

STUDIES ON THE TEMPLE IN THE  
ANCIENT NEAR EAST

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## CONCLUSION

At the 1979 national meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature in New York City Professor Yohanan Muffs read a paper in which he attempted to reconstruct what an Israelite legal papyrus (something that we do not possess) would look like if such were discovered. In attempting such a reconstruction he marshalled considerable evidence from known legal texts that have been recovered from ancient Near Eastern lands adjacent to ancient Israel, especially those whose legal customs are known to have been comparable to Israel's, from our knowledge of judicial procedure recovered from these texts and from more formal "law codes," and from the knowledge of legal theory and practice that is preserved in the Old Testament itself.<sup>1</sup>

Along similar structural lines Mario Liverani has recently essayed to reconstruct the "Ideology of the Assyrian Empire." In so doing he hoped to arrive at a kind of "ideological grammar, i.e., a closed and coherent system of all the rules which are used to write a

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<sup>1</sup>The lecture was noted in the announcement of the annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature, Dallas, 1980, 51.

Neo-Assyrian royal inscription which will be 'correct' at the level of political ideology."<sup>2</sup> Liverani constructed a kind of typology, focusing on dynamic and static aspects, under the following rubrics: Diversity of Space, Diversity of Time, Diversity of Men, and Diversity of Goods. Underlying the whole, and supporting it as an interpretive principle was the view of ideology as "a theory of diversity as justification of unbalance and of exploitation."<sup>3</sup>

Quite importantly, Liverani did not expect to find all the elements of his "ideological grammar" in all instances (that is, in all Assyrian royal inscriptions) that might be encountered. Rather, "no enumeration. . . contains all or most of the elements--just as no linguistic utterance necessarily contains every rule of the linguistic grammar--but these, and not others, are the elements to be employed to make specific statements."<sup>4</sup>

Just as the above named scholars have attempted to reconstruct ideal models of text types or of ideological constructs, which in the case of the former, doesn't exist for the purview of scholars today, and, in the case of the

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<sup>2</sup>"The Ideology of the Assyrian Empire," Power and Propoganda, A Symposium on Ancient Empires, Mesopotamia 7; Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1979, 305.

<sup>3</sup>"The Ideology of the Assyrian Empire," 305-314.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 305.

latter, was not explicitly laid out in antiquity by Assyrian scribes, so in this dissertation I have attempted to lay down the basic principles of a "grammar" of what I have been so bold as to call "the common temple ideology of the ancient Near East." As was the case with Muffs, I have reconstructed this ideology from physical remains (in this case architectural remains, city plans, votive statues and glyptic) and also from textual remains (epics detailing idealized methods of temple building, building inscriptions, ritual texts, dedicatory prayers, covenant rituals and others) which can be associated with temple building and ritual.

As was the case with Liverani, I do not claim that every instance of an actual recovered temple, or of a text detailing temple related practices contains all the elements of the typology. But like him, I claim that it is these elements (and others yet to be discovered and enumerated) that were anciently employed in the creation of a temple, in the carrying out of its ritual, and which taken together, constitute the temple ideology of the ancient Near East. What Liverani has described as a "grammar," based on "an inventory of the themes used," and "the links between them, to arrive at a coherent system," is remarkably close in intent and in implementation to my attempt to construct a typology, which is in fact also "

inventory of the themes used," along with "the links between them, to arrive at a coherent system."<sup>5</sup>

I would now like to move from the structure of Liverani's article to its content, which I also find directly relevant to the work that I have undertaken in this dissertation. As stated above, Liverani demonstrates and expands his theory of ideology on the basis of a number of 'aspects,' both dynamic and static. These are "Diversity of Space," "Diversity of Time," "Diversity of Men," and "Diversity of Goods."<sup>6</sup> Closer analysis reveals that his aspects can with equal value be applied to the temple ideology that I have attempted to delineate, and that in fact each of the aspects can serve as a rubric, under one or the other of which each of the propositions of the typology can be arranged. To begin with, I would like to discuss the aspect of time. In the ancient Near Eastern world time relates to the beginning, however that may be conceived in each tradition; in other words, to the creation. According to Liverani: "The 'creation' is precisely the moment when the world, or better still the single institutions composing it, goes from a state of chaos to the cosmic one."<sup>7</sup> It is the king's function,

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<sup>5</sup>"The Ideology of the Assyrian Empire," 303.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 305-314.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 308.

according to Liverani, to renew and to revive the main institutions of society periodically. "The knowledge and control of time is therefore an essential task of the king. All that is done must take place at determined times, must slot correctly in a time that is cosmic . . ."8 The concept of "controlling time" here implies the ritual celebration of creation, the reenactment of the founding deeds of the tradition, the renewal of royal authority, the recovenancing of God and society, etc. Again, according to Liverani: "This whole cycle of creation, decay, re-birth can be enriched by allusions to the cycle of the world in its totality: initial creation, flood, re-emergence from it of a civilized society--a model cycle followed by all other cycles."9 The king's time, in short, is extensively taken up in calendrical events and feasts.

According to Sasson, who has recently published an extensive study of the ritual calendar at Mari, Zimri-lim's time was extensively controlled by his ritual obligations. In fact, during the months of May through October, when he was away from the palace on military campaigns, the incidence of communal meal sharing declines

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., 309.

considerably!<sup>10</sup> Numerous festivals which involved the king are mentioned in these texts. Furthermore, in a text quoted by Sasson, a number of the year names of Zimri-lim's reign are explicitly based on important ritual events, chief among these being the dedications of votive statues and other important offerings in various temples, and the consecration of his daughter as a priestess in a temple.<sup>11</sup> Generally speaking, the forced or neglectful absence of the king from his ritual duties is taken by the ancients as a sign of serious trouble for the capital city and its realms, as the necessary renewal both of authority and of the cycle of creation would thereby be interrupted. This is especially the case with respect to the ancient mentions of instances of the non-performance of the Akītu festival, particularly prominent in the Nabonidus Chronicle.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>Jack M. Sasson, "The Calendar and Festivals of Mari during the Reign of Zimri-Lim," Studies in Honor of Tom B. Jones, ed. Marvin A. Powell, Jr., and Ronald H. Sack, AOAT 203; ed. Kurt Bergerhof, et. al., Kevelaer: Butzon and Bercker, 1979, 123.

<sup>11</sup>"The Calendar and Festivals of Mari during the Reign of Zimri-Lim," 124-125, quoting Georges Dossin, "Le Noms d'Annes et d'Eponymes dans les 'Archives de Mari,'" Studia Mariana, 54-59.

<sup>12</sup>A. K. Grayson, Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles, Texts from Cuneiform Sources, ed. A. Leo Oppenheim, et. al., Locust Valley: J. J. Augustin, 1975, 104-111, and see A. Falkenstein, "Akīti Fest und Akīti Festhaus," Festschrift Johannes Friedrich zum 65. Geburtstag am 27 August 1958 Gewidmet, ed. R. von Kienle et. al., Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1959, 158-159.

Ultimately, it is the issue of time, as discussed above, which is the most important factor in understanding the role of astronomy/astrology in ancient temples. I attempted to make this clear above in one of the propositions of the typology. In chapter one, above, proposition 6 reads, in part, "As such it is, or can be, an astronomical observatory, the main purpose of which is to assist the temple priests in regulating the ritual calendar." The usage of astronomical observation in connection with both ritual acts and also in the orientation of temples and in the proper building of temples is attested from the time of Gudea to the Seleucid period.<sup>13</sup> According to Sasson, at Mari "these celebrations might have depended on the cycle of the sun, the moon, or the seasons," although it is also attested that political considerations may well have overridden the advice of the astronomers in the celebration of certain festivals, on certain occasions.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>A Falkenstein, "'Wahrsagung' in der Sumerischen Überlieferung," La Divination en Mesopotamie Ancienne et dans les Regions Voisines, CRRA 14, 64-65, and S. Giedion, The Eternal Present: The Beginnings of Architecture, Bollingen Series, 35; New York: Pantheon Books, 1964, 244-245.

<sup>14</sup>"The Calendar and Festivals of Mari during the Reign of Zimri-Lim," 128. See also W. Brede Kristensen, The Meaning of Religion, 370: "The revelation of a building plan was probably the result of astrological observations and calculations, or other observations of a

All of the above presupposes the temple: the king, his "knowledge and control of time," the ritual reenactment and regeneration of the cycle of creation, and the enactment of festivals. Therefore, the following propositions of the typology, as they read in chapter 1, above, can be partly or wholly subsumed under Liverani's category of time: 6, insofar as it relates to the astronomical regulation of the ritual calendar; 10, which relates to the ritual reenactment in temples of creation myths; 13, which deals with the practice of revealing the god's will for the year through the tablets of destiny; and 15, sacrifice, since animal sacrifice is an integral part of the ritual year.

The second category of Liverani's that I would like to discuss with reference to my typology is "Diversity of Men." Liverani approaches this aspect of his analysis from the point of view of "Assyrian, non-Assyrian," which corresponds to an "us-them" dichotomy, with the king "the reference point for the order of the cosmos."<sup>15</sup> For the purposes of my analysis, I will

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mystical-scientific nature." Of course, it must be noted that astronomical observation in Mesopotamian culture was also strongly oriented towards divination. See Erica Reiner and David Pingree, Babylonian Planetary Omens, Part Two: Enuma Anu Enlil, Tablets 50-51, *Bibliotheca Mesopotamica*, II/2, ed. Giorgio Buccellati, Malibu: Undena, 1981.

<sup>15</sup>"The Ideology of the Assyrian Empire," 311-312.

focus on two orders of mankind, the king and his followers. With the origin of the state, the king is, of course, the focal point of cosmic government. From the time of Eannatum of Lagash, to the time of David, the royal ideology presents us with the concept of the divine engenderment of the king.<sup>16</sup> According to Liverani, "The uniqueness and compactness of the cosmic world reaches its apex and explanation in the uniqueness of the kingship."<sup>17</sup> But of course, kingship implies followers. It is the followers who become the objects of the "temple covenant system" which we see in the archaic state, as I have described in part above in chapters 3 and 4. And so, as Liverani writes: "Since the kingship is the reference point for the order of the cosmos, the relative position of men within the empire finds its expression in a series of relationships between king and the single officials or the remotest human groups. This relationship has its own peculiar ideology. . ."<sup>18</sup>

Of course, kingship in the ancient Near East is unthinkable outside of the institution of the temple. If

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<sup>16</sup>Thorkild Jacobsen, Toward the Image of Tammuz, 150, 387-388; Henri Frankfort, Kingship and the Gods, 299-312; Frank Moore Cross, Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic, 257-260; Baruch Halpern, The Constitution of the Monarchy in Israel, Harvard Semitic Monographs, 25; ed. Frank Moore Cross, Jr., Chico: Scholars Press, 1981, 128-131.

<sup>17</sup>"The Ideology of the Assyrian Empire, 310.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., 312.

the kingship is indeed "the reference point for the order of the cosmos," then it is a small but logical step to the temple, where in each of the ancient Near Eastern traditions that we know anything about, all of the important royal and state functions are carried out. This includes the covenant, which involves the wider populace, as I have described at great length in chapters 1 through 4, above. Therefore the following propositions of the typology can be subsumed under the heading of Diversity of Men: 10, which relates to initiation; 12, which relates to covenant related communal meals; 14, which states the close relationship between temple, covenant and law; 16, relating to the secrecy of temple precincts, which secrecy effectively excludes the common man from more intimate involvement in temple practices and underlines the chasm that separates royalty from the common person in the ancient world; and 18, which emphasizes the political legitimizing role of the temple in the ancient Near East.

We now come to Liverani's category of Diversity of Space. This is a most important concept, both for Liverani's typology and for my own. We will see that ideological constructs related to space have far-reaching implications in the ancient world, and that these can be seen to have influenced ancient life intellectually, and also in physical, material ways. Liverani expresses the

significance of the concept of space in terms very similar to the manner that I have already discussed, particularly in chapter 3, above. I am referring to the dichotomy between center and periphery, discussed above with reference to the views of Edward Shils, Jonathan Z. Smith, G. Ernest Wright, G. W. Ahlstrom, and others. In Liverani's words, "the absolutely instinctive opposition between the known and the unknown, between the reassuring and the hostile, is rationalized as an opposition between a 'cosmic' center (that is, orderly and working according to norms) and a chaotic periphery."<sup>19</sup> It is logical to deduce, according to this view, that imperialism or empire building consists in the prevailing of cosmos, which means the center, the capital city and its leaders, over the periphery, identified as anyone not under the sway of those at the center (self-defined, of course). Liverani writes: "The imperialistic expansion of the central kingdom is therefore the prevailing of cosmos over the surrounding chaos, it is an enterprise that brings order and civilization."<sup>20</sup>

I wrote at great length in chapter 3 about the role of the tell in helping us define the nature of the city plan in the ancient Near East. Quite often, though

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<sup>19</sup>Ibid., 306.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., 307.

not always, the ancient city had an acropolis at its rough geographical center. The acropolis, as is so dramatically evident at the site of Tell Mardikh, in Syria, dominated the city plan, and was visible from miles around. Temples and palaces stood on the acropolis, thus making it also the ideological and the power center of the city. A wide lower city stretched out in the area between the acropolis and the city fortification system. This city was then the ideological, commercial and military center of a wide hinterland, and it is properly the relationship between a central city and its hinterland which forms the basis of the reconstruction of complex, urban societies outlined by Charles Redman, and summarized in chapter 3 above. Empire building then amounts to the reproduction of such an urban system, either literally or ideologically, in peripheral areas. This process can be observed, in the literal sense, in the remarkable Uruk period Sumerian "colonies" on the great bend of the Euphrates River in Syria: Habuba Kabira, Tell Kannas and Jebel Aruda. We have in these settlements a virtual duplication, architectural, ceramic, glyptic, and ideological of the southern Mesopotamian city of Uruk itself. The similarity with Uruk goes so far as the typical axial hearths found in the houses at Habuba

Kabira.<sup>21</sup> Strommenger further noted that the all-important glyptic remains found at Habuba Kabira were not manufactured at the site itself, but were probably imported from Uruk.<sup>22</sup> The ceramics found at Habuba Kabira were identical with those at Uruk "in form, material and technique."<sup>23</sup>

Most interesting, for the purpose of this dissertation, is that approximately in the middle of the ancient settlement, corresponding to the contemporary (but now flooded) site of Tell Kannas, was found a series of classic Uruk temples which, in Strommenger's words, "gleich grundsätzlich der des zentralen Bezirkes im süd-mesopotamischen Uruk."<sup>24</sup> I have already called attention above, in chapter 1, to the remarkable Uruk period temple attested at Jebel Aruda, on a peak high above the Euphrates River, about 5 km. north of Habuba Kabira. It

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<sup>21</sup>Eva Strommenger, "Ausgrabungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft in Habuba Kabira," Archaeological Reports from the Tabqa Dam Project--Euphrates Valley, Syria, AASOR, 44; ed. David Noel Freedman, with the assistance of John M. Lundquist, Cambridge: American Schools of Oriental Research, 1979, 67.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., 68-71.

<sup>23</sup>Eva Strommenger, Habuba Kabira, Eine Stadt vor 5000 Jahren, Sendschrift der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft, 12; Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 1980, 62.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., 44; see also André Finet, "Bilan Provisoire des Fouilles Belges du Tell Kannas," Archaeological Reports from the Tabqa Dam Project-Euphrates Valley, Syria, 86-95.

was this temple which the excavators found filled in with mud brick, thus preserving the foundations of an earlier temple while at the same time providing a platform for a newer one, a well-attested southern Mesopotamian practice attributed to the Sumerians.<sup>25</sup>

The pottery that is typical of Syria during the same period that these Uruk sites flourished along the Euphrates, namely, the Amuq Phases F and G, is for the most part handmade and distinctly less expertly produced than the Uruk ware itself, even though some Uruk features are evident. Therefore, I would like to suggest that we can see in these Uruk settlements, in contrast to the other settlements of Syria in the equivalent time period, the contrast between a "cosmicized periphery," one that has been settled from the south, and where the southern settlement patterns, building styles and temples are virtually reproduced, and the surrounding area, still not under the control of the center. The major element in the "cosmicization" of the Euphrates Valley area would be the temples, making these settlements, and especially Jebel Aruda itself, virtual temple cities. The surrounding area, that represented ceramically by Amuq Phases F and G, I would see as the periphery, unorganized, hostile,

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<sup>25</sup>G. van Driel, "De Uruk-Nederzetting op de Jebel Aruda: een Voorlopig Bericht," 46, and Joan Oates, "Ur and Eridu, the Prehistory."<sup>45</sup>

territory, from the point of view of those living in the center.

The other sense in which we see "horizontal cosmicization" of space in the ancient Near East in connection with the temple is vividly illustrated in the inscription commemorating the dedication of the Shamash temple at Mari by Yahdun-Lim. This inscription, which could be duplicated many times all over the ancient Near East, deals not with colonization, as was the case above, but rather with a kind of ritualized "passing through," which also represents the assumption of control over those areas. This practice, attested as early as Lugalzagesi of Umma,<sup>26</sup> depicts the ruler making a campaign to the Mediterranean, washing his weapons in the sea, taking fine cedar and other wood in the "Cedar Mountain" (a practice that also has strong ritual and economic overtones), and taking tribute from various peoples along the route. He states that he "united it [i.e., the entire region] under his command." Though colonization does not follow, the area has nevertheless been "pacified," and this achievement is memorialized by the building of the temple, which act at the same time provides Yahdun-Lim with the necessary authorization and power to continue in the path

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<sup>26</sup>Thorkild Jacobsen, Toward the Image of Tammuz, 153-154.

he has already set for himself.<sup>27</sup> Yet another clear example of the process of cosmicizing a peripheral territory through the building of a temple is found in the inscription of Bel-Harran-bel-usur, discussed in chapter 3, above.

Another aspect of space that is reflected in ancient Near Eastern temples is that of the so-called Fata Morgana, or the view that the earthly temple is a reflection or mirror image of a heavenly temple. In Mesopotamia, temples, cities and rivers all have their celestial counterparts in the form of the various stars.<sup>28</sup> This of course yields a vertical aspect to ancient Near Eastern views of space, and probably accounts in large part for the strong interest in planetary omens, celestial observations, and other practices that fall within the realm of astrology. Some role was played by astrology in the building of the Eninnu, as recorded in the Gudea cylinders. Gudea is visited in a dream by the goddess Nisaba, who holds a tablet on her knee which contains the "stars of heaven." At the same time, a god appeared with a lapis lazuli tablet on which was written the plan of the temple. The stars on the tablet of Nisaba

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<sup>27</sup>ANESTP 556-557; and see A. Malamat, "Campaigns to the Mediterranean by Iahdunlim and Other Early Mesopotamian Rulers," AS 17 (1965) 365-372.

<sup>28</sup>Eckhard Unger, "Fata Morgana," RLA 3 (1957) 27-29, and see Erica Reiner and David Pingree, Babylonian Planetary Omens, Part Two, 10-16.

are called "the holy stars of the building of the temple." Later, Ningirsu appears to Gudea and promises him "signs for the building of my temple, the holy stars of heaven I will give you for the proper carrying out of my rites."<sup>29</sup>

Burrows postulates the historical process that may lie behind such views: "a) constellations as heavenly habitations. . . of gods; b) analogy with the earthly temples of the same; c) the celestial shrines as patterns of the earthly, in accordance with a general theory of prototypes."<sup>30</sup> The idea of a heavenly temple being brought to earth, the earthly built after the tabnit of the heavenly, is of course attested in the OT, in Ex 25:9 and elsewhere.<sup>31</sup> For the Canaanite sphere, Ahlstrom has presented a convincing case for interpreting the cache of statues and stelae found in the niche in the Late Bronze II temple of Area C at Hazor as the cultic representation of the divine family of Canaanite religion, one of the

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<sup>29</sup>SAR 95-97, 99, 111, and A. Falkenstein, "'Wahrsagung' in der Sumerischen Überlieferung," 65-66; also Eric Burrows, "Some Cosmological Patterns in Babylonian Religion, 59-63.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., 64; see also Bruno Meissner, Babylonien und Assyrien, 2, 107-112.

<sup>31</sup>See David Noel Freedman, Pottery, Poetry, and Prophecy, 137-138, David Noel Freedman, "Temple Without Hands," 21-28, and Eric Burrows, "Some Cosmological Patterns in Babylonian Religion," 64-66.

completest expressions that we have of the concept of "bringing heaven to earth."<sup>32</sup>

The final aspect of space, implied by Liverani's discussion, and made explicit in my typology, relates to the cosmic aspects of the temple, represented for example by the orientation of the building, the pillars that stand in front of it, and the ideology that unites the king with such a cosmic system.<sup>33</sup>

To conclude the discussion of the temple typology with reference to the aspect of space, the following propositions of the typology can be related to it: 1, which treats the cosmic mountain; 2, the cosmic mountain as the primordial hillock; 3, the waters of life;<sup>34</sup> 4, the tree of life; 5, the sacral nature of the ground on which the

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<sup>32</sup>See G. W. Ahlstrom, "Heaven on Earth--At Hazor and Arad," 67-83.

<sup>33</sup>In addition to the rather extensive discussion of these aspects of the temple ideology, particularly chapters 1 and 3, above, see, for the cosmic significance of the temple pylons in Egypt, Theodor Dombart, "Zweitürmige Tempel-Pylon Altaegyptischer Baukunst und seine Religiöse Symbolik," Egyptian Religion, 1 (1933) 87-98.

<sup>34</sup>The verticality of space in the ancient Near East includes the abyss or underworld as one of the dimensions, a point that I have made extensively in chapters 1-4; note that the concept of the abyss, presumably as it relates to Enki, is attested archaeologically at Eridu in Level 8, which dates to the Ubaid period. See M. E. L. Mallowan, "The Development of Cities from al-Ubaid to the End of Uruk 5," CAH rev. ed., Vols. I, II, Fasc. 58, 13-14, 21-22.; for a more elaborate view of the role of the underworld in Babylonian cosmology, see Bruno Meissner, Babylonien und Assyrien, 107-112.

temple is built; 6, the practice of orienting temple buildings<sup>35</sup> and also the Fata Morgana basis for astronomical/astrological practice; 7, verticality as expressed in multi-staged temple and ziggurat construction; 8, the plan and measurements of the temple being revealed by a god; and 11, the association of the temple with burial and ancestor worship.

The fourth and last of Liverani's aspects that I want to relate to the temple typology is Diversity of Goods. The point here is quite simple: the periphery possesses raw materials that the center needs and thus exploits both for its own internal use and also in order to create finished products which are then shipped back into the periphery for sale or trade; and the center is itself the source of untold riches, both ideological riches in the form of temples, fabulous treasures in the form of precious and semi-precious metals, which metals are found in the center in both raw--bullion--form and in the form of finished jewels, and great stores of agricultural resources and other raw materials. "The two world zones are different and also complementary as far as availability of material goods and services go. The periphery, basically sterile and blocked at some point

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<sup>35</sup>"A rampart protected the Hurrian town, whose corners were oriented to the cardinal compass points, in accordance with unvarying Mesopotamian tradition." Pierre Amiet, Art of the Ancient Near East, tr. John Shepley and Claude Choquet; New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1980, 517.

before a real organization, is an area where it is possible to find precious raw materials, useful to the functioning of the central cosmos."<sup>36</sup> This is implied in the example of the Euphrates Valley Uruk period sites described above. The Uruk sites, representative of an organized center possess high quality goods which exhibit a high degree of technical expertise and beauty. The peripheral Syrian cultures, the Amuq Phases F and G cultures, appear to be at a much lower level of technical expertise and organizational ability. The ritual necessity binding on kings of the Egyptian, Palestinian, Canaanite and Mesopotamian traditions to go personally into the Levant, particularly to the "Cedar" and "Silver Mountains" in order to obtain precious woods and metals for temple building needs no further explication here. This was simply one of the primary ritual requirements for a king in the ancient Near Eastern tradition. This practice is one of the prime examples of the combination of ritual with economic interests. The Yahdun-Lim inscription is again instructive here. Yahdun-Lim lists the numerous products that he sought and obtained during his ritual razzia into the Levant. He also notes the resultant fine craftsmanship that went into the building of the Shamash temple at Mari.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>36</sup>"The Ideology of the Assyrian Empire," 312.

<sup>37</sup>ANESTP 556-557.

The full impact of the temple as a magnet for precious commodities, as a storehouse for these, as a veritable treasury for the monarch, and as a central institution in far-flung mercantile enterprises is also well known. I presented evidence for this aspect of the temple in chapters 1 and 3, above. Additional evidence for the economic impact of the temple comes from Temple I at the Hittite capital of Hattusas. The plan itself gives a clear picture of this, showing as it does the enormous storage areas that surrounded the sanctuary. Tablets have been found in the Temple I storerooms attesting to individuals in charge of precious metals.<sup>38</sup> The excavations at Tell Mardikh are now beginning to reveal a city that was the center of the exploitation of the extensive natural metal and mineral resources of Anatolia and the Levant, as well as the agricultural resources of the Aleppo Plain. It is easy to see that the gods of Sargon and Naram-Sin would "direct" them to attack and defeat Ebla, since Ebla would be interfering in their own direct access to these same resources.<sup>39</sup> And yet w

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<sup>38</sup>Hans G. Güterbock, "The Hittite Temple according to Written Sources," Le Temple et le Culte, CRRA 20, 128-129. See also K. Bittel, "Hattusa," RLA 4 (1973) 169-171.

<sup>39</sup>Paolo Matthiae, "The Archaeological Discoveries of Ebla in Historical Perspective," Public Lecture; Salt Lake City, Utah: March 28, 1983; Alfonso Archi, "The Kingdom of Ebla in the Archives Period," Public Lecture; Provo, Utah: March 28, 1983.

must avoid the temptation of falling into the trap of seeing the temple merely as a magnet for economic gain, or merely as a center of political exploitation, or as merely a combination of both these factors. As I have tried to emphasize, we should attempt to see the entire typology working in a complex interrelationship, the totality of which gives us a clearer view of ancient Near Eastern temple practices.

To sum up the application of Liverani's aspect of Diversity of Goods to my typology, I see the relevance of propositions 9A and 9B, which deal with the view that the temple is seen as the source of material and spiritual prosperity, and that the interruption of such prosperity is associated with temple desecration; and 17, which deals with the economic importance of the temple.

The use that I am making of Liverani's interpretive scheme would not be complete if I did not deal with his central definition of ideology as "a theory of qualitative diversities as justification of unbalance and exploitation."<sup>40</sup> I have touched on the issue of exploitation several times in this dissertation, particularly in chapter 3, and above in the discussion of Diversity of Goods. The issue of the exploitative purpose of an ideological system is related, in my opinion, to the issue

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<sup>40</sup>Ibid., 303.

of "official" vs. "popular" religion. It is widely assumed that the temple ideology, operating at the level cosmic myth and related ritual, would have excluded the broad mass of society, who would not have had access to such a system for cultural, sociological, and technological reasons. The quotation of Rappaport above, in the introduction, p. 15, could be taken as a seminal definition of the chasm that is assumed to have separated the common person of the ancient Near East from the temple (myth oriented) systems: "the higher the level of control, the greater the importance of moral and mythic terms in its cognized model." In fact, according to Liverani, Thorkild Jacobsen and many other scholars, the sociological structure of the world of the gods is merely a reflection of the structure of the society that first began to develop such myths.<sup>41</sup> Thus, for example, the very "chaos-cosmos" perspective that underlies the cosmogonic myths would relate to an "us-them" dichotomy,

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<sup>41</sup>Thorkild Jacobsen, Toward the Image of Tammuz, 137.

Assyrian vs. non-Assyrian, human vs. sub-human, Assyria vs. the nonorganized hinterland.<sup>42</sup>

Did the central creation myths, with their accompanying rituals, which I have demonstrated had their focal point in the temples, have the ability to serve as integrative forces in the lives of the ancient Near Eastern masses? Or were these systems merely exploitative? Proposition 18 of the typology, above, chapter 2, which deals with the legitimizing political role of the temple, would definitely point toward the exploitative aspects of the system. But, as I have tried to make clear, this is only one point of the typology--the complete "grammar" of the temple typology consists of as complete (as possible) an "inventory of the themes used," and "the links between them, to arrive at a coherent system."<sup>43</sup> It is to be seen as a totality--only then can its full impact on ancient society be measured and understood.

It is clear that the temples were both much exploited by those who controlled them, and that they in turn provided a basis of such exploitation. Whether we look at the extraordinary cruelty of the Assyrian kingship, which drew its authority from the Assyrian

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<sup>42</sup>"The Ideology of the Assyrian Empire," 300-301, 306-307, 309-312.

<sup>43</sup>"The Ideology of the Assyrian Empire," 303.

religious system, or at the uses made of the Jerusalem temple by Solomon and Manasseh, or at the abuses of the Egyptian system that took place from the time of Ramses III on, as a result of the benefactions of land given by Ramses III to the priests of Amun at Thebes, a similar picture emerges. Whether these examples represent the entire picture or not is very difficult to say, and will remain so as long as the religion of the common person remains opaque to us. The implications of Rappaport's statement definitely exclude the common person from the effects of "moral and mythic terms" in its world view, which in the case of mythic terms would have meant the exclusion of the common people from the temple (a point that I have made quite strongly above in the sections on secrecy).

I have suggested above, in chapter 3, that I do not believe that the temple systems can be dismissed as totally exploitative, that I feel that there is evidence for genuinely pious motivation toward the temple from both royalty and commoner. But the attempted demonstration of this claim is in any case not central to this dissertation. I am convinced, however, that the extreme pessimism that is widely attributed to Mesopotamian society can be directly attributed to the lack of access by the masses to the temple systems. This statement assumes that the ideology, taken as a whole, had the ability to serve as a

integrative force in people's lives, and to provide considerable mythic information on what we would call salvational and eschatological aspects of life, along with reinforcing ritual.<sup>44</sup> At the same time, it is my contention that the fabled "sunny optimism" for which ancient Egyptian people are known was directly based on the much wider access that the common Egyptian came to have, over time, to the Egyptian temple ideology. After all, the widely assumed "democratization of Egyptian religion" actually refers to the ever widening circle of dissemination of Egyptian temple texts (Pyramid texts, Coffin texts, Books of the Dead, Breathing Permits, moving chronologically from the Old Kingdom to Greco-Roman times)! As for ancient Israel on the point of temple exploitation, the issue is very difficult. It is my firm contention however, based on the evidence contained in chapter 4, above, as well as evidence spread throughout the dissertation, that the temple ideology common to the ancient Near Eastern world was deeply embedded within the historical experience of ancient Israel. The evidence from prophets such as Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Zechariah, presented above in chapter 4, as well as evidence coming out of NT eschatology which shows that

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<sup>44</sup>Mircea Eliade, "The Prestige of the Cosmogonic Myth," Diogenes 23 (1958) 1-13.

central features of this ideology were used in a positive fashion, is compelling, in my opinion.<sup>45</sup>

To conclude the dissertation, I would like to return to the conceptual simplicity of the Sumerian King List. I have stated above that the temple ideology is an attempt to systematize and to rationalize our understanding of the ancient Near Eastern temple. I also stated, at the end of chapter 2, that it was a generative model, one that could be used to accurately reconstruct, or to predict main elements, both architectural and ritual, of ancient Near Eastern temple systems. It is my contention that the Sumerian King List can also be seen as a text that generates the centrality and necessity in ancient times of the temple. We owe it to Buccellati, in the article quoted in chapter 3, to have pointed out the necessary and intimate connection in the Sumerian King List between kingship and city. Kingship is lowered from heaven and resides in a city. But nowhere in the article does Buccellati mention, although he does imply, the equal necessity of the temple in this equation.<sup>46</sup>

If we view the matter more closely, we will see the proper formula: First there was creation, and

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<sup>45</sup>This was pointed out many years ago by Bern Alfrink, "Der Versammlungsberg im Äussersten Norden," Biblica 14 (1933) 41-67.

<sup>46</sup>Giorgio Buccellati, "The Enthronement of the King and the Capital City in Texts from Ancient Mesopotamia and Syria," 54-61.

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kingship was lowered from heaven to Eridu (the city that is the earliest archaeologically attested city in the southern Mesopotamian alluvium). The excavations at Eridu have yielded a long series of temples, beginning with level XVI, dating to about 4900 B.C., to level VI, dating to about 3500 B.C. A great ziggurat of the Ur III period overlay the whole sequence of prehistoric temples at Eridu. Here, in these early levels, we have the earliest attested evidence for the Sumerians, in all probability. We see the continuity of temple building that we know characterized Sumerian society during early historic times. Eridu is a temple city. Therefore, the formula that is implied in the Sumerian King List must be amended to imply the sequence creation, kingship, temple, city.<sup>47</sup> Later in the Sumerian King List, in the post-flood section, the city of Uruk is first referred to by the name of its main temple, E-Anna(k)! Notice the comment of Thorkild Jacobsen on this name: "As first pointed out by Poebel . . . the phrase presupposes that only the temple precinct E-Anna(k) existed at the time. The city Uruk was built under En-me(r)-kar." This latter fact is made clear in the Sumerian King List, Col. 3, lines 7-9.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>47</sup>Seton Lloyd, The Archaeology of Mesopotamia, 37-47, and Joan Oates, "Ur and Eridu, the Prehistory," 44-50.

<sup>48</sup>Thorkild Jacobsen, The Sumerian King List, Assyriological Studies, 11; Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1939, 71-85.

A standard definition of civilization begins with the city, which presupposes both monumental architecture and fortifications.<sup>49</sup> But we must go to the great historian of architecture, S. Giedion, to refine this definition: "The first appearance of the man-made temple is synonymous with the appearance of monumentality in architecture."<sup>50</sup> In other words, monumental temple construction defines for us the onset of civilization, as this was embodied in earliest city life. In case this proposition be doubted on the basis of the supposed lack of urbanization in Egypt, see the recent work of Barry J. Kemp.<sup>51</sup> The ancient Near Eastern city is unthinkable without the temple. Buccellati notes that "the capital was a city endowed with a religious character," and further, it was "because of religious reasons that the act of the enthronement was strictly linked with the site of the enthronement."<sup>52</sup> The "act" of enthronement, the "site" of enthronement, and the "religious character" of the city where this took place as well as the additional

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<sup>49</sup>William W. Hallo, The Ancient Near East, A History, 33.

<sup>50</sup>The Eternal Present: The Beginnings of Architecture, 213.

<sup>51</sup>"The Early Development of Towns in Egypt," Antiquity 51 (1977) 185-200.

<sup>52</sup>"The Enthronement of the King and the Capital City in Texts from ancient Mesopotamia and Syria," 60-61. Emphasis is in original.

ideological and ritual acts that we must understand in the same context, are all related to and based on the presence of a temple. The failure, over and over again, of scholars in our field to state this fact explicitly has represented a major gap in our understanding of the underlying motivation of much that we read in ancient texts, and of much that we excavate in Near Eastern tells. I feel that we have come far toward a deeper understanding of "the old imperial cosmological language [that] was a major mode of religious expression of the archaic temple."<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>53</sup>peter Brown, quoted in Jonathan Z. Smith, Map is Not Territory, 187.