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Fig. 1. Statue of the goddess Sekhmet, a fierce and sometimes terrible deity, the consort of the god Ptah of Memphis. This statue now stands in one of the shrine rooms of the little temple of Ptah at Karnak. The modern traveller, on entering the dimly lighted room is startled and generally impressed by the rather grim figure of the goddess and receives something of the impression which the statue, that originally stood here may have conveyed. (Oriental Institute, University of Chicago)

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TEMPLE IN THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST

For what purpose did the ancient temple exist, and what role did it

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play in community life? What was thought to be the relation of Deity and people to it? How are the modern church and synagogue related to it and yet different from it?

In this and the December numbers of *The Biblical Archaeologist* an attempt will be made to deal with these questions. In this issue two articles are presented (Parts I and II) on the Egyptian and Mesopotamian temples by Professor Harold H. Nelson of the Oriental Institute and by Dr. A. Leo Oppenheim of the Iranian Institute. These will be followed in December by Part III on the temple in Canaan and in Israel by the Editor and by Part IV on the Herodian Temple, the synagogue, and the church in the period of the New Testament by Professor Floyd V. Filson of McCormick Theological Seminary.

It will be seen that temples were originally constructed as homes for the deities in whom the people believed. Just as king and commoner lived in houses, so did the gods. Temples, therefore, were exceedingly important in community life because they were the point where the Divine touched the human, where the transcendent became immanent, and where the ultimate source of power became available to alleviate human weakness and need. Man's duty, people then believed, was to provide for the physical needs of a god: that is, food, water, and innumerable delicacies. In return for these services the god was confidently expected to provide for human necessities, give directions for the conduct of daily life, and furnish the stability necessary for a community's prosperity.

A study of the articles of Drs. Nelson and Oppenheim will reveal that a fundamental difference existed between Egyptian and Mesopotamian conceptions as to the way in which the divine power was manifested in human life. This difference can largely be traced to the variant conceptions of kingship in the two countries. In Egypt the king was himself a god, the son of Amon-Re who was the chief deity of the land; and the divine blessings to the country were largely mediated through his person. In Mesopotamia, on the other hand, the relationship between god and people was more direct. The king was not a god. He humbly sought the divine instructions for his life as did any other man, though to be sure his position in the community entitled him to certain special privileges and favors.

The Mesopotamian conception was basic to the whole of the Fertile Crescent, including Israel. Yet in Israel it was inevitable that the fundamentally different conception of Deity should arouse questioning about the meaning of the temple. Solomon's structure was commonly called the "house" of God, just as were other Oriental temples; but Israel was not content to leave the matter there, as we shall see in Part III of the article to appear in December.

With the destruction of the Temple and the Dispersion something new appeared on the scene. That was the synagogue, differing radically from the Temple in meaning and function. The early Christian Church followed with a complete repudiation of the whole temple-idea. It is in this setting that the full significance of the words of Paul to the Athenians is understood: "God that made the world . . . dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he



Fig. 2. Nekhbet, the vulture goddess of Upper Egypt, spreads her wings along the ceiling, above where the Pharaoh stood when he showed himself in the "Window of Appearances" at the Medinet Habu temple. Such representations of the goddess or of the winged sun-disk extended above all the main passageways in the temple along which the king would normally move when he visited the building. By a repetition of the same figure, like an unrolled movie film, the Pharaoh was never beyond the protection of the goddess. (Oriental Institute, University of Chicago)

needed any thing" (Acts 17:24-25; cf. also John 4:20 ff.). In both modern Judaism and Christianity, however, the temple-idea is still occasionally to be found, especially in subtle forms. In Part IV there will be an indication of the way in which this is true.

This type of article, one which attempts to penetrate the conceptual life of the ancient world and to interpret its modern relevance, is badly needed. Yet it is exceedingly difficult to find scholars who are prepared and who are willing to write along these lines. New ground must be broken; and though the B. A. will attempt to publish an increasing amount of material of this kind, it is hoped that readers will be indulgent where our attempts meet with only partial success.

G. E. W.

I. THE EGYPTIAN TEMPLE

with particular reference to THE THEBAN TEMPLES OF THE EMPIRE PERIOD Harold H. Nelson The Oriental Institute, University of Chicago

The Egyptian temple was originally merely a house for the god, just as an Egyptian dwelling was a house for its human master. It was a simple affair of a single small room, a hut, apparently little more than a naos or shrine, a frame with matting or wattle sides or possibly constructed entirely of wood. Before it stood a symbol of the god while the whole was enclosed in a fence or low wall. As time went on the god's house was expanded with the addition of rooms and halls before and on either side, but the shrine, developed into the holy of holies of a temple complex, still remained. It had become a room, secluded far in the rear of the building. but lying on the main axis of the temple. There in mysterious shadow stood the sacred image (Fig.1), shut off from the profane sight of the outside world by a series of doors which closed portal after portal along the great central passage running from the main entrance through the pylon back to the "great place" (as the Egyptians called it), the god's peculiar quarters. At most of the great city temples, the chief seats of the leading deities, the principal god of the town had his own temple which belonged to him exclusively or which might contain minor accommodations for the other two members of his holy family. At Karnak, Amon, Mut, and Khonsu, the Theban Triad, had each his or her own temple with apparently no provision for the reception of the other two deities. These were their special dwellings and belonged to each alone although Amon figured prominently on the walls of all the buildings. In the reliefs the king is shown officiating before other gods who belonged to Amon's Ennead or circle of associated powers, but there seems to be no place within the temple itself reserved for the worship of such divinities. The inscriptional evidence, on the other hand, speaks of the sanctuaries of the Ennead as found within the temple, so that we must presume that they existed there. Outside the main temple were number of minor shrines dedicated to various gods such as Ptah, Osiris, Maat, etc., and there we know that services in their honor were regularly celebrated.

There are two other groups of buildings to which this description does not fully apply, namely, the processional "stations" and the temples "on the west," as the Egyptians designated them. The former were used in connection with the periodic progresses which the god made from place to place in his temple grounds. Under the early 18th Dynasty each of these stations consisted of a raised platform reached at opposite ends by a low stairway little more than a ramp. On the platform was a structure consisting generally of a single room with a door at either end, sometimes

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surrounded by a colonnade. When the portable bark-shrine containing the image of the god and carried on the shoulders of priests reached one of these buildings, which were numbered in regular order of succession, it was carried up the gentle slope of the stairs into the cella and deposited upon a support in the middle of the room. There are reliefs showing the bark of Amon within such stations where the accompanying inscription reads, for instance, "resting or stopping in station no. 5, called 'Maat-ka-Re receives the beauty of Amon'." After the completion of the ceremonies customary at one station, the god proceeded on his way to that next in order and ultimately returned to his "great place" from which he had set out. In these early 18th Dynasty buildings and in the reliefs of that period provision is made only for the bark of Amon which seems alone to have



Fig. 3. The Nile god, Hapi, bringing into the temple of Ramses III "refreshing water", flowers, and "all things" for the service of the sanctuary. This scene is in the narrow room below the stairs leading to the roof of the temple. (Oriental Institute, University of Chicago)

taken part in such processions within the temple compound. By the 19th Dynasty (after ca. 1320 B. C.), however, the bark of Amon was accompanied by those of Mut and Khonsu and the stations built by Seti II and Ramses III, now included in the first court of the Amon temple at Karnak, have accommodations for all three barks which no longer entered and left the building by different doors but came out by the same door by which they entered.

Aside from the great temples of particular gods and the processional stations associated with them, we have still another group of temples which were known as those belonging to the West, or "on the West of Thebes," "on the west of Abydos," etc. Whether or not they should be termed "mortuary temples" is largely a matter of definition. The West was the region of the dead and of Osiris. The goddess of the West welcomed the dead to his tomb, and also figured in the reliefs on the temple walls where the king is shown as an Osiris. Moreover, they seem to furnish the only substitute for the tomb chapel, a regular part of an Egyptian sepulchre but conspicuously lacking in the tombs of the kings in the hills just behind the Theban mortuary temples. That these latter were intended, in part at least, for the service of the dead king is evidenced by such statements as that made by Ramses II regarding the temple of his father, Seti I, at Abydos which was left unfinished when Seti died and was completed by his son. The latter addressing his dead father says, "Behold I am making thy name to live, I have protected thee, I give attention to thy temple, thy offerings are established. Thou restest in the other world like Osiris, while I shine like Re for mankind. How happy for thee, who begat me — since thou comest as one living again. I have fashioned thee, I have built the house thou lovest, wherein is thy statue in the cemetery of Abydos, region of eternity. I have endowed offerings for thy statues, the daily offerings come to thee." While these temples served the king when he was dead, they began to function while he was yet alive. At the same time they were dedicated to the great god of the locality. Thus at Thebes the temples on the West, each built by a different Pharaoh, were all Amon temples. At Medinet Habu Ramses III in most instances appears upon the walls as the living king. Ramses says of this temple: "I built for thee (Amon) my house-of-millions-of-years in the necropolis of Thebes. I fashioned thy august images dwelling in its midst while the great Ennead are in shrines in their sanctuaries." The king then goes on to say that he has arranged the cult of the temple, provided for the proper observance of the regular feasts, organized its priesthood and set the whole institution in motion. Here is the living king building the temple and officiating in it while alive but at the same time he says to Amon: "I give all things to my father Amon-Re, that he may [benefit from] them in after years, and that he may give therefrom to my image and my statue while I rest beside him receiving offerings."

In these temples on the West, provision was made for the service of other gods besides Amon, such as Re, Osiris, Monthu, Sokar, Ptah, etc. One of their chief functions as is constantly stated in the inscriptions is to serve as a resting place for the bark of Amon when he visited the necropolis in "his beautiful Feast of the Valley." During this feast the sacred bark was transported to the necropolis and spent the night in the temple of the reigning Pharaoh or in that of the most recently built of the temples there. In this feast not only the living king but the dead Pharaohs as well took part. At Karnak we have a relief showing the bark of Amon setting out for the temples on the West of Thebes with the living king burning incense before it and his dead predecessor walking behind the bark accompanied by an inscription stating that he is "following his father, Amon, in his beautiful Feast of the Valley."

THE SYMBOLISM OF THE EGYPTIAN TEMPLE

The very simplicity of the primitive shrines of early times, which only

later developed into the great temples of the Empire and Ptolemaic periods, argues against any very elaborate mystical interpretation of their significance. As time went on, however, and the house of the god became more and more complex, the Egyptian began to see cosmic reflections in the temple building in which the god resided and in which he came into closest contact with the world of men. The priesthood of the various temples indulged their fancy in mystical and metaphysical explanations of the divine dwelling, which speculations naturally took the form of envisaging within the limitations of the physical building the limitless world in which the deity moved. The temple was thus pictured as a microcosm of the world, the realm of the god. I can find no indication that this interpretation of the temple plan was other than secondary. At any rate, the cosmological





Fig. 4. Two representations of the sungod as he sails down the sky" to rest in life in the western horizon." "A" (above) is on the east face of the west wall of the unroofed chapel located above the gateway and between the pylon towers at the temple of Ramses III at Medinet Habu. "B" (below) also faces east in the unroofed sun-chapel in the rear of the same temple. Opposite "A" and facing west is a scene showing the sungod rising in the east in his morning bark. Thus the worshiper facing either the rising or the setting sun had before him a representation of the sungod in the bark appropriate to the time of day. Note how even the baboons and ostriches lift their hands or wings in adoration of the deity. (Oriental Institute, University of Chicago)

significance ascribed to the temple did not determine its form. The structure came first and the interpretation dealt with what already existed. Moreover such concepts seem to have had no bearing on the relation of the temple to society, or on the daily service observed within it.

The Egyptian constantly applied to his temple figures of speech drawn from the physical world. Thus its pylons reach to the height of the heavens: its beauty illuminates the surrounding area with its brightness: it is like the horizon where Re is born again every day: it is the lord of silver and the mistress of gold. The temple also becomes a reflection of the world. Its ceiling is painted blue for the sky and is studded with a multitude of golden stars. Across this sky, in a long line down the central axis of the building leading up to the "great place," flies with outstretched wings the vulture goddess shown in a succession of representations so that, as the king or the god in his portable shrine proceeded along the sacred

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way, he was under the shadow of the protecting deity's wings (Fig. 2). The floor of the temple is similarly conceived of as the earth out of which plants grow. These take the form of the lotus or papyrus columns which spring from the sacred soil on which the building stands.² The Holy of Holies where the god's image rested in its shrine is regarded as the mound which first rose from the primeval waters, the hill where Re first appeared out of chaos. Along the bases of the walls, normally left undecorated in the earlier temples, runs at times a dado of lotus or lily stalks, each crowned with its bud or open flower, growing, like the columns, from the holy ground. Here too appear the long lines of small human figures bearing as gifts to the temple the various products of the land. These are the personified Nile, or the canals, lakes, fields, vineyards, nomes and districts of Egypt. They stand close to the earth from which their offerings come. In some temples, the side walls of the narrow rooms below the stairs that lead up to the temple roof and which form right triangles with the hypotenuse determined by the ascending lower surface of the stairway, show these Nile gods as though rising from the earth and moving towards the door leading out into the temple halls (Fig. 3). The two pylon towers are the hills of the horizon between which the sun-god rises, and the platform above the gate between the two towers where the sun first penetrates into the temple each morning is frequently decorated with reliefs of the morning and evening solar barks in which Re sails through the sky each day (Fig. 4). In late times the pylons are likened to the goddesses Isis and Nephthis who are shown in the reliefs lifting up the sun in the morning to begin his journey through the sky. A text at Edfu, speaking of the two towers of the pylon, states: "One is like Isis, the other like Nephthis as they lift up Behedety (the sun-god of Edfu) when he shines on the horizon." Even the interior of the temple is said to resemble the heavens. In later times a visitor to one of the early tombs which he mistakenly took for a temple has left his impressions of the building thus: "The scribe, So-and-so, came to see the beautiful temple of King Snefru. He found it within like the heaven, for Re rises therein, and he said: 'The heaven rains fresh myrrh, it drops incense upon the roof of the temple of King Snefru.'3 Ramses III, speaking of his temple at Medinet Habu states: "When Re rises, he shines into its midst. When he sets, he touches its beauty. Its form is like the horizon of the heavens." Speaking to Amon-Re, he adds: "Happy is my temple if thou dwellest therein to eternity, and it shall abide forever."

DEITY AND TEMPLE IN EGYPT

Though the god was spoken of as "dwelling" within the temple, he was not thought of as circumscribed by time or place. Amon had his chief residence in *Ipet-sut*, "the select of places," the name of this great shrine at Karnak. But he was immanent in a multitude of other temples both in Egypt and in other lands over which the Pharaoh ruled. His daily service

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^{2.} Borchardt, Die aegyptische Pflanzensauele, pp. 53 ff.

^{3.} Spiegelberg, Die Auffassung des Tempels als Himmel, AZ. 53 (1917). p. 99

was celebrated each morning in all his temples and his morning and evening meals, to which his priest summoned him, were set out for his enjoyment in all of his numerous dwellings. The king, standing before a row of identical divine figures, is said to be addressing Amon "in every place in which his Ka is." In each town where one of his temples stood he might be spoken of as Amon of this or that place, but these were merely names of the same god. The litany of Amon in the first court of the Luxor temple shows the king standing before the deity and the accompanying text begins: "Making incense to Amon-Re, king of gods," "in each of his names," or "in all his names" (Fig. 5). Then follows a list of these names such as Amon-Re in Thebes, or in Hermopolis, or in Heliopolis, or in foreign



Fig. 5. Ramses III stands before the image of Sokar in his bark-shrine. The king has assumed the ritual attitude required as he pronounces the formula accompanying the presentation of offerings. The title of the scene, inscribed immediately before the figure of the Pharaoh, reads: "Making offerings to Sokar in all his names." The "names" as given in the tabulated text between the king and the god's shrine are not personal but are designations of every possible place where the god may be found, an all-inclusive summary of the single deity's multitude of manifestations. (Oriental Institute, University of Chicago)

lands. More interesting are such designations as Amon-Re: "in all his forms, in all his figures, in all his appearances, in all his beings, in all his births, in every place where he desires to be, in all his likenesses, in all his monuments."⁴ Elsewhere he is "lord of the sky, of the earth, of the underworld, of the water, of the desert." Men also call upon Amon who is "in the south lands, in the north lands, in the west lands, in the east lands." The king, speaking to the god, terms the city of Thebes "thy peculiar, or special, house." While it might be the god's favorite dwelling, at the same time he also dwelt in each and every one of his temples. The sun-god, Re, first acquired this universality. It was difficult for the sun-god to be localized exclusively in any one town or sanctuary, though Heliopolis was regarded as his special dwelling. The immanence of other deities in any place where their worshipers were found might be reinforced by combining them with Re. The identity of the deity was, therefore, somewhat fluid as

4. Daressy, Litanies d'Amon du Temple de Luxor (Rec. du Trav. XXXII.), pp. 63 f.

the result of this tendency to merge two or more gods under one hyphenated name. Thus we have Amon-Re-Harakhte-Atum, or Khonsu-Re-Horus-Thoth, or Mut-Saosis-Sekhmet-Bast, though these combinations were generally of deities who already had much in common.

The question of whether the god might be approached in only one place or in every place simultaneously apparently never arose in the Egyptian's mind. The god was simply there where the worshiper sought him. He was not confined to any place or any image however sacred. The Egyptian says: "He [the god] is one who confoundeth by what is seen of the eves [i, e., by his outward form in his statue]. Let the god be served in his fashion [i. e., according to the proper requirements] whether made of precious stones or fashioned of copper, like water replaced by water. There is no stream that suffereth itself to be confined: it bursteth the dyke by which it is confined." Breasted points out that this statement "is obviously an effort to distinguish between the god and the conventional temple image. As water bursts the dyke, so the being of god cannot be confined within the visible image," but "is as elusive as one body of water merging into another."⁵ In other words the Egyptian did not confuse the deity with his image any more than he identified the dead man with his mummy or his statue in the tomb. When a man died he passed into the other world, into the realm of Osiris. There he carried on his life much as he did in this world, but he never entirely severed his connection with the world of living men. To retain his identity his name must be preserved and to take part in the ceremonies at his tomb, which were perhaps his chief link with the living, his mummy or his statue which also stood in the tomb must, by proper magical rites, be vitalized and made capable of occupancy by his soul or Ba. Just as these physical entities must be made available to the unseen dead, so the statue of the god, by the same magical rites, had to be animated, that the deity might use it to manifest himself in his temple. Moreover, these rites had to be repeated again and again. They serve at least to demonstrate that the Egyptian god was not the temple image (Fig. 6).

TEMPLE AND COMMUNITY IN EGYPT

It was apparently through the image that the deity could make his will known. While embodied in it he pronounced oracles affecting the lives of men. These expressions of the divine will were effected by the image nodding its head in approval of one of two alternatives laid before it, or by other physical acts. In this way the god decreed the erection of buildings, selected his favorites for office, rendered decisions as to the guilt or innocence of the accused, gave his blessing to plans for warlike undertakings, etc. The maintenance of the vitality of the temple image was thus a matter of prime necessity.

With the actual daily service of the temple the mass of the people had little or nothing to do, although there was a considerable body of lay priests who, in monthly rotation, carried out duties along with the regular priesthood. The temple service was conducted by and for the king, that he

^{5.} Breasted, The Dawn of Conscience, pp. 157-8.

might obtain life, health, abundance, power and a multitude of other blessings. But his prosperity was also that of his land and its inhabitants. He became, as it were, a channel through which the divine blessings might flow not only for his own happiness and satisfaction but for that of his people as well.

The king may have been originally the "servant" of the god. The same word in Egyptian means both "servant," and "majesty." But in actual fact in historic times the servant idea as applied to the monarch had become much weakened. The ruler was himself a god, the son of the deity who dwelt in the temple. The relationship between them was one of mutual advantage, that of a father and his eldest son. Though the wording of the



Fig. 6. The king animates or vitalizes the image of the god Amon. On the right he purifies the statue with water sprinkled over it from a special kind of jar held between his two hands. He then presents four cups containing balls of incense and natron used for cleansing the mouth of the statue. Finally he touches the mouth of the image with a magical instrument shaped like an adz whereby the mouth of the figure was "opened." These are three episodes selected from a long series of acts, each accompanied by its proper ritual utterance, known as the Rite of Opening the Mouth. When the ceremony was completed the temple image could be employed by Amon as a medium for physical contact with his worshiper. (Oriental Institute, University of Chicago)

temple service speaks of the king prostrating himself before the deity and kissing the ground, just as do the captives taken in war who beg for mercy, the reliefs showing such acts of the cult depict the Pharaoh either standing, or at most kneeling, before the divine image. The use of magic which played so large a part in Egyptian ritual gave the officiant a greater equality with the deity who, if approached with the proper formulae and gestures, might be practically coerced into doing what was desired. Moreover, the king, being already of divine parentage and destined to become a fullfledged deity on his death, would perhaps find it difficult to assume the humility which the wording of the service seemed to require.

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The ordinary man came nearest to the deity perhaps on the occasion of the great feasts when the god was carried outside his temple precincts and either went in procession through the town or journeyed to visit his divine neighbors in other temples, traveling in his gorgeous dahabiyeh on the river while the populace ran rejoicing along the banks or swarmed upon the water in their own small craft, chanting the god's praises and joining in dances and games. As the feasts celebrated in any temple were fairly numerous, the god was, probably, not so remote from the sight of his people as we would sometimes imagine. The king might be the one who approached the god in his holy sanctuary, but the ordinary man could still address his prayers even to the mighty king of gods. In fact one of the epithets of Amon is "he who hears petitions and answers prayers." One imagines that the farther down the social scale he stood, the less assurance did the petitioner feel that his prayer would be heard. Possibly for some such reason there was a tendency to appeal to the god nearer at hand. While, as we have seen, the official religion held that the god was one, though with diverse names and dwellings, the common people apparently developed the conception of a distinct individuality attached to the local form of the god who dwelt in their own locality. Such a tendency among the ignorant is not unknown in Christianity, where the Virgin of one district will find her champions against the claims of a rival Madonna in a neighboring town. In the letters of late times we find the writer calling down upon his correspondent the blessings of Amon-Re, king of gods, of Mut, of Khonsu, and of all the gods of Thebes, of Re-Harakhte when he shines and when he sets, of Amon, United-with-Eternity, of Amon of Jame, of Amon of the throne of the Two Lands, of Amon Userhet,⁶ etc., as though these latter were separate divinities like Mut, Khonsu and Harakhte. Undoubtedly the ordinary citizen felt nearer to the form of Amon who was connected with his local shrine than he did to the more remote and august deity who lived in grandeur in his imposing fane at Karnak, a conception which would undoubtedly be encouraged by the local priesthoods to enhance their own prestige and, perhaps, emoluments.

The temple impinged upon the life of the common man in its economic aspects with increasing force as time went on. From the beginning, the tribute paid to temples through their royal endowments must have laid a considerable burden on a large section of the population. Until the time of the Empire we have little statistical data bearing on this subject, but beginning with the 18th Dynasty we can see a steady increase in the growth of the temple wealth. Thutmose III, who seems to have gained power largely through the assistance of the priesthood of the Amon temple at Karnak, repaid their help by pouring into the god's treasury much, if not most, of the wealth derived from the plunder and tribute of his Asiatic conquests. From his time on the power of the great Theban deity grew to alarming proportions. The revolt against the position of Amon that took shape in the religious movement under Ikhnaton, may have been directed as much against the economic dominance of the priesthood as in support

^{6.} Cerny, Late Ramesside Letters (Bibliotheca Aegyptiaca IX, 1939), passim.

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of a theological concept. After the collapse of that movement, the gods, and especially Amon, recovered their lost power with great rapidity and moved on to secure a still stronger hold on the country until, in the end, the very throne itself crumbled before the power of the great priesthood at Thebes. The recently published Wilbur Papyrus, a sort of Doomsday Book of the estate of Amon under the later Ramessides, together with information derived from the great Papyrus Harris and numerous temple inscriptions contemporary with it, give a still more vivid picture of the dangerous influence exercised by the Amonite ecclesiastical institution under the 20th Dynasty. The register of Amon's vast landed possessions, coupled with our knowledge of the control possessed by landlords over the bodies and souls of the peasants who work their estates under such an economy, clearly show the strangle hold that the priesthood had acquired on the life of the country by the 11th century B. C. This is undoubtedly



Fig. 7. Though one of the earliest products of Mesopotamian glyptic, this seal depicts with astonishing perfection and artistic skill a religious scene: a reed-shrine and an altarlike structure with two "symbols" of the goddess Innina are transported on a decorated boat manned by a crew of one rowing and one staking man. A priest (?) with a netlike skirt stands before the altar below which a bull can be seen. (H. Frankfort, **Cylinder Seals**, Pl. III; e)

not the situation throughout the whole course of Egyptian history, but that the economic power of the temple institution always had a tendency to increase in more prosperous times is certain. It happens that under the 20th Dynasty our knowledge of this aspect of Egyptian life is fullest.

Like the Egyptian fellah of today, the peasant of Pharaonic times bore his burden of poverty and toil, of injustice and tyranny, with submission and considerable cheerfulness. And just as today escape from his social prison was closed by circumstances to all but the few. He bowed to necessity but trusted to a better life in the world after death where he too might share some of the pleasures and, perhaps, some of the ease of the Osirian hereafter. However, he was probably pleased to be called to the attention of the god when he was shown on the votive scale his master erected on the sacred soil of Osiris at Abydos, even though he were there depicted performing his humble offices for his earthly lord. He might be debarred from too close approach to the great deity who resided at Thebes, or Heliopolis or Memphis, but he did utter to them his petitions in times of difficulty and entertained hopes of a better lot when the troubles of this world were over.

II. THE MESOPOTAMIAN TEMPLE

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In the marshy canebrakes of Lower Mesopotamia worshipers of still undetermined ethnical affinities constructed boats (Fig. 7), fenced off sacred enclosures, wove dais-shaped windscreens and elaborate reed-huts to house their images and other worshiped objects as long ago as the end of the fourth millennium, B. C. The rare pictorial representations allow us only a few glimpses of the religious activity enacted in these reedsanctuaries.1 This aquatic past left sundry traces in the ritual practices, the sacred furniture of the later temples, as well as in the material features of their architecture.² To this we trace back naval processions, the use of reed-huts for certain rites, altars made of reed, and other customs.

With the invention of sun-dried bricks was ushered in the epoch of monumental temple-architecture. The oldest extant brick-buildings were devoted to the gods. On a mound of clean earth a rectangular and symmetrical temple was lifted high above the level of secular human life; three naves and, most probably, a second story feature an imposing structure in whose white-faced walls numerous doors opened in three directions (Fig. 8). Yet, this temple was still an experiment, an attempt to create a sacred building to shelter the deity, its worshippers and their cult. Though the architectural technique — rectangular and symmetrical planning, recessed brick-walls, colored facing, etc. — was accepted as norm for all future edifices of that type, the characteristic features of the building itself (that is: location on a mound, accessibility through numerous doorways, and arrangement of the rooms) seem nevertheless to have been rejected as adequate expressions of the religious concepts of the community. Whether it was because this concept was still in actual evolution or because there were successive ethnical or political changes in the community, new types of temple-architecture appear and disappear in Mesopotamia³ until, towards the end of the third millenium, the perfect expression was finally achieved by the creative religious genius of the templebuilders. A pattern was thus set to be followed conscientiously by all Babylonian architects until this civilization disappeared.⁴

THE TYPICAL MESOPOTAMIAN TEMPLE

The old sanctuary was replaced by two buildings: one aloft on the mound, the dimensions of which were considerably increased and which was to become the marvel of the Near Eastern world (Fig. 9), the other on the level soil. The tower (sigqurratu) was destined to receive the deity alighting there in its descent from heaven, while the lower building, with the ground-plan of a typical South-Babylonian private house, was to be the abode of the god when staying on earth. None of the small sacred structures erected on top of the stage-tower has survived, exposed as they were

Cf. the article of L. H. Vincent "La Représentation divine orientale archaique" in Mélanges Syrienes... A. R. Dussaud (Paris 1939), 373 ff.
 Cf. e. g. E. Heinrich, Schilf und Lehm, ein Beitrag zur Urgeschichte der Sumerer (Studien z. Bauforschung, Vol. VI, 1934).
 The article of V. Mueller "Types of Mesopotamian Houses" in JAOS LX, 151 ff. will inform the reader with regard to these questions and the pertinent literature.
 The short-lived innovations which appear very rarely in the period of the Cassite rulers are not discussed here.

not discussed here.

to the inclemencies of the weather and to the inevitable decay of this part of the building. No literary evidence describes clearly their function so that we have to rely on Herodotus' perhaps fanciful information that the lofty sanctuary contained a beautifully decked-out bed and a golden table, but no image, and that a priestess chosen by the god slept there.⁵ Archaeological evidence informs us furthermore of monumental stairways leading to the upper parts of the tower while historical inscriptions of later periods describe the uppermost stage as faced with blue-colored enamelled bricks, and adorned with mighty copper horns indicating, perhaps, that an altar was the model for that story of the temple-tower.⁶



Fig. 8. The characteristic facade of this reconstructed temple is documented by numerous seal-cylinders. "Symbol"-poles usually flanked the entrance door; this decoration is so typical that we find it in the pictographical sign for "door." (V. Christian, Altértumskunde des Zweistromlandes, Pl. 95).

In the lower temple we have a central court surrounded by groups of

5. Both features of this description seem to have appealed to Herodotus; the absence of an image and the concept of sexual intercourse between a god and a human female. The first information was certainly reliable because the temple harbored only one image of its god; as to the second we have to bear in mind that Herodotus very likely had some fixed ideas about "Oriental mysteries" as can be seen from sundry effectfully colored details in his descriptions of Babylonian and Egyptian customs. It is rather likely that he (consciously or unconsciously) transferred the information he received of the "Bed-Room", i. e. the part of sanctuary where the rite of the "Sacred Marriage" was enacted, to the mysterious shrine on top of the tower.

6. The idea that the deity alighted on the tower when descending from heaven to perform its epiphany before the "false door" in the lower temple lacks the support of any sort of architectural connexion between these two buildings. Yet, it should not be dismissed for that reason, which only appeals to our type of logical thinking. The Assyrians to whom the siggurratu-idea was originally alien, unmistakably stress this connexion in the temples built in Asshur, Kar-Tukulti-Ninurta, Kalhu and Khorsabad. It seems that these architects were free to express a relation which their Babylonian colleagues could not materialize, bound as they were by their traditions.

rooms of which the principal one, situated on the shady south-front, contained the image (Fig. 10). Here, in the reproduced living-room of the Babylonian private house, the sacred image stood on a low threshold-like step before a door-shaped recess in the wall and in front of the main door of the transverse room. This door led through one or two other transverse ante-rooms to the main court, where the worshipping crowd gathered to look through a monumental doorway, which presented the characteristic architecture of a city-gate, to the beautifully dressed image glowing in the darkness of the sanctuary. Only the servicing priests and those sacerdotal officials, termed "[those allowed to] enter the house", had access to it. Exception was made for the king of Babylon who entered the naos of Esagila (main temple of this city) once a year, at the New Year's festival, yet stripped of his regalia and as a humble and devout penitent. When, for example, the Assyrian king Shalmaneser III (858-824 B. C.) came to Kutha in Babylon to worship the god Nergal he referred in his inscriptions⁷ to the pious act: "He humbly made the prostration at the door of the temple, offered his sacrificial lamb and gave the [required] gifts".8 Obviously the king was not permitted to enter the shrine.

The Assyrian temple has another origin and lacks — in its earlier and genuine forms — the central court holding the worshiper. The visitor to the house of god had to enter the room itself where the deity permanently dwelt. He stepped into the oblong sanctuary through a door in the longer wall, near the farther end of the room on the shorter wall of which the image was placed. Consequently, he had to turn to his right or left to behold the god enthroned on a platform and separated from the main room by a small partition formed by wall-ledges (Fig. 11). Under Babylonian influence the entrance was sometimes provided with flanking towers (imitating a city-gate) or placed in the shorter wall, creating thus - against the spirit of the building - a sequence of rooms strung on one central axis: anteroom, main room for the worshiper and adyton with the image.

The Assyrian deity was enthroned in the place of honor, far away from the entrance and not to be seen from the outside. As the master of the house it there received the visitor who reverently entered its room. The resulting intimacy was somewhat counteracted by the above-mentioned division of the main room, but was undoubtedly so intended by the architect. In this context it should be stressed that the Assyrian image seems to have been confined to its shrine before the ever increasing Babylonization, while the Babylonian gods quite frequently left their sanctuaries to be shown to the admiring crowd in the spacious temple-yards and in the streets. That the Assyrian images were kept in their abodes is expressly indicated, for example, by a passage of an inscription of Ashurnasirpal II (883-859 B. C.) who warned his successors not to bring the holy image of Ishtar (whose temple he had restored) to the profane light of day.9

Cf. Luckenbill, Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia, Vol. I, No. 624.
 This description covers the typical features of a visit to the sanctuary. The frequent personal names of the type pan ili amaru "to see the face of the god" (cf. J. J. Stamm "Die akkadische Namengebung" in MVAG XLIV, 85 f.) show the religious import of such visits while the scarcity of personal names referring to temples (cf. loc. cit., 85 f., 203) squares with the conclusions reached in the present article.
 Cf. Budge-King, Annals of Assyrian Kings, 165, rev. 5.

1944, 3) THE BIBLICAL ARCHAEOLOGIST

Before discussing the construction and appearance of these temples, short mention should be made of their most famous representatives. In the first place we have Esagila, the Marduk-temple (Tower of Babel) in Babylon of Bible-fame; the Ezida in Borsippa, whence Nabu, the son of Marduk, came annually to pay homage to his father; the Shamash-temples (called Ebabbar) of north and south Babylonia in Sippar and Larsa respectively, while Uruk (the biblical Erech) harbored the famous temple of Anu and Ishtar, the Eanna. The temple of the national god of Assyria stood in Asshur among many other shrines dedicated to Assyrian and Babylonian deities; a famous Ishtar-sanctuary in Arbela seems to have



Fig. 9. The much discussed problems of the reconstruction of this temple-tower center around the arrangement of the upper stages, the angle of the lower and the access to the top sanctuary. (Th. Dombart, **Der babylonische Turm,** Taf. 1)

been a place of pilgrimage at the time of its revelling festivals.

The very heart of the temple was the place where the image had to stand; it was distinguished by deep foundations of kiln-fired bricks or clean sand, and protected by numerous magic figures imbedded in brickcases. The orientation of the building¹⁰ was determined by the setting of the *libittu makhritu* ("first brick") which was placed ceremoniously on clean earth, surrounded by precious beads and anointed with perfumed oil. This brick was conceived as harboring the protective numina of the building, the "god", "goddess" and "genius" (*ilu, ishtaru, Lamassu*) with which the temple was endowed like any living human being.¹¹ In case of a desecration of the sanctuary, necessitated by repair-work or reconstruction, the *libittu makhritu* had to be taken from its location by the

For this problem cf. G. Martiny, Die Kultrichtung in Mesopotamien (Studien z. Bauforschung, Vol. 111, 1932).

^{11.} Cf. the texts published by F. Thureau-Dangin. Rituels accadiens for the details mentioned above.

temple-architect and brought to a ritually clean and secluded place in the open air. Here, penitential songs, continuous aspersions and fumigations were enacted for the sustenance of this "temple in exile" till it could be put in place again.

Architects and surveyors with their ropes and rods determined the outlines of the temennu (Sumerian: temen; cf. Greek: temenos), the foundation-platform in which was also to be deposited the foundationdocument. In case of a rebuilding of a ruined temple the architects had to follow exactly, "neither projecting nor recessing a finger's breadth," the outlines of the old *temennu*, a custom of great advantage to the modern excavator, who finds layers upon layers of such foundations, like the pages of a book, laid by scores of pious generations.

The walls of sacred buildings were consistently made of sun-dried bricks, although the advantages of kiln-fired bricks were well known. The latter were frequently employed in secular buildings, but the conservatism of sacred architecture tends here, as everywhere, to retain antiquated techniques. The roof of the temple was made of timber stretched over the rooms, thus determinating their width, since the temple-architects did not favor the use of supporting devices, such as columns, etc. Its inner side was magnificently decorated with metal inlays and incrustations. The last stage of the construction-work was reached when the door-openings were skillfully framed. Then the heavy doors, coated with sheets of copper or precious metals which the artist had engraved or embossed, were set in their hinges, and provided with heavy locks and strong ropes for their manipulation. The brick-walls were faced on both sides with white coatings often decorated with colored washes or other, more costly, mural decorations (mosaics, enamelled bricks, etc).¹²

When the work was completed, the image was brought in its new house in a solemn and jubilant procession. As a rule each image dwelt in a separate sanctuary: the principal god in the main room, the members of the divine family or the officials of the divine court in smaller shrines. Statues of kings and of private persons,¹³ in worshipping attitudes with pious dedicational inscriptions, sumptuous votive-offerings praising both the god and the donator, filled the sanctuary, together with multifarious sacred furniture such as altars, sacrificial tables, portable shrines, canopies, etc.14

The deity was conceived as living in the sanctuary just as the king lived in his palace. This is unmistakably expressed by the fact that the throne-rooms of the Babylonian and Assyrian palaces correspond exactly in their architectural features to the sanctuaries of the region. In Babylonia we have transverse rooms with the king visible from the court through a central door. In Assyria there were longitudinal rooms with the throne on

It might not be amiss to stress here the perishable nature of all that sumptuousness. Thorough and constant repair-work was vitally necessary to maintain the roof-cover and the pro-tective coating of the brick-walls in good condition, but it was not able to prevent the deterioration and the final ruin of the temple, a situation which the kings so eloquently describe in their reports on the reconstruction of ruined sites.
 Cf. the passage KAR 214:19-20.
 The importance and role of the co-called "symbols"—special objects of religious worship in the temple—cannot be discussed here.

the smaller wall. The daily life of the image is also dominantly patterned on that of the king. In this regard we are fairly well informed by the ritual texts of the Seleucid period, and by the numerous administrative documents from Neo-Babylonian temple-archives. There is good reason to assume that the picture which these sources yield is also valid for the daily life of the king, of which we know little.

After having been awakened by a ceremonious assembly of minor deities, the image is furnished water for its morning toilet, then clothed and decked out with sumptuous garments, crowns, etc., according to the requirements of the day's ceremonies; it is served twice or three times a day a plentiful repast on exquisite and precious plates; it receives the



Fig. 10. This map shows the typical ground-plan of a Babylonian temple. Note the narrow corridor separating the cella from the outer wall; this architectural feature is rather frequent and seems to have had a definite purpose (requirements of the ritual or protection of the image against house-breaking?). (Koldewey, **Die Tempel von Babylon und Borsippa,** Taf. 11)

visits of the members of its family or court, and was led on festival occasions through the streets of its town to rites performed in out-of-door sanctuaries, or carried in a festive cortege to nuptials with its divine spouse. It was not even refused the truly royal pleasure of hunting in its game-cover.¹⁵

Many, and certainly the most impressive, of these scenes were enacted by the priests before throngs of admiring worshipers which saw the beautifully decorated golden or wooden images carried around on magnificent platforms (Fig. 12) in huge processions with appropriate musical

^{15.} Cf. the Assyrian letter Harper ABL 366.

accompaniment. The priests were well aware of the propaganda value of such a display of wealth and pomp. As a matter of fact the entire architectural set-up of the Babylonian sanctuary is actually based on the very same trend of thought. The image is effectually displayed to the gaze of the worshiper by placing it in a shallow room opposite a monumental door shaped like a city-gate in order to create a magnificent frame for the statue.

For the worshiper, however, this priestly concept of the relation between the divine and the human had serious consequences. Though he could admire with religious awe the glamour of the displayed image in the background of the sanctuary, he was forever separated from it by the unsurmountable barrier which excluded him from the shrine.¹⁶ Though he was able to enjoy in the thronging crowd some fleeting glimpses of the age-old statues carried hither and yon in elaborate but unintelligible ceremonies, he could only expect to be asperged by the priests with some drops of the water which was sanctified by the supposition that the image had touched it when washing its hands after the repast. Apart from that he could take part only in the collective and periodical ecstasy of joyous festivals of thanksgiving and in the traditional mournings where there was no room nor time for the intense subtlety which links the individual to his god. No deeply spiritual bond could emerge under the circumstances just described. The "house of god" was separated from the ever fertile fostering soil of individual religious intensity, and the same chasm gaped between the temple and the worshiper as between the king's palace and the mass of loval subjects.

TEMPLE AND COMMUNITY IN MESOPOTAMIA

But the sanctuary was not the only building of the extensive templecomplex. The latter contained within its girdle-walls the living-quarters of the numerous priests who directed and performed the ceremonies, accompanied them with song and music, manufactured the costly utensils of the cult, and cared for the maintenance of the sanctuary itself. Furthermore there were schools and libraries where the young priests were trained and prepared for their duties and there the scholars worked, copying old tablets and keeping the lore of their calling alive. Besides all this there were large warehouses, workshops, granaries, and stables where the immense wealth of the deity was stored, administered, and increased by a special body of competent priests. This part of the temple meant far more to the average Babylonian than the admired splendour of the sanctuary, and interfered far more with his daily life. The economic weight of this institution was a tangible reality in the city-state, and its powerful influence was felt in every domain of the political, social, and economic life of the community.

It is beyond the scope of this article to discuss the development of the temple as an economic institution. Suffice it to state that its tap-roots disappear in the darkness of the prehistoric period, into that protoplasmic

^{16.} Cf. note 8 for the importance of the optical impression.

state of Mesopotamian social organization where the offices of the king and the (high-) priest were still united in one and the same person. The ensuing schism left the temple provided with enough land and serfs to ensure its economic prosperity, yet to a certain extent subject to the secular royal authority. The latter is clearly borne out by the fact that from a very early period the Babylonian king appointed the high-priest of the city's temple, although he himself was not permitted to enter the sanctuary but once a year and then only after having been humiliated by the very same priest. It is furthermore remarkable that, until the last period, the board of sacerdotal officials which ran the temple-organization, had to include a representative of the king. It was the latter's duty to control the transac-



Fig. 11. Note the stress put on the entrance of this typical Assyrian sanctuary in which, however, heavy wall-ledges contribute to create a "Babylonizing" transversal room for the image in the axis of the longitudinal main-room. (W. Andrae, **Die archaischen Ischtartempel**, Taf. 7 a)

tions of the temple and to pay the royal taxes or else to obtain special charters from the king granting freedom of taxation for the sanctuary and its possessions. Although this peculiar relation between the secular and the religious authorities could have tended to cause friction or at least to have created a tension between them, it can be stated that they lived in astonishing harmony throughout the two and a half millennia recorded in the extant texts. Though this impression may be partly caused by our restricted knowledge of Babylonian history,¹⁷ the basic attitude between palace and temple was obviously that of collaboration and mutual ideological assistance.

Economically, the temple fared very well: a steady stream of royal gifts (partly spoils of war) and endowments, together with the offerings

^{17.} Beyond a thin and not even always coherent network of king-names and a meagre array of historical facts (of varied importance) only little is known of the Babylonian history.

brought in by the pious poor extended more and more the landed property of the temple, filled its warehouses, added glamour to its sanctuaries, and lightened the burden of taxation. An efficient administration, controlled by a highly developed and extensive bureaucracy, could not but increase the accumulated wealth. On the fertile soil and fat pastures the countless serfs and slaves of the temple were working. In the efficiently equipped workshops they produced not only for the needs of the deity and the priests but manufactured also export-goods in order to buy in foreign countries the coveted precious metals, stones and timber which nature had denied to Babylonia. It is easy to imagine how such a thriving and ambitious institution influenced the economic life of its city by creating the pattern and showing the effects of international trade and commercial efficiency, not to speak of the work and money it procured for the merchants, craftsmen, and artists of the city.

Another and equally influential side of the temple's activities deserves notice here. Owing most probably to their common roots the temple felt and accepted, just as the palace did, the responsibilities incumbent upon it by virtue of its social and economic predominance. It therefore endeavored to correct in some ways the grievances of the economically underprivileged. It attempted to standardize the system of measurements whose irregularities constituted a severe burden on farmers and other debitors. It tried to reduce the rate of interest, the fluctuations of which were constantly in favor of the creditor, or at least to set an example of what should be normal. It also tried to regulate the money-market by granting loans without interest in special cases. Without the backing of legal enforcements these reformative trends were certainly as inefficient as the corresponding efforts of the kings to control the prices of the standard commodities. Yet, such postulations, theoretical and propagandistic though they actually were, bear eloquent witness to a concept of social responsibility devoid of religious connotations.

The reader of the preceeding pages in which we have tried to outline the tenor of the relations between the temple (as a religious and an economic institution) and the individual, will certainly have observed that we were dealing for the most part with the situation in Babylonia. The important question now arises whether the archaeological and literary data of the Assyrian region offer the same picture.

With regard to the ground-plan of the genuine Assyrian sanctuary we have already shown that it was basically different from that of the Babylonian. Instead of the stage-like display of the image, the Assyrian architects wanted to shelter the god in the remotest part of the oblong sanctuary, thus inviting the worshiper to enter the divine abode. There, one room enclosed both the god and the man, endowing this meeting between the divine and the human with an unmistakable atmosphere of intimacy. Such an atmosphere, created by the architect and willed by the worshiper, betokens the altogether different Assyrian concept of the relations between the "house of god" and its visitor.

As to the literary evidence, it unfortunately offers only scarce information for two reasons: first, the administrative documents of the temple1944, 3)

archives, which constitutes our foremost source of information in Babylonia, are all missing and the extant rituals offer little insight into our field of interest. Secondly, a consistent and steadily increasing process of Babylonization has produced a nearly solid overcast which hides most of the specifically Assyrian features, especially in the realm of religious thought. Only two salient facts can be mentioned here without too much detailed discussion: the fact that the Assyrian king was also the highpriest of the national god, thus linking palace and temple by means of his person; and the fact that the Assyrians did not believe that the sanctuary was the only place of divine presence. They offered sacrifices and prayers to divine beings dwelling on mountain-tops, in sacred groves, and near the sources of rivers.



Fig. 12. Assyrian warriors carry four images on heavy poles. The god alone can be determined: the hammer-like axe and the double lightening-bolt characterize him as a "Weather-God." The insignia of the goddesses are not characteristic enough to determine their nature. Note the image in a shrine (Akk. Shamu "heaven") and the strange fact that the face of the first image is shown frontally. (A. H. Layard, Monuments of Niniveh 1, Pl. 65)

All this betrays the existence of a specific Assyrian religiosity of which little is yet known and which definitely differs from the religious concepts of the Babylonians. It seems to have been pervaded with the same intensity that patently animates the impetuous energy of the entire Assyrian civilization, so different from the reclusive stability and equipoise of the Babylonian.



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