

The Babylonian World.  
The built environment/ Architecture.

Introduction.

The study of ancient architecture is an extremely valuable tool because buildings and the settlements they form are far more than a collection of bricks and mortar. The size and patterning of settlements across the landscape frequently reflects the social and political complexity of a society, while the tracks and roads between the settlements indicate the connections between them. They may also point in the direction of significant external contacts as well. The internal arrangement of the settlements relate to the values and structure of the society to which they belong and may also play an active role in promoting them. The relationship between buildings and behaviour is not straightforward, but it is widely agreed that such links exist and that the built environment both reflects the ideals of the society in question, and plays an active role in encouraging socially desirable behaviour. ( see for example the work of Hillier and Hanson 1984, of Kent 1990 and Rappaport in Kent 1990)

If we accept this premise, it follows that the structure of a settlement can offer us a glimpse into fossilised behaviour patterns, if only we can unravel their meaning. If we take the example of a typical Old Babylonian town or city, its layout will probably demonstrate which buildings were given prominence and which were most lavishly decorated, both features suggesting the importance that society attached to them. Domestic buildings will be grouped together in different ways, often with different floor areas. This can indicate whether or not the extended family played an important part in society, or if the nuclear family was the norm. A wide range of floor areas among the domestic units can tell us whether there were major differences in wealth which may in turn indicate whether the society was highly stratified or not. If certain members of society were secluded and protected from contact with anyone other than their own families this too may be apparent from the house plans. Industrial areas and cottage industries should also be readily identifiable.

More prosaically, architecture provides us with important insights into the technical achievements of the Old Babylonian builders who mainly used mud brick for their constructions. It demonstrates their engineering ability, their tools and their surveying methods as well as their use of other raw materials, some of which may not be local to Mesopotamia. Their level of professional expertise in turn provides us with indirect information on the degree of craft specialisation within the construction industry, information which in Babylonia can often be supplemented by the textual record. The presence of skilled craftsmen, if they are present, in turn tells us something about the level of administration that was necessary to support and provide for these master builders and surveyors.

In this chapter we will look first at the structure of a typical Old Babylonian town, then at the major public buildings, the temples and the palaces, and finally at domestic housing. Most of the evidence will be drawn from Babylonia itself, but it will be augmented by some drawn from a little further north from sites such as Mari and Rimah which lay on the northern edge of the Babylonian world.

The urban structure

Two important surveys of Old Babylonian cities in the last twenty five years have greatly increased our knowledge of these fundamental building blocks of society. ( By the early second millennium many sites in the south were already old foundations and so may, in practice, reflect the values of an earlier time.) The older towns and cities stood on considerable tells or mounds, but others were newly founded on 'green field sites' and had a more open configuration.<sup>1</sup> So important were towns in the Babylonian world view that each city and its environs were seen as the property of a great god who guided its destiny and protected its citizens. Men and women were often identified in the textual record as being of such and such a city, not by a family name, and their personal names might include the name of their city god as one element, while the

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<sup>1</sup> In the north the configuration was often different and showed an upper and a lower town.

rulers were often referred to simply as the man of their capital city. Hammurabi, for instance was often referred to as the man of Babylon.

Our evidence is drawn from the French survey of the great tell site of Larsa, ( Huot 1989) capital of one of the most important city states on the south Mesopotamian plain at the beginning of the reign of Hammurabi with an area of about 190ha, and from that of Mashkan Shapir (Stone and Zimansky 1995), second city of Larsa state, a much flatter, younger, site of about 100ha. In addition, valuable information can be obtained from two much smaller planned sites, each less than 2 ha in area, Haradum, again a French project (Kepinski-Lecomte 1992) and Harmal explored by an Iraqi team (Baqir 1946:22-30)

All settlements on the southern plain of Mesopotamia lay on water courses, either the Tigris or the Euphrates, or on canals, because the rainfall was insufficient for agriculture or for the needs of men and beasts. The great city of Ur had access to water by means of two harbour areas on the Euphrates and one on a large canal, both of which were major arteries of communication as well. Harbours are found in many large sites and were important commercial areas known as the *Karums*, where goods were loaded and unloaded and business was transacted. Smaller canals then led water into the settlements. Most towns seem to have been walled and a study of the modern contours of a site often indicates the position of the gates which were frequently heavily fortified. At Larsa five gates have been identified, some for wheeled traffic and some just posterns. (Huot op.cit:40) Relations between town and country were very close in the Old Babylonian period and no clear boundary existed between the two<sup>2</sup>. Many inhabitants of the towns worked land on the outskirts of their settlements and intensively cultivated gardens, orchards, and plantations of date palms frequently lay within the town walls (Harris 1975:20).

Within the gates the town was usually divided up by roadways and water-courses into a number of smaller tells representing quarters or *babtums*, as they were known, which often had different characters. At Larsa the major roads appear to converge on the religious and administrative area, lying in the centre of the city, which housed the main temple of *E-Babbar* and a ziggurat which must have physically dominated the city. Other areas are more difficult to identify with certainty, but specialist production areas for metal-working, flint and semi-precious stone working have been identified both inside and outside the walls, while the main domestic quarter lay to the east and north. (Huot op.cit.36/7 & 45) More information can be obtained from the survey of Maskan Shapir which was surveyed by a combination of aerial photography and foot patrols.( Stone & Zimansky op.cit.) It was, like Larsa, a walled town on a number of canals which divided the city into five quarters. Some gardens, palm groves and a cemetery all apparently lay within the wall. Unlike Larsa, the temple area, which was not excavated, lay in the south-west corner of the site rather than in the centre as in most contemporary cities. The main temple was dedicated to Nergal, god of death and disease and one might suggest that its position on the perimeter of the site was so that this warlike god could help in the defence of his town.

Close to the temple lay what was probably the administrative area, and a cemetery with another possible temple, while a large metal-working and pottery making area lay to the south-west where the prevailing wind would blow the fumes away from the domestic quarters which seem to have been in the centre and the north-west. Pottery kilns and other metal working areas are, however, also found widely distributed across the whole area, suggesting the presence of cottage industries as well as larger scale production in dedicated workshops. One puzzle is the position of the market place in such settlements, if one existed, as there is little room within the confines of a tell site for large open spaces. It is now thought that markets were present and may have been held at the gates of the city or just outside them, although smaller markets and shops probably stood within the walls. As we have seen the quays of the city were the main commercial centres, although not necessarily the only ones. Mashkan-Shapir was a relatively new foundation and thus did not stand on a high tell so the market may have been held in the open area between the walls and the built-up area to the south-east.

Haradum and Harmal are very different, not only in terms of scale, but because both seem to have been planned settlements with specialist functions. Harmal on the outskirts of modern Baghdad was a small

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<sup>2</sup> For an excellent study of the Mesopotamian city see Van de Mieroop 1997.

administrative centre, while Haradum on the middle Euphrates, about 90 kms south-east of Mari, was a settlement to facilitate trade up and down the river. Both were very small compared to the sites we have been looking at, neither reaching two hectares in area, but both were heavily fortified. The plan of Haradum is more regular and we can see that the town was laid out on a grid plan which looks almost Roman in its symmetry. The two main buildings, the temple, and what was identified as the mayor's house stand on a small square just north-east of the centre of the settlement. The rest of the area inside the walls was divided into blocks and seems to be taken up with houses, except for the south-eastern corner which may have had a more specialised function.

### Public buildings, Temples

We have seen that religious buildings were often at the centre of Babylonian cities. They usually formed an impressive group around the ziggurat or stepped tower which would have dominated the skyline. The ziggurat at Larsa seems to have been founded in the Ur III period and what remains is largely the work of the Neo-Babylonian king Nabonidus who restored the building which was dedicated to the sun god Shamash and his wife Aya. (Bachelot & Castel 1989:56-77) We know little of the Hammurabi foundation except that it stood in its own court and its dimensions as restored were almost square measuring 40.30x43.50m. A niche was uncovered on the east face, but no trace of the access remained and we do not know how many stages it had or if it had a triple stair like the contemporary one at Ur, a single flight of steps, or even a ramp.

The main temple called *E.Babbar* is also unexcavated and lies adjacent to the ziggurat. It may have been founded in the Ur III period like the ziggurat, but the plan seems to date to the time of Hammurabi and was carefully restored by the Kassite king Burnaburiash. Work has been carried out on a series of impressive courtyards which presumably gave access to the main shrine. (Calvet et al 1976:1-28 The courts were surrounded by small rooms which may have been used as offices or even workshops. In one them, room 13, buried below the floor a jar was found containing what was originally thought to be a jeweller's hoard as it contained both finished items of jewellery, 65 weights and a small quantity of precious scrap metal in addition to various tools, clay sealings and an inscribed haematite seal. Its purpose has since been re-assessed and it is now considered that it may have belonged to a temple official or to a merchant. (Huot 1995) The main court, Court 1, in which room 13 lay and the hoard described above was found, has a number of interesting features of which the most impressive is the decoration of the internal walls. ( Calvet et al 1976) This is made up of engaged half columns decorated with a design which closely resembles twisted barley-sugar sticks. The pillars were made of specially moulded semi-circular bricks and at a later stage were plastered over so that eventually the decoration disappeared. The court was not completely excavated, but its overall dimensions were of the order of 46.70 x 36m. There was access from this court to at least two other smaller ones. An impressive doorway in the south-west wall gave access up a flight of steps to room 9. To one side of this stair lay a suite of platforms and walls known as the Construction Annexe coated with bitumen which the excavators thought might have been altars or offering places. Room 9, a rectangular space, seems to have been a subsidiary sanctuary which appears to have predated the main construction of the court. Inside lay two piles of brick, perhaps also the remains of altars, set diagonally across the main axis of the room, which strongly suggests that they belong to an earlier structure and were too important to be destroyed or relocated. Their alignment is the same as that of the Construction Annexe and this structure too probably belongs to an earlier building.

The engaged columns of court 1 with their barley-sugar decoration provide a distinctive decorative feature which links a number of temples of approximately this date. The Larsa courtyard is not the earliest example which we have. This is found at Ur where a king of Larsa called Warad-Sin fortified the ziggurat enclosure with a bastion on the north-west of the terrace bearing the same style of decoration also made of specially moulded mud brick (Woolley 1939:42/3, and fig.71). The style seems to have moved from the south of Mesopotamia northwards, perhaps via the Jebel Hamrin, part of a long-established route east of the Tigris which linked cities as far apart as Susa and Nineveh. A fine temple was uncovered at Tell Haddad during rescue operations in the Hamrin valley, which unfortunately is largely unpublished, but the interior of the courtyard was decorated in this very distinctive way.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> I am grateful to Professor Michael Roaf for this information.

Fortunately, our next example from Tell al Rimah is much better recorded. This site lies on the north Mesopotamian Jazira about 13 kms south of Tell Afar. A glance at the topography suggests there was an upper and a lower town, something not seen in the south, the upper town dominated by a large religious complex which was excavated by Professor David Oates. ( Oates 1982 for a summary and references) Excavation showed that the complex was made up of a large temple (Fig.1) and a ziggurat dating to the time of Hammurabi, a period of considerable prosperity when Rimah stood close to one of the routes linking the Assyrian plain with the metal-rich region of central Anatolia and shared in the prosperity this trade brought to the region.

The temple stood on a platform which was linked to the lower town by a fine processional stair carried on three vaults of diminishing size. The temple itself was just under 40m square, approached through a monumental gate on the east side at the head of the stair. The gate led into a court 19m square in the north corner of which stood a stair carried on a series of vaults which survived to first floor level. Opposite the main entrance lay the door into the inner and outer sanctuaries, rectangular rooms which had their long walls parallel to the wall of the court. (Fig.2) The statue of the god probably stood on the long back wall of the inner cella or sanctuary, where it could be seen from the main entrance and had a view out over his city. The entrance to the shrine seems to have been flanked by monumental figures of a goddess and a protective genii, but neither was found in its original position.

On the other three sides of the court lay smaller service and storage rooms, some of which seem to have been two storeys high. The interior walls of the court and the exterior walls of the building were decorated with engaged half pillars decorated like the ones which we saw at Larsa. (Fig.3) In addition to the twisted barley sugar design there are two other patterns one made up of a series of small diamond shapes and another of a quatrefoil . All seem to have been made of carefully carved bricks which were then assembled to form the required pattern. It has been suggested that two of the designs evoke the pattern left on the stem of a palm tree when the fronds are chopped off to prune it.

These patterns also occur at two other temples of this period in north Mesopotamia at a site in north-east Syria called Leilan, ancient Shubat-Enlil, Shamsi-Adad's new capital. where they are found on the façade of a building which has only been partially excavated, but which includes the exterior wall of a shrine. The shrine itself is also of interest as its design, with the altar on the short rather than the long wall of the cella, reverts to a plan not seen since the late third millennium.(Weiss et al. 1995 fig.4, p.533) The final site is Mari on the middle Euphrates where similar pillars in a poor state of repair were found on the facade of the Temple des Lions. (Margueron 1991:9-10)

At Rimah two more entrances were uncovered in the main temple court opposite each other on the north and south walls. There was no entrance on the west wall because a great high terrace or ziggurat, approximately 25m square was built up against the outer wall of the temple on this side. It is badly preserved and it is not clear if there was ever more than one superimposed platform, nor is it obvious where the access was. It seems likely that the only way onto the top of the terrace was from the roof of the adjacent temple, which as we have seen could be reached by a stair in the north corner of the inner court. This makes it very different to the classic ziggurats we have seen which are free-standing in their own courts with direct access by stairs or ramps, and contrasts with the plan of the temple which is very similar to those in the south.

There was another remarkable feature found in the Rimah temple complex. Some unexpected and sophisticated techniques were employed to roof the structures. Some of the store-rooms in the temple were covered by steeply pitched radial vaults and the stair to the roof was also composed of eight transverse radial vaults of increasing height, each carrying two treads. The substructure of an apparently earlier platform adjacent to that on which the temple stood was supported on a series of pitched brick vaults one above the other.(Oates 1992) Corbel- vaulting had of course been in use for more than a millennium before this and these innovative techniques seem to be a response to the problem posed by the lack of good timbers which could be used to support the roofs of large public buildings.

Other temples are known from the Old Babylonian period and one of the most complete is that found at the site of Ischali in the Diyala valley which was probably a provincial capital. The temple was dedicated to a manifestation of the goddess Inanna and was known as the Kititium temple. It is an impressive structure standing on a platform with the main sanctuary raised a further two metres on a second platform. This second platform was approached by a monumental flight of steps from a ceremonial courtyard at the lower level. This court in turn was surrounded by smaller shrines and service rooms. The main shrine could also be approached directly from the road outside and like the earlier temples of the Ur III period and the temple at Rimah, the cella and ante-cella lay on the far side of an internal courtyard with a clear view of the divine statue standing in a niche in the centre of the back wall of the cella. The cellas could be closed off by means of massive double doors. Behind the shrine lay a number of service rooms some of which seem to have housed the treasures of the temple which included a magnificent bitumenous bowl decorated with the heads of wild moufflon sheep or ibis, probably from Susa, and a stamp seal which originated in the Arabian Gulf far to the south. (Hill & Jacobsen 1990)

Smaller versions of similar, but less elaborate shrines were found at the two small sites mentioned earlier, Harmal and Haradum. At Haradum there was only one shrine in the centre of the town laid out in a similar manner and at Harmal there were a number apparently dedicated to scribal gods, where in at least one instance the entrances were guarded by pairs of charming clay lions sitting on their haunches. Scribal gods were especially appropriate in this case because Harmal is thought to have been a small specialist administrative enclave.

Hammurabi and his contemporaries also built at the old Sumerian cities of the south, but in many cases the remains are fragmentary. At Ur for instance the Giparu or palace of the high priestess was renovated by the sister of the king of Larsa, Warad-Sin, who we have already met as the builder of the bastion with the palm tree decoration at Ur. (Weadock 1975:109/10) One of the gateways into the inner ziggurat enclosure which had been modified to serve as a sort of law court known as the E-dub-lal-mah in the Isin-Lara period and whose inner room may have been roofed by a dome, was also in use, although not much work was done here in the Old Babylonian period (Woolley 1965:9-14, figs 48 & 51). Various other subsidiary temples were also built or refurbished outside the main temenos area.

#### Palaces.

The remains of Hammurabi's own city at Babylon are unfortunately almost inaccessible as the water table has risen too high to allow them to be explored. The problems have now been compounded by the use of the site as a large army camp in the aftermath of the second Gulf war. For example big trenches were dug through the archaeological levels, large areas were levelled and treated to make hard standing for lorries etc and sand bags filled with material from outside the perimeter of the site, some containing archaeological items, were used for protection. Many of these bags have now burst mixing imported material with the indigenous remains. We will probably never know what Hammurabi's own palace looked like and there are few other palace buildings from this period in the south which can be used as models. One structure from Larsa, of which only the foundations remain, was found and is thought to be the remains of palace built by Nur-Adad of Larsa who lived about fifty years before Hammurabi. Sadly, it has been badly damaged by brick robbing and illegal digging. ( Margueron 1982). It is a large rectangular building well separated from the temple complex, perhaps underlining the separation of what could very loosely be called 'church' and 'state' and seems to have been built round a series of courtyards; a reception suite or throne-room has been tentatively identified.

Happily for us there is an excellent and well preserved example of a palace from the city of Mari on the middle Euphrates. It was founded in the mid third millennium, but was extensively restored in the early second millennium by Zimri-Lim who was conquered by Shamsi-Adad, and the building was finally destroyed by Hammurabi towards the end of his reign. The complex web of diplomatic, cultural and economic contacts across the region at this period make it reasonable to see this building, which was much admired by contemporaries, as fairly typical of palaces across the region. It can also be suggested that the design of the palace, which was almost a city in microcosm, reflects the many and different roles which a king was expected to play in the life of his city. ( for a summary of the evidence see Gates. 1984. Margueron 1982 & for more details M.A.R.I)

The palace is a huge fortified structure, evidence for the king's military role, covering thirty two acres, indicative of his wealth and the range of his power. The main entrance lay on the north wall and gives access through a number of auxiliary rooms to a great public court with a cistern in the centre. On the far side of this is what may be a raised reception room or shrine which has traces of frescoes on the walls. It is tempting to see this area as the site of the *majlis*, or court, where local people probably had direct access to their ruler or his deputy. Here they could air their grievances or express their views on matters of great concern to them as still happens today in some traditional Arab societies. In the northwest corner of this court an entrance led into the heart of the palace complex, the great Court of the Palm as it is designated in the texts found nearby. The name seems to have derived from the presence of a palm tree in the centre of the court whose position is today marked by a pierced stone which may have supported it. The south side of the court was shaded by a loggia supported by posts of which traces remain, while a central door gave on to the outer throne room. The south wall was also remarkable for the unique painting found adjacent to the entrance ( Fig.4). This spectacular painting seems to represent a wall hanging with scalloped fringes along the top and bottom. It shows the investiture of a king of Mari in its central panel which is divided into two horizontally. The top half depicts the goddess Ishtar, bristling with weapons, her foot on her lion, presenting the king with the traditional symbols of kingship, the so-called rod and ring,. Behind him stands a protective minor goddess while Ishtar is attended by another similar goddess and a god who is probably Amurru god of the west. The lower half of the panel shows two goddesses with flowing vases, traditional symbols of fertility in this barren region. The central panel is flanked on each side by mythical beasts, trees and two more protective goddesses. (Margueron 1990:115-125)

The entrance in the south wall of the court of the Palm gives onto an outer audience chamber, room 64, which holds a stepped platform, visible from the court, flanked originally by two statues. One survives today and represents a goddess holding a vase with water flowing from it, similar to those shown on the investiture painting. From here a further two doors allow access to the main throne-room which has a raised niche at the east end with the bases of a number of statues in it. It has been plausibly suggested that originally this niche held statues of the king and the goddess Ishtar in a scene which mirrored that shown in the investiture painting in the court. (al Khalesi 1978:68 ) At the foot of the steps leading up into the niche lay the fallen statue of an earlier king of Mari. From this ceremonial complex, where no doubt the king received important foreign and local dignitaries, a stair gave access to an upper floor and to the king's private apartments.

Other important sectors within the palace compound include a large religious quarter in the south-east lying above the third millennium shrines and reflecting the king's sacerdotal duties; an extensive chancery or scribal quarter where the administrative functions of the palace were focussed; storage facilities, highly necessary to provision the palace and perhaps the town in times of stress; and finally another sumptuous domestic suite which was probably the queen's apartments. The queen had important duties of her own and when her husband was away on official business effectively ran the day to day business of the palace. (Dalley,S. 1984, especially chapter 5)

#### Domestic housing.

Although housing occupied much of the space within a city's wall only two urban areas in south Mesopotamia of Old Babylonian date have been excavated over a wide area. The first was at Ur and the second at Nippur (Woolley Ur Excavations vol. VII, Stone 1987). The Ur quarter especially gives a flavour of the character of a domestic area at this time with buildings tightly packed together, winding main roads leading to smaller streets and crowded alleyways which, in turn, gave access to individual groups of buildings. In addition to the mud brick houses, which presented blank walls to the street with narrow doors giving access to the interiors, there were small shrines which were miniature versions of some of the major religious buildings which have already been described. The entrances of these shrines were sometimes protected with clay reliefs showing protective figures of minor deities. There are also one or two buildings which may have been shops. At Ur one of these has a hatch or window giving on to the street through which food and drink might have been sold.

The majority of the buildings at both Ur and Nippur are domestic and a high proportion are courtyard houses where the rooms lie round one, two, or occasionally three courtyards which provided light and air to the rooms and work space for the inhabitants. A recent study of the houses at Ur shows a wide variation in

floor space from 9.68 sq.m to 19.25sq.m suggesting considerable inequalities of wealth and in the number of residents per unit. It is also tempting to suggest that while the smaller houses were lived in by nuclear families the larger ones sheltered extended ones (Brusasco 1999-2000:67). Similar variations in size were observed at Nippur and it is suggested that the presence of 'rich' and 'poor' houses together in close proximity may indicate that these neighbourhoods were lived in by groups who were related to each other, rather than by groups of similar economic standing (Stone 1987:17, Brusasco op.cit:144) It has also been suggested that some of the blind alleys at Ur which give access to both large and small units may have been jointly owned by the residents who on this hypothesis would also have been part of the same kin group. It also seems that professions ran in certain families so that each neighbourhood may also have housed groups of professionals working in the same field. The presence of chapels in some of the larger houses at Ur has led to suggestion that the area may have been a priestly enclave. However, in the Isin-Larsa period at least one house is known from the tablets found in it to have been lived in by a Dilmun merchant called Ea.Nasir<sup>4</sup> and chapels are known from houses at other contemporary sites. Tablets found in the houses are mostly personal business archives and legal documents such as wills and land sales. Some people seem to have worked from home using one room as an office. There are also a number of school exercises leading to the proposal that at both cities small neighbourhood schools were present.

It is difficult to determine with certainty what individual rooms within the houses were used for and Brusasco (op.cit:71) stresses that most rooms were multi-functional, something which is easier in a culture where furniture is minimal and the placing of mats and cushions can easily transform a living into a sleeping area and vice versa. Usage will also vary depending on the time of day and the weather so that in winter tasks undertaken outside will move into the interior. It is somewhat surprising that few houses had washing areas and only 6.8% of the rooms at Ur contained hearths. Much of the cooking seems to have been done in the courtyard. It is not clear if the houses at Ur and Nippur had upper floors, but it seems likely that some did and there can be little doubt that the flat roofs provided useful additional storage and living space. At other towns, such as Sippar, texts record the presence of upper floors which could be sold or rented separately (Harris op.cit:22). We also know from the texts that inheritance laws divided property between all surviving sons with the eldest getting an additional 10% and custody of the chapel and the family tomb which usually lay in it. Girls received their share as a marriage portion. This system meant that through time properties tended either to be sold and the proceeds shared between siblings or that buildings were subdivided into smaller and smaller units so that each son got their share (Stone 1981:24/5, Brusasco op.cit:113,116/7,134).

### Conclusions.

The evidence which has been presented above relates to the situation in large southern urban centres. We have almost no evidence for the situation in the countryside, but we certainly cannot assume the buildings are exactly the same. Ethnographic evidence points to the presence of large walled compounds in the countryside, rather than courtyard houses, as these also provide space for at least some of the family's stock. In north Mesopotamia the situation also seems to have been rather different, although the evidence is again fairly sparse. Evidence from Chagar Bazar and from Hamoukar for instance shows that a variety of house plans were present, some similar to the southern ones as well as considerable number of buildings composed of a single rectangular room, and others with a T-shaped configuration (Mallowan 1936:14-16, & '37:108-12, Gibson 2002:23-27). At tell Mohammed Diyab in north-east Syria there is evidence for the use of barrel vaults to roof some of the rooms, ( Sauvage 1992) something which we have already noted at tell Rimah, but for which there is no evidence in the houses in the south.

It was suggested at the beginning of this chapter that a study of the built environment could provide information in a number of fields. A striking feature of the larger sites we have looked at is that most of them were already old and their structures well established by the early second millennium. The tradition of walling them and the domination of the urban scene by temples and palaces continues. The Old Babylonian kings seem to have been well aware of the importance of tradition as the rebuilding of the great temple at Larsa and repairs at other sites also shows. At Larsa older features like the Construction Annexe were carefully incorporated in the new design. The continuity in the design of the urban courtyard house is also

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<sup>4</sup> No.1 Old Street.

striking and must be a tribute to its suitability both environmentally and socially to the needs of the community. It has been suggested that both nuclear and extended families are present in the towns and that neighbourhoods may have been lived in by kin groups who were not only related by blood, but also by profession. The technical abilities of the builders are also clear and the presence of the dome at Ur and a wide variety of vaulting techniques in the north is impressive, as is the ability of the builders to use mud brick in a variety of ways to decorate major public buildings. It should therefore be no surprise to note that the texts show us that professional builders and architects were present in society (Postgate 1992:236, Crawford 2002:69)

This study of the built environment has, as we hoped, produced a number of models for the workings of society in the second quarter of the second millennium BCE and these models can be tested against the evidence presented in other studies in this book.

#### Illustrations.

Figure 1. Hypothetical reconstruction of the temple and ziggurat at Tell Rimah. Courtesy of Dr J.Oates

Figure 2. Reconstructed plan of the temple and ziggurat at Tell Rimah. Courtesy of Dr J.Oates

Figure 3. 'Barleysugar' pillars in the temple at Tell Rimah. Courtesy of Dr J.Oates

Figure 4. Drawing of the wall painting in the Court of the Palms at Mari.

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Thriplow.

May 8<sup>th</sup> 2007

Dear Gwendolyn,

Here is my corrected bibliography, I hope it is all now tidy. If there is one thing I loathe above all others it is bibliographies!

I have inserted two more important references and I hope it will be possible to add them in and to make the following insertions in the text:

Page 82, para 2, after Stone and Zimansky 1995 please add, 2004.

Page 85. para 2 after Oates 1982 please add ,Postgate, Oates and Oates 1997.

I take your point about Heather's chapter and title. If the book covers neo-Bab too would it be a good idea to add Architecture in the Old Babylonian period to my title just to make all crystal clear?

Best of luck with the tidying up, a dreary chore, and much look forward to seeing the finished article.

Best wishes