Oval Temple also yielded seventy-six fragments of stone votive figurines.<sup>44</sup> No *favissa* has been found; all the orant statues were broken. Even though they were not found in their original context, the sheer number of the objects suggests that they must have been elements of temple furnishings. The fragments were discovered in the courtyard and in some of the rooms, but their distribution is not uniform; for example, they are almost completely absent from the south-eastern part of "House D" and (except for two fragments) from the south-west of the courtyard. The find-spots cannot be used for precise reconstruction of the statues' distribution during the temple's functioning, yet their concentrations in two rooms are noteworthy. One of the rooms is N44 : 1 near the north-eastern corner of the platform, where ten fragments were found (nine dating to the Oval I phase, and one – to Oval III).<sup>45</sup> Of particular interest is the accumulation of fourteen such artifacts (thirteen – Oval I, one – Oval II) in room L43 : 4, in the aforementioned "House D", interpreted as a chapel.<sup>46</sup> And thus, in the cases of both buildings that are beyond any doubt interpreted as temples (the Inanna Temple in Nippur and the Oval Temple in Khafajah), the presence of orant figurines within the perimeter of the temples is well documented.

To sum up, I think that none of the arguments put forward by J.-D. Forest is unequivocal enough to necessitate a change in the understanding of the basic function of the buildings from the Diyala Region. Certain features both of the buildings themselves and of the artifacts found inside them indeed seem to confirm the hypotheses of their discoverers, who interpreted the buildings as small urban temples.

Translated by A. Szymczak

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<sup>41</sup> JACOBSEN 1942, *passim*.

<sup>42</sup> TUNCA 1984, 202 *sq.*

<sup>43</sup> Cf. list of statues from Nippur, BRAUN-HOLZINGER 1977, 10-12, 16-19, 78 *sq.*

<sup>44</sup> Levels Oval I and II produced 62 such artifacts (26 illustrated in publications, 36 – poorly preserved or fragmentary – described in the catalogue); in levels Oval II-III and III, 14 artifacts were found (6 pictures and 8 notes). The description of the objects and their distribution based on FRANKFORT 1939, 58-75; *ibid.*, 1943, 23, 26-29, 36-39.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 1939, 60 *sq.* nr 28, 40, 41; 72 *sq.* nr 152; *ibid.*, 1943, 36 nr I 179, 188, 238, 255d, 290; 37 nr II 1.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 62 *sq.*, nr 54-56, 59, p. 66 *sq.* nr 85, p. 70 *sq.* nr 131, p. 72 *sq.* nr 142, 144; *ibid.*, 1943, 26 *sq.* nr 246, p. 37 nr 552, 554, 584, 591, 596. As far as it is possible to judge, the fragments come from different statues, as attested by the presence of eight complete and one fragmentary head in the set. What is interesting, the same room (Oval I) yielded also the torso of a figurine that seems to depict a naked woman, *ibid.*, 72 *sq.*, nr 154, as well as a large set of mace heads, DELOUGAZ 1940, 27, 157; FRANKFORT *et al.* 1932, 66-68.

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