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The Court of the Palms:

A Functional Interpretation  
of the Mari Palace

by Yasin M. Al-Khalesi

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**THE COURT OF THE PALMS:  
A FUNCTIONAL INTERPRETATION OF THE MARI PALACE**



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## PREFACE

In this work, I attempt to show the importance of studying together the various elements of man's remains in the archaeological record. This is particularly true in historical archaeology and specifically in urban architecture. The method used here aims at integrating cuneiform sources, art objects, artifacts and installations within their architectural context. Other archaeological analyses, both quantitative and qualitative, were also given full consideration. The written evidence is especially important in verifying the function of some room-types. The reader will see the richness of information available in texts, which can help the archaeologist understand functional and aesthetic architecture. Indeed, this research was originally stimulated by some written documents which contained architectural references.

The palace of Zimrilim of Mari has been selected as a case study for this method of investigation because of its state of preservation, the richness of its cultural materials and the large number of publications dealing with the site. This palace is ideal for functional interpretation.

In preparing this volume, I received advice and many excellent suggestions from friends and colleagues, to whom I owe a special debt of gratitude. In particular, I would like to express my thanks to Mr. Ron Glaeseman, who first brought to my attention the architectural references in the Mari tablets, and helped me in collecting those texts. I am also pleased that Mr. Glaeseman has added an appendix to this volume, in which he discusses further textual evidence on the *papâhum* at Mari.

I am deeply grateful to Professor Giorgio Buccellati, Professor Marilyn Kelly-Buccellati, Professor Richard Ellis and Professor Piotr Michalowski for reading through the manuscript and for their many helpful comments.

I would like to thank Miss Margaret Milligar for reading and correcting the manuscript. I especially appreciate the effort of Miss Cheryl Faris who read and indexed the final copy of the book; her assistance came during some of my busiest days.

My thanks should also go to the artist, Mrs. Constance Spriestersbach, for making the drawing of the reconstruction of Sanctuary 66 on Plate VI, and for her helpful observations on the "Investiture" mural of Mari. To Professor Vaughn Crawford I am grateful for permission to produce the photograph of the Kassite stone relief of the goddess Lama, in the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art; unfortunately, the photograph could not be included for technical reasons. My thanks also go to Mrs. Marie Louise Penchoen for her skill and keen understanding in typesetting the book.

Finally, I wish to acknowledge my indebtedness to my former teachers and colleagues, who generously advised and supported me in my professional career. It is with deep sorrow that I single out my



master advisor, Professor Faud Safar, whose recent death in an auto accident is a great loss to archaeology in Iraq; I will never forget his kindness and encouragement.

I sincerely hope that my approach used in this study will contribute to the research methodology of Near Eastern archaeology.

Yasin M. Al-Khalesi  
Los Angeles, California  
May 30, 1978

## CHAPTER I

### Introduction

It has been over forty years since excavation first began at the site of ancient Mari on the Euphrates near Abu Kemal in Syria. During those long years, two basic results have been achieved: a) the excavation of the outstanding remains of the city of Mari, and b) the publication of these remains in several volumes and numerous articles. The architectural remains of Mari and its cultural materials, especially the written documents, are matched by few other sites in the neighboring areas of the Near East.

Mari was an important cultural center as early as the 3rd millennium B.C., but it reached its zenith in the 2nd millennium during the rule of Yasmah-Addu (1796-1780) and Zimrilim (1779-1761). The prosperity of the city is clearly reflected in the remains of the palace of Zimrilim, with its huge size (over 9 acres), its complex internal structure (more than 300 rooms and courts), its enormous yield of objects, artifacts and cuneiform tablets. In fact, the palace is one of the largest and best-preserved buildings in 2nd millennium Mesopotamia. Therein lies its historical and cultural importance, as well as its potential for studies such as the one we are undertaking here.

The excavations of the palace have generally been well conducted and adequately published. The definitive reports on the excavation's results have been published in two separate series.

The first is the *Archives royales de Mari/textes* (hereafter cited as *ARM* or *ARMT*) which contains the transliteration and translation of the Old Babylonian letters and administrative and economic texts from the palace. The second is the four volume work, *Mission archéologique de Mari (MAM)*, published by the excavator A. Parrot during 1958-1968.

The first and third volumes of *MAM* discuss the results of the excavation of the temples of Ishtar and Ninni-zaza. The fourth volume (*MAM IV*) deals with a hoard of valuable objects found in Presargonic Palace I, underneath the palace of Zimrilim. The second volume, with which we will be dealing in this paper, consists of three parts describing the palace and its finds. Section one (*MAM II, 1*) presents the architectural remains of the palace; *MAM II, 2* treats the murals which were discovered in different areas of the palace; and the third section (*MAM II, 3*) describes the artifacts and cultural materials of the building. In addition to the final report, the entire series of preliminary reports will be found in *Syria XVI* (1935) ff. Subsequent to the publication of the main report, excavations were resumed in 1964 in the southeastern side beneath the level of Zimrilim's palace. The results of these investigations (the Early Dynastic palaces) are published in *Syria* in volumes following that year. A. Parrot has recently published a new book entitled: *Mari capitale fabuleuse* (Payot: Paris, 1974) which deals with the previous excavations at Mari, but also includes additional information about the recently discovered palaces of the 3rd millennium.

*MAM II* is a thorough and detailed account of the structural remains with many useful drawings and photographs of the individual rooms and courts. Although most of the rooms were well described individually, Parrot chose not to make an overall interpretation of the plan as a work of

architecture and did not attempt to place the palace in its temporal and regional setting. Moortgat proceeds to fill this interpretational vacuum, proposing that the palace of Zimrilim was built during three different periods: Ur III, the Assyrian Interregnum, and the Zimrilim Period.<sup>1</sup> Moortgat's viewpoint,<sup>2</sup> which is based on the stylistic consideration of the wall murals from the building, seems unconvincing and is not based on a comprehensive study of the total architectural effect offered by the building.<sup>3</sup>

The cultural materials, their types, location, and quantity are of great importance in verifying the function of architectural form. The method applied in the present work integrates written records, art objects, artifactual findings and installations with the larger architectural context in which they occur. The significance of written documents, in particular, for historical architecture and the relationship of the two have not been fully recognized. Indeed, this study was originally stimulated by some texts from the Mari palace, which contained architectural designations.

The palace of Zimrilim has been selected for this type of investigation because it is the most complete building from the standpoint of architecture and of its cultural objects which have been recovered *in situ*. We have examined the published texts from the palace and have chosen those which contain architectural information pertinent to this research. The documents we selected refer to, we believe, several units which are located in one area of the palace: the Inner Court Block (Rms. 106, 116, 64, 65, and 66)(pl. II). The objective and method of the study is to examine these texts and attempt to identify their architectural and artistic designations with actual units which occur in the plan of the building. In this way, the records will provide the historical identity (names) and the functional definition of certain areas, while the study of the structural remains and artifacts should theoretically substantiate the texts and help to associate a particular form with a specific function. After proposing the relationship between the written documents and the architecture, we shall analyze the components of the Inner Court Block, especially the layout and type of the reception suite (64/65), and we will attempt a comparative analysis with other Near Eastern structures in order to evaluate it in its temporal and regional setting. The final goal of the research will be identification of Sanctuary 66 and the restoration of its cult statues and facade decoration on the basis of architecture, installations, and the artistic features which appear in the painting known as "The Investiture of King Zimrilim."

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<sup>1</sup>A. Moortgat, *The Art of Ancient Mesopotamia; The Classical Art of the Near East*, trans. by J. Filson (London: Phaidon, 1969), pp. 69-74.

<sup>2</sup>Partly supported by R. Ellis, "Some Observations on Mesopotamian Art and Archaeology," *Journal of American Oriental Society* 95 (1975), p. 87.

<sup>3</sup>For more details see Y. Al-Khalesi, "Mesopotamian Monumental Secular Architecture in the Second Millennium B.C." (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Yale University, 1975), pp. 44-47.

## CHAPTER II

### The Palace of Mari: Layout and General Description of the Units

To give the reader a better perspective, it is useful to overview the architectural layout of the palace, as well as the various functional units and courts. The building is almost rectangular, measuring 200 x 120 m. It is situated at the northern side of the city between two much smaller structures, the Ishtar temple on the southwest side, and the Ninni-zaza temple and the so-called ziggurat on the east side. The northern location of the building was most likely selected because of the prevailing cool wind from the north. The building has only one entrance, close to the northeastern corner of the structure. This single entrance is at variance with most of the known 2nd millennium palaces.<sup>4</sup> The entrance of the palace leads to Gate-House (Unit No. 1) with a bent-axis arrangement (pl. I).

The various units of the palace are arranged around two large courtyards, Forecourt 131 and the Inner Court 106. These two courts are public areas, with the latter less public than the former.<sup>4a</sup> The Forecourt (131) is the first of the two and is encountered upon entering the building through the Gate-House. This large space (48.10 x 32.50 m.) comes closest to being a true public court, open to those workers, soldiers, or villagers who had reason to be inside the palace. The size of the Forecourt is sufficient to accommodate a considerable number of people, as indicated by the photograph on p. 65 of Parrot, *MAM* II, 1; roughly 125 persons are shown standing in the court, and one can estimate there would be sufficient room for three times this number. It was most likely that this Forecourt was used for gathering the large numbers of personnel often mentioned in the administrative correspondence found in the building. Indeed, the location of the Kitchen Unit (No. 2) on the northeastern corner of the building is convenient, with easy access to the public Forecourt. The Kitchen Unit is a self-sufficient area arranged in the traditional plan of Mesopotamian private houses. The unit might have also housed servants.

Across the Forecourt from the Kitchen Unit lies the "Palace Chapel" (Unit No. 3) and its sanctuary, Rooms 209-210 (pl. I). The chapel is elevated above the level of the rest of the palace (due probably to the stratigraphic continuity of the chapel on the same spot) and is reached from the Forecourt by a series of wide flights of stairs. In the same area of the chapel there is what we may call a Sub-Unit (No. 4), Rooms 136-138/214, which seems on the basis of the texts found there to have had some bureaucratic function. This unit is entered from the Forecourt through the long Corridor 133/139/120.

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<sup>4</sup>Y. Al-Khalesi, "Mesopotamian Monumental Secular Architecture in the Second Millennium B.C." (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Yale University, 1975), pp. 67-68.

<sup>4a</sup>For public and private sectors in palace architecture see *Ibid.*, pp. 68-71, 137-41.

Connected with Forecourt 131 is Room 132 located in the south wall, which Parrot has termed the "Audience Chamber." The prominence of this room in relationship to the court and its secular and religious characteristics indicates a dual nature. This dual function can only be explained by the presence of the king in a ritual ceremony accessible for public viewing. Room 132 was part of the adjacent funerary complex/*bīt kispim* (Unit No. 5) which is located between the Reception Suite 64/65 on the west side and the "Royal Chapel" on the east side. Zimrilim devoted this large area of his building to the *kispu*-cult, which was very well documented in the records of the "Lim" dynasty.<sup>5</sup> It is highly probable that Zimrilim sat in the "Audience Chamber" after attending the funerary offerings in the nearby dining halls (Rooms 122 and 220). He sat there in public view from Forecourt 131, as part of his *kispu*-cult obligation.

Also accessible from Forecourt 131 through corridor 130/68 is the general Storage Unit of the palace (Unit No. 7) which is located on the southern side of the building (pl. I). It consists of a square Court (87) for loading and unloading and 21 Storerooms (83-86, 88-98, 100-105) arranged at the sides of a long Corridor (99). The workshops and storehouses which Parrot has identified with our Funerary Unit should be looked for in the badly denuded area south of the building (Unit No. 6). In none of the areas excavated is there evidence of a manufacturing area for the metal objects that are so often mentioned in the texts.

The second largest public area of the palace is Inner Court 106. This court is accessible only from the Forecourt through a bent-axis type passage (114/112). The Inner Court is the heart of the palace, as is indicated by the care and elaboration with which the court was executed, by its brilliant murals and other decorations, as well as by the double throneroom suite on its south side (pl. I). This area was obviously reserved for visitors of high rank on royal business and high officials of the king. Court 106 and the double throneroom suite, which will be called the Inner Court Block (106/116/64/65/66) are discussed in detail in Chapter Three below.

Contiguous to the Inner Court Block on the west and north sides are six separate units, five of them arranged around a central court. We shall begin with the Kiln Unit (No. 8) at the west side of the double Throneroom Suite (64/65) which Parrot has termed "*Fours et Communs*" in view of the two large "ovens" in the central Court 70.<sup>6</sup> He assumes that Court 70 constituted the palace kitchen, and that the accompanying bathrooms and toilets were for the convenience of the personnel who worked in this area. We tend not to agree with Parrot's viewpoint that this unit was the cooking place of the palace on the basis of several considerations, among them: 1) the location of the unit next to the throneroom suite and its direct communication with it, which suggest a function immediately related to the king and far more important than a kitchen; 2) the two large circular "ovens" are not of the cooking types known in Mesopotamia—compare for example, the cooking ovens in Room 167 of the palace with the circular kilns<sup>7</sup>; 3) some of the objects which were found in this unit, such as the fragments of the fine mosaic, show a high degree of craftsmanship and, according to Parrot, are comparable to the "*rétable*" found in the king's chamber Room 46.<sup>8</sup> It is unlikely that such artistry would be relegated to a room of mere

<sup>5</sup>For full discussion of this unit see my article, "*bīt-kispim* in Mesopotamian Architecture: Studies of Form and Function," *Mesopotamia* X (1976).

<sup>6</sup>A. Parrot, *Le palais; architecture: Mission archéologique de Mari II*, 1. Bibliothèque archéologique et historique 68 (Paris: Geuthner, 1958), pp. 221-244.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid, pls. XV: 2-3 and L.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid, pl. III.

utilitarian function. It is difficult, then, to determine the purpose of this unit on the basis of the available evidence. The unit might have been the area where royal tablets were made and sent for the king's sealing in the adjacent throneroom and returned to be enveloped and baked. Another possible function would be some type of bath arrangement for the ruler and the elite members of the administration.<sup>9</sup> These two suggestions must be considered as purely hypothetical at the present time.

The next area is the Administrative Unit (No. 9) which consists of two self-contained complexes, each with a series of rooms or suites surrounding a central rectangular court. Its proximity to the Throneroom 64 and the Inner Court, and the direct access to them and to the School (Unit No. 10), make it convenient for conducting administrative business.

The "Royal Residence" (Unit No. 11) is aptly named, as the quality of the wall decorations, the more elaborate installations and Reception Room 34 lead one to conclude that they were reserved for the royal family. This block is also ideally located for access to the most important parts of the palace, with easy entry to the eastern Guest Wing (Unit No. 12), the Inner Court, the School and the Administrative Unit. The Guest Wing is the last unit of the building, consisting of a square court surrounded by a series of rooms. This block could have been allocated to special visitors, due to the proximity and access to the Royal Residence and the Gate-House.

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<sup>9</sup>This was suggested to me by R. Glaeseman.

## CHAPTER III

### The Inner Court Block (106/116/64/65/66): Architectural, Artistic, Artifactual and Textual Evidence

Among the texts published in the *ARMT* volumes, there are available the communications of those officials responsible for the palace and the maintenance of its units, in particular Mukannišum and Yasīm-sumū. In the archives of these two officials, references are made to an area within the palace which is called the “Court of the Palms” (*kisal* GIŠ.GIŠIMMAR.HI.A). The two most instructive letters are given below in transliteration and translation (*italics added*):

#### 1. *ARMT* XIII, 16, lns. 5-25

(letter from Mukannišum to *bēhīya*, i.e. Zimrilim)

- 5 (b)e-l[i k]i-a-am ú-wa-e-ra-an-ni  
um-[m]a-a-mi <sup>d</sup>LAMA.HI.A ra-qí-du-tim  
ú (*sic*) sà-hi-ir-ta-am ša ki-[s]a-at GIŠ.GIŠIMMAR  
a-[n]a a-la-ki-ia li-il-tu-ku  
i-na ka-ša-dí-ia-am
- 10 <sup>d</sup>LAMA.HI.A ra-qí-du-tim ú-ki-in-nu  
ù Ib-bi-<sup>d</sup>IM URUDU.NAGAR  
[š]a sà-hi-ir-ta-am  
i-ip-pé-šu  
[ú-u]l wa-ši-ib
- 15 [a-na <sup>d</sup>h]a-na-at il-lí-ik-ma  
ù aš-šum iḫ-zu ša GIŠ.IGI.KAK.HI.A  
bē-lí ki-a-am iq-bē-i-im  
um-ma-a-mi šum-ma iḫ-zu  
ša GIŠ.IGI.KAK.HI.A
- 20 er-si-ú šu-up-ra-am-ma <sup>lu</sup> eb-bi  
lu-ut-ru-da-am-ma  
(ú?) li-ir-ku-su  
iḫ-zu ša GIŠ.IGI.KAK.HI.A er-si-ú  
be-lí eb-bi li-iḫ-ru-da-am-ma
- 25 ma-aḫ-ri-šu-nu GIŠ.IGI.KAK.HI.A li-ir-ku-su
-

My lord has ordered me to do the following: 'Before I arrive (at Mari), have them check the *prancing lamassus* and the *railing* of the *Court of the Palms*'. Now, since my arrival here, they have positioned the *prancing lamassus*, but Ibbi-Addu, the metalworker who has to make the *railing* is not here, he went to the land of Ḫana. Concerning the riveted plating, my lord has given me the following order: 'If the riveted platings are ready, write to me so I can dispatch some superintendents and the plating can be attached'. At the present the *riveted platings* are ready, would my lord dispatch the superintendents, so that in their presence the rivets may be attached.

Unfortunately, most of the sense of this next important report is lost due to breaks, but what details remain are significant:

2. ARMT XIII, 40, lns. 26-34  
(Letter from Yasīm-sumū to *bēlīya*, i.e. Zimrilim)

- 26 a-di 5-ši-šu šī-īp-rum i-na li-ib-bi ē-k[āl-lim]  
i-ba-aš-ši i-na ta-as-li-il ki-sa-al GIŠ.GIŠIMMAR.III.A  
a-na É a-ba-ra-ak-[ka-a?]-tim  
i-na e-re-bi-i[m-m]a GIŠ-x-[x š]e-bi-ir  
30 i-na ú-ur pa-pa-ḫ[i]-i[m x-x-x h]á še-eb-ru  
i-ga-[r]a-at É [x-x-x-x s]a?-a  
1 Tā-ba-at-šar-ru-sú k[i]-a-a[m iq?-bi?-em]  
um-ma-a-mi i-ga-ar-ti É x-[x-x-x]  
ša a-na É ka-re-e-em i-ma-a[q?-qu?-tu?]

There is five times as much work within the palace.  
While *covering the Court of the Palms*, at the  
*entrance to the personnel quarters* (wood) . . . has  
broken, (and) on the *terrace of the sanctuary* the  
. . . are broken. The walls of the . . . room of . . . are . . .  
Tabat-Šarussu said to me: 'The wall of the sanctuary  
which fell on ? the granary . . .'

In addition to the above letters describing architectural elements associated with the Court of the Palms, two administrative documents point the association of an oil storeroom and a sanctuary with the same court.



3. *ARMT IX, 9, lns. 1-11*

- 1 2 ME 77 DU[G] i.[GIŠ?]  
 ša im-ma-aḥ-ru  
 up-pu-ūš-ma  
 1 A.GAR 7 GUR 37 qa i  
 5 i-na GIŠ.BÁN.GAL  
 1 ša Nu-ūr-<sup>d</sup>EN.ZU  
 iš-tu A-la-aḥ-tim<sup>[ki]</sup>  
 i-ša-bi-la-am  
 G[IR] Ik-si-u[d]-a-ia-bi-šu  
 10 ša a-ua é ku-nu-uk-ki ša i  
 [š]a ki-sa-al GIŠ.GIŠIMMAR

277 jars of oil?, which were received (and) “treated.”  
 17 kur 37 qa of oil measured with the large *sutu*  
 measure-oil which Nūr-Sîn sent from Alah̄tum. (It is)  
 under the control of Ikšud-ayabīšu, who entered it  
 into the *sealed oil storhouse of the Court of the Palms*.

4. *ARMT IX, 236, lns. 1-11*

- 1 1 GUR 10 zì sî-im-mi-da-tum  
 40 bu-rum  
 40 GÚ ap-pa-um  
 30 GÚ.TUR  
 5 te-er-di-tum  
 a-na DINGIR-ka-an  
 i-nu-ma LUGAL  
 iš-tu gi-ir-ri-im  
 GİR a-bu-um- DINGIR  
 10 i-na pa-pa-ḥi-im  
 ša ki-sa-al GIŠ.GIŠIMMAR

130 qa of *simmidatum* flour, 40 qa *burrum* grain,  
 40 qa of *appanu* lentils, 30 qa of chick peas. An  
 order for Ilu-kān, when the king (returned) from  
 campaign. Under the control of Abum-I, in the  
*sanctuary (papāḥim) of the Court of the Palms*.

In order to analyze the above texts the following architectural references which occur in them have to be considered in connection with the palace units. These references are:

- I. *kisal gišimmarī* (*kisal* GIŠ.GIŠIMMAR.III.A): the Court of the Palms (XIII 40:27); (*kisal* GIŠ.GIŠIMMAR): the Court of the Palms (IX 9:11, 236:11; XIII 16:7).
- II. *saḫirtum gišimmarī* (*sà-ḫi-ir-ta-am* GIŠ.GIŠIMMAR): the railing of the Court of the Palms (XIII 16:7,12); *qurqurruṣa ša saḫirtam epēšu* (URUDU.NAGAR [š]a *sà-ḫi-ir-ta-am i-ip-pé-šu*): and the metalworker who has to make the railing (XIII 16:11-13).
- III. *tasllum kisal gišimmarī* (*ta-as-li-il ki-sa-al* GIŠ.GIŠIMMAR.III.A), *ana bīt abarakkatīm ina erēbimma* (*a-na á a-ba-ra-ak-[ka-a?]-tīm i-na e-re-bi-i[m-m]a*): covering the Court of the Palms, at the entrance to the personnel quarters (XIII 40:27-29). *ina ur papāḫim* (*i-na ú-ur pa-pa-ḫ[i-i]m*): on the terrace of the sanctuary (XIII 40:30).
- IV. *bīt kunukkī ša šamuim ša kisal gišimmarī* (*é ku-uu-uk-ki ša à š[a] ki-sa-al* GIŠ.GIŠIMMAR): the sealed oil storehouse of the Court of the Palms (IX 9:10-11).
- V. *lamassū raqīdūtum* (<sup>d</sup> LAMA.III.A *ra-qī-du-tim*): the prancing *lamassus kisal gišimmarī* (*ki-sa-al* GIŠ.GIŠIMMAR): of the Court of the Palms (XIII 16:6,10).
- VI. *papāḫum ša kisal gišimmarī* (*pa-pa-ḫi-im ša ki-sa-al* GIŠ.GIŠIMMAR): the sanctuary of the Court of the Palms (IX 236:10-11).

### I. Inner Court 106: “The Court of the Palms”

It is clear from the above excerpts that these architectural elements are either located within the Court of the Palms or are adjacent to it, with easy access from it. Accordingly, our first step is to determine the location of the Court of the Palms, with full consideration given to the various elements as a whole. In seeking the identity of the area referred to as the Court of the Palms, one’s attention is immediately drawn to the two large public courts, Forecourt 131 and Inner Court 106 (pl. 1). Either of them could have been large enough to contain a stand of palm trees. There is no indication, however, that actual trees were ever planted in either of them, or in any of the palace courts in Mesopotamia.

Before we discuss the identity of the Court of the Palms, let us say a few words about the court as a very consistent form of architecture in the Mesopotamian buildings. It has been stated: “Architectural works seem to consist of two main types of systems acting together. Mechanistic-type systems organized to arrive at utilitarian and practical goals. Human informational systems intended to communicate various messages, behavioural, aesthetic and others.”<sup>10</sup> Indeed, the court as an architectural form in ancient and very recent structures of the Near East is an ideal example for these two types of interrelated “mechanistic and behavioural aesthetic systems.” The court is an internal open space, where various domestic activities (in houses) and royal ceremonies (in palaces) took place. Climatic adaptation is another function of the court, where circulation of cool air can be obtained in the harsh, arid climate of the Near East. The court also provides light and communication. The aesthetic aspect of the court is represented by its hollow large space opening to the sky. This form of architecture is but an environmental adaptation to a country largely desert or semi-desert. Trees and green are not the typical natural phenomena of the desert. Large open space and sky are its two basic landscape features. It was important to preserve unbroken the relationship between this enclosed space, the court, and the serenity of the sky.

<sup>10</sup>S. Wilson, “Architecture in Communication with Nature and Man,” *Architectural Science Review* X (1967), p. 134.

Parrot, aware of the references to the Court of the Palms in Mari texts, has recently identified it with the public Forecourt (131) and restored a line of palm trees running along the long side of the court in front of the "Audience Chamber" (Room 132; fig. 1).<sup>11</sup> This restoration of actual palm trees seems an inappropriate one for two significant reasons. The *first* is that such a restoration is in conflict with the two basic functions of this public court—utilitarian and aesthetic. This Forecourt, as we mentioned above (p. 3) is the true public area of the building, where various state ceremonies took place, as for example the ceremony of the cult of the dead (*kispum*). On this occasion Zimrilim seems to have sat in the "Audience Chamber" accessible for public viewing, as part of his royal duties toward his subjects. It would have been undesirable and impractical (with regard to space) on those occasions to have trees planted in this area. In fact, Parrot's restoration appears to create a wall-like line of palm trees concealing the majestic appearance of the "Audience Chamber," and breaking the aesthetic aspect of the large open space of the court. The *second* reason is that none of the architectural units which are mentioned in the above texts seems to be located in or adjacent to Forecourt 131.

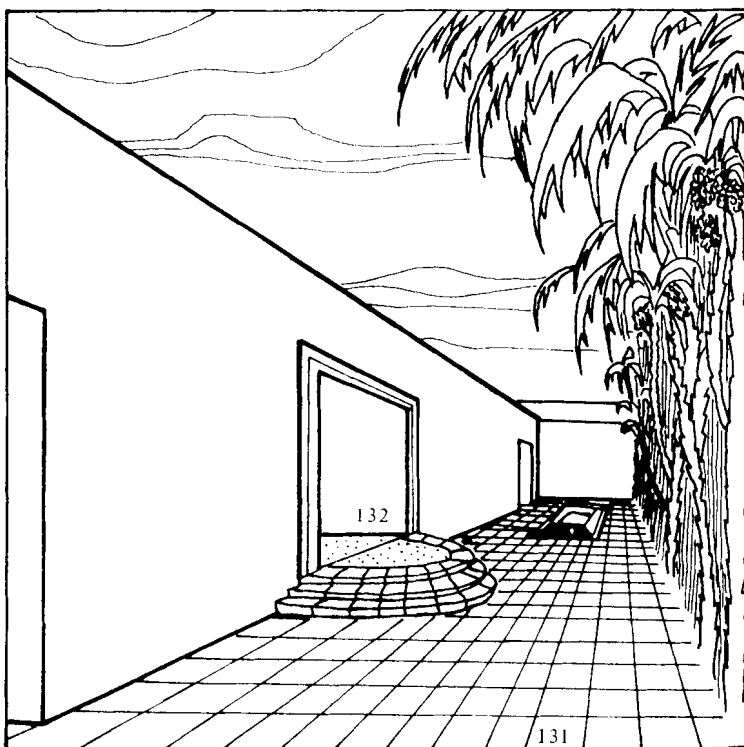


Figure 1. Forecourt 131 of the palace at Mari with a restored line of palm trees running in front of the "Audience Chamber" (132).

For a correct identification of the Court of the Palms, we believe that we must consider the textual references as descriptive of the type of *mural decorations* found on the interior walls of Inner Court 106. Indeed, the "Investiture Scene of Zimrilim" depicts such palm trees flanking

<sup>11</sup>A. Parrot, *Mari capitale fabuleuse* (Paris: Payot, 1974), pp. 114-115, fig. 63.

the central scene (pl. IV). The remains of this famous painting were found on the south wall of the court, to the right of the entrance of Throneroom 64. What has been recovered is almost all of one panel belonging to a single register, over 8 feet wide and 6 feet high.<sup>12</sup> The center area is given over to the "Investiture" scene. Immediately to either side of this scene appears a representation of a "Sacred Tree," followed by a vertical frieze of three dragon figures, a date-palm tree with two climbers and a supplicant goddess. The details of this painting will be discussed later; here we shall make only general remarks about its artistic value.

The painting displays two artistic features, conventionalism and realism. The former is represented by the central investiture scene of Zimrilim, a religious ceremony in which the king receives or touches the emblems of kingship held by the goddess Ishtar. The latter is represented by the figures of the trees and their details. These two contrasting themes are well attested in Mesopotamian art, but the execution of them in one representation and in painting make it a remarkable work of art, indeed. The fact that the size of the trees is greater than the main subject of the painting, the investiture scene, indicates a certain realism, although the depiction of the sacred tree is imaginary (see also p. 43). On the other hand, the date-palm trees are represented in the mural so as to convey great naturalism. The palm details—trunk, leaves, clusters of dates, two climbers picking the fruit, a blue bird standing on the tree poised ready to fly, and the colors—have all been observed and composed with skill and precision. In fact, Parrot writes about the palm trees as if they were the work of another artist, and mentions that the blue bird of the painting which has been identified the "hunter of Africa" was seen over the ruins of Mari in 1951.<sup>13</sup>

One can imagine the elaborateness and the beauty of Court 106, most likely with more murals of palm trees decorating the walls of this unit, the heart of the palace, which was reserved for the king, royal dignitaries, and high officials. With such compositions of murals, which is "evidence of the evolution of art and ideology at the beginning of the second millennium,"<sup>14</sup> it would not have been surprising to find this court (106) called the "Court of the Palms." One can understand now why the king of Ugarit sent his messenger to see the palace of Zimrilim.<sup>15</sup> He did not send him to Mari because its palace Forecourt (131) had actual palm trees planted in it, but partly because its Inner Court (106) was decorated with such mural masterpieces.

In order to confirm the identification of the Court of the Palms with Inner Court 106, we shall now turn to the discussion of the other architectural elements mentioned in the above texts and associated with this courtyard.

## II. The Railing of the Court of the Palms

We are informed by the letter of Mukannišum (*ARMT* XIII, 16) that Zimrilim is concerned about the condition of the railing of the Court of the Palms. The text points out also that "Ibbi-Addu the metalworker who has to make the railing is not here"; hence the text implies that this was of metal, possibly bronze. No traces of metal were recovered from the Inner Court, which is not

<sup>12</sup>A. Parrot, *Le palais; peintures murales: Mission archéologique de Mari* II, 2. Bibliothèque archéologique et historique 70 (Paris: Geuthner, 1958), pl. A.

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 60-61 and n. 1.

<sup>14</sup>R. Boulanger, *Egyptian and Near Eastern Painting* (New York: Funk and Wagnals, 1965), p. 89.

<sup>15</sup>A. Parrot, "Les fouilles de Mari, troisième campagne (hiver 1935-36)," *Syria* 18, pp. 74-75; C.L. Woolley, *A Forgotten Kingdom* (New York: Norton, 1968), p. 70.

surprising as such objects would be the favorite target of plunder. The Inner Court does, however, feature a clay plaster plinth, 50 cm. broad.<sup>16</sup> It should be noted that this is the only public court with such railings. The only other area of the palace with similar decoration is the “Royal Residence.”<sup>17</sup> The Inner Court displays elaborate wall decorations beside the representational murals. The upper part of the walls are also ornamented with bands in blue and red.<sup>18</sup> The Inner Court, the “Court of the Palms,” was indeed an impressive area of architectural and artistic excellence.

### III. The Covering and the Personnel Quarters of the Court of the Palms

The letter of Yasīn-sumū (*ARMT* XIII, 40:27-29) indicates that the Court of the Palms is covered in some manner: “while the covering of the Court of the Palms, at the entrance of the personnel quarters ...”. This presents no problem, since the court in ancient Mesopotamian buildings should have had verandas running around it to offer shelter from sun and rain and to protect the walls, as is almost always the case in present-day Near Eastern houses. In the Mari palace, this could also refer to the series of small stone squares found in the south-west and southeast corners of the Inner Court<sup>19</sup> (pl. II). It has been suggested by Parrot that these squares served as sockles for a type of canopy which may have been used for the shade of visitors and to protect the murals.

It is interesting to note here that one of those canopies (SW) is just outside the entrance (Room 55) to the personnel quarters, as the letter indicates. Important is the letter’s indication of the association of the Court of the Palms with the personnel quarters (Administrative Unit No. 7) and the communication between them. We know that Parrot has correctly identified the western area of the Inner Court as the “Intendant and Administrative Quarters,”<sup>20</sup> which is reached through Room 55, opening into the Inner Court directly under the SW canopy (pls. I-II).

### IV. The Sealed Oil Storehouse of the Court of the Palms

*ARMT* IX, 9:10-11 mentions a certain amount of oil stored into the “sealed oil storehouse of the Court of the Palms.” The text clearly refers to a specific oil magazine which should be contiguous with and accessible from the Court of the Palms. There can be no doubt that the text refers now to the large Storeroom 116 (20.50 x 4.15 m.) located on the Inner Court, and accessible from it only (pl. II). In this storeroom benches were found built against the walls and at least 11 large storage jars were discovered *in situ*.<sup>21</sup> Although the content of the jars was not determined, it would be justifiable based on the textual evidence to presume that they contained oil.

### V. The Prancing *lamassus* of the Court of the Palms

Mukannišum in his letter to Zimrilim informs the king that the prancing *lamassus* of the Court of the Palms have been repaired (*ARMT* XIII, 16:6-10). The identification of the *lamassus* and their

<sup>16</sup>A. Parrot, *Le palais; architecture: MAM* II, I. BAH 68 (Paris: Geuthner, 1958), pls. XXIV-XXV.

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid*, pls. XXXVIII-XXXIX.

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid*, figs. 90-91, 93-95.

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid*, fig. 95.

<sup>20</sup>*Ibid*, pp. 192 ff.

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid*, figs. 98-99 and pl. XXVI.

forms is a difficult matter. Before we discuss the prancing *lamassus*, it is useful to review both the meaning of the term and the iconography of these figures.

Textual evidence shows that the term *lamassu* (<sup>d</sup>Lama) refers to a protective spirit whose function is to protect “the good fortune, spiritual health, and physical appearance of human beings, temples, cities, and countries”; it is also explained as the “representation of the lamassu-spirits, or representation in human shape.”<sup>22</sup>

Representations of the *lamassu*-spirits/genii are attested in Ur III, Old Babylonian and Kassite periods in the form of a female deity standing with her hands raised in front of her face in a suppliant attitude, and normally wearing a long flounced robe and a horned crown (fig. 2). This portrayal of the female *lamassu* is a very popular theme in the art of these periods (less so in the Kassite period). The figure appears interceding on behalf of worshippers to present their prayer to the principal god, or by herself in front of the god.<sup>23</sup>



Figure 2. An Old Babylonian clay relief representing a suppliant goddess (*lamassu*).

This *lamassu* figure seems to have disappeared from Babylonia by the end of Kassite period.<sup>24</sup> In Assyria, we do not find the figure as early as the Middle Assyrian period, although it is referred to

<sup>22</sup>*The Assyrian Dictionary* (Chicago: the University of Chicago Press), ‘*lamassu*’, pp. 60 ff.

<sup>23</sup>On stone: the stele of Ur-Nammu; the stone reliefs on figs. 32-33 in this work; on metal: D.J. Wiseman, “The Goddess Lama at Ur,” *Iraq* XXII (1960), pl. XXIII: a-b, e-h; on seals: E. Porada, *Corpus of Near Eastern Seals in the North American Collections I*. The Collection of Pierpont Morgan Library. Bollingen Series 14 (New York: Pantheon, 1948), pls. XLIII, XLVIII, LXII-LXIII, LXXVIII: 568-569; on terracottas: Y. Mahmoud (Al-Khalesi), “Unpublished Clay Figurines in the Iraq Museum” (Unpublished Master’s Thesis, University of Baghdad, 1966), figs. 98-99, 102; D. McCown and R. Haines, *Nippur I; Temple of Enlil, Scribal Quarter, and Soundings*. The Oriental Institute Publications 78 (Chicago: the University of Chicago Press, 1967), pl. 134: 5; A. Spycket, “La déesse Lama,” *Revue d’Assyriologie et d’Archéologie orientale* LIV (1960), fig. 1; R.F.S. Starr, *Nuzi: Report on the Excavations at Yorgan Tepe Near Kirkuk, Iraq ... 1927-31* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1937/1939), pl. 100:A; in this work fig. 2; and in the murals from the Mari palace (Room 132 and Court 106).

<sup>24</sup>Also Spycket, op. cit., p. 86.

in texts.<sup>25</sup> In 1st millennium Assyria the term *lamassu* refers to a group of composite creatures of bull, lion, bird, or human features, such as the winged human-headed bull and the winged human-headed lion, which are placed at the sides of the city and palace gates to protect the buildings against evil forces and to guard the good spirits.<sup>26</sup> In the Late Assyrian period the *lamassu*-genii appear to have also been made in other forms, such as figures of sheep; the Assyrian king Sennacherib states:<sup>27</sup>

“I artistically made four . . . sheep as protective spirits of silver (and) bronze, together with . . . sheep serving as protective spirits of massive quarried stone”;

“I placed at their (the palace’s) doorways figures of *lamassu*-spirits made of alabaster (and) ivory, holding *illuru*-flowers, their hands folded(?) .”

Protective genii were also made in fish-man form. Two stone statues of a merman (human bust and fish’s body) were discovered guarding the main entrance of Nabu Temple at Nimrud.<sup>28</sup>

What does this shift of manifestation of the *lamassu*/genius-spirits mean between the 2nd and the 1st millennia B.C.? Does it suggest a complete change of representation, or did there exist several shades of meaning of the term *lamassu*? These questions are problematic and difficult to answer with certainty at the present level of the discussion. A number of considerations nevertheless allow us to arrive at least at a tentative conclusion.

First of all, there is strong evidence of multiple manifestations of one concept in many mythological elements of Mesopotamian civilization; the *lamassu*/genius-spirits seem to be one of them. The *lamassus* have two contrasting natures, benevolent and demonic.<sup>29</sup> In the symbolic art of Mesopotamia such multiple conceptions are known at least as early as the Ubaid period. From this period there is a group of clay figurines such as those found at Ur<sup>30</sup> and Warka<sup>31</sup> depicting a nude female body carrying a child, and a demonic head (in one figurine) representing opposite ideas, fertility/motherhood and aggression/death. This multiple concept in art is also known in the later periods, for example in the famous Old Babylonian clay relief in the collection of Colonel Norman Colville.<sup>32</sup> The relief represents a composite figure of a nude goddess (symbolizing

<sup>25</sup>A.K. Grayson, *Assyrian Royal Inscriptions I. Records of the Ancient Near East* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1972), 9:69.

<sup>26</sup>H. Frankfort, *Art and Architecture of the Ancient Orient*. The Pelican History of Art (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1970), pp. 146, 148; Moortgat, *The Art of Ancient Mesopotamia*, pp. 130-131, 153, figs. 108, 256; M.E.L. Mallowan, *Nimrud and its Remains*. The British School of Archaeology in Iraq (London: the University Press, 1966), p. 90; R.D. Barnett, “Lions and Bulls in Assyrian Palaces,” *Le palais et la royauté*, ed. P. Garelli. XIX<sup>e</sup> Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale (Paris: Geuthner, 1974), pp. 444-446; for Assyrian texts see, W. Von Soden, “Die Schutzgenien *lamassu* und *schedu* in der Babylonisch-Assyrischen Literatur,” *Bahgdader Mitteilungen* III (1964), pp. 148-156; *The Assyrian Dictionary*, ‘*lamassu*’, p. 65.

<sup>27</sup>CAD, ‘*lamassu*’, p. 65.

<sup>28</sup>M.E.L. Mallowan, *Nimrud and its Remains*, pp. 234-235, fig. 198; T. Madhloom, *The Chronology of Neo-Assyrian Art* (London: Athlone, 1970), pp. 99-100, pl. LXXV:2.

<sup>29</sup>L. Oppenheim, *Ancient Mesopotamia; Portrait of a Dead Civilization* (Chicago: the University of Chicago Press, 1964), p. 200.

<sup>30</sup>C.L. Woolley, “Excavations at Ur, 1929-30,” *The Antiquaries Journal* X (1930), pl. XLVIII.

<sup>31</sup>C. Ziegler, *Die Terrakotten von Warka*. Ausgrabungen der Deutschen Forschungsgemeinschaft in Uruk-Warka Bd. 6 (Berlin: Verlag Gebr. Mann, 1962), pls. 1-2.

<sup>32</sup>H. Frankfort, *Art and Architecture of the Ancient Orient*, fig. 119.

fertility) with wings and talon feet (symbolizing aggression and terror) standing on two lions (symbolizing power) and flanked by an owl (perhaps representing death).

It is reasonable to assume now, on the basis of the foregoing presentation, that during the 3rd and 2nd millennia B.C. there was emphasis on the *lamassu*-spirits in the form of a supplicant goddess interceding on behalf of the worshipper. In the 1st millennium, on the other hand, the stress was on the demonic forms—composite creatures of bull, lion and human features—with the specific function of protecting the palaces and cities against evil spirits. Different people in different places or times dealing with one concept may stress a certain aspect or function with a shift of emphasis.<sup>33</sup> It should be noted, however, that when the Assyrian king is engaged in “purifying ceremonies connected with the sacred tree and deities,”<sup>34</sup> he is usually depicted on orthostats accompanied by a winged human figure or a winged bird-headed man carrying a cone in one hand and a bucket in the other. Are these genius figures the Assyrian counterparts of the human *lamassus* with the interceding role of the earlier periods? It is possible. Moreover, it has been stated some time ago that the art of early Mesopotamia shows that:<sup>35</sup>

“there is no evidence of a dragon (figure) engaged in any action hostile to a divinity. When dragons are represented in conjunction with gods the former are always subservient to the latter, and docilely perform various humble tasks serving as the seat upon which the deity sits, the steed which he rides or which is harnessed to his chariot or plough, the faithful follower who accompanies him to the contest.”



Figure 3. Large clay relief (61 cm.) of a bull-man holding a door-post, Hendur-Sag chapel at Ur.

<sup>33</sup>L. Oppenheim, op. cit., p. 201.

<sup>34</sup>T. Madhloom, op. cit., p. 110, for historical and artistic details see the following pp. 111-114.

<sup>35</sup>E.D. Van Buren, “The Dragon in Ancient Mesopotamia,” *Orientalia* XV (1946), p. 2.



This is also true in the later periods, and we specifically mention here for the purpose of our discussion the winged dragon, which appears in a protective role holding a gate-post.<sup>36</sup> Indeed, in the Old Babylonian period a bull-man (fig. 3) or a winged dragon (fig. 4) is usually the figure that appears holding gate-posts and guarding deities or temple entrances.<sup>37</sup>



Figure 4. An Old Babylonian clay relief of a winged lion (*lamassu*?) holding a door-post.

This theme of the protective function of genii or demons seems to be supported by the literary sources. For example, the myth "Gilgamesh and the Land of Living" tells us that the monster Humbaba was the guardian of the forest and his murder by Gilgamesh and Enkidu angered Enlil.<sup>38</sup> Texts dealing with demons "either describe their dangerous activities or prescribe prophylactic and apotropaic magic meant to help those who are threatened or affected by the demons"<sup>39</sup> - again, the multiple concepts.

Although the concept of the protective figures appears early in Mesopotamian art,<sup>40</sup> it becomes apparent that during the Old Babylonian period we begin to find at least two different representational types of protective genii; each one seems to stress certain functions of the concept. These representations are: first, the figure of the supplicant goddess known as *lamassu*, whose main function is to introduce worshippers to the presence of the deities; second, the figures of dragons holding door-posts, whose function is to guard buildings against evil forces. What is important,

<sup>36</sup>For example: the famous vase dedicated by Gudea to the god Ningizzida, Frankfort, op. cit., fig. 101; on seals: E. Porada, *Corpus of Near Eastern Seals in the North American Collections I*, LXXIII:541; on terracottas: D. McCown and R. Haines, *Nippur I: Temple of Enlil, Scribal Quarter, and Soundings*, pl. 143:2; Y. Mahmoud (Al-Khalesi), "Unpublished Clay Figurines in the Iraq Museum" (Unpublished Master's Thesis, University of Baghdad, 1966), figs. 92-93.

<sup>37</sup>E. During Caspers, "The Gate-Post in Mesopotamian Art; A Short Outline of its Origin and Development," *Jaarbericht van het vooraziatisch-Egyptisch Genootschap ex Oriente Lux* XXII (1971-72), p. 217.

<sup>38</sup>N.S. Kramer, *The Sumerians; Their History, Culture and Character* (Chicago: the University of Chicago Press, 1963), pp. 190 ff.

<sup>39</sup>L. Oppenheim, "The Eyes of the Lord," *Journal of American Oriental Society* (Essays in Memory of Speiser) 88 (1968), p. 179.

<sup>40</sup>E.D. Van Buren, "The Guardian of the Gate in the Akkadian Period," *Orientalia* XVI (1947), pp. 312 ff.

indeed, is the fact that the second group or similar ones are also called *lamassu* and served the same protective function in the Late Assyrian period. The inevitable questions are: Is there a relationship between the two groups? Are the Assyrian protective figures a later development of the Old Babylonian dragons?; and if so, what is the name of the OB group, is it *lamassu*? These questions cannot be solved at present because of the lack of specific evidence.

It is very interesting, however, that the figure of the supplicant goddess and figures of demonic nature appear together on two of the few architectural sculptures of the 2nd millennium B.C. First, two stone blocks were discovered built in the side of the doorway of the ante-cella in the main temple at Tell Rimah and were dated to the reign of Shamshi-Addu I<sup>41</sup> (also p. 49, figs. 27-28). On the face of the block is carved in relief the figure of the supplicant goddess *lamassu* standing between two palm trees, and on the other block a demonic face usually identified with "Humbaba." The figures of the supplicant goddess and "Humbaba" are also seen together on Old Babylonian seals.<sup>42</sup> The second example is to be found in the molded brick facade of the temple of Inshushinak (12th century B.C.) at Susa, which depicts in relief the supplicant goddess alternating with a figure of a bull-man grasping a palm tree<sup>43</sup> (also p. 55). Figurines of the female *lamassu*, a large painted terracotta relief (61 cm. high) of a bull-man holding a gate-post (fig. 3) and reliefs of guardian demons were found together in the Old Babylonian Hendur-Sag chapel at Ur.<sup>44</sup> The terracotta relief of the bull-man seems to have been used as an architectural decoration. Woolley, the excavator, suggests that the relief is one of a pair that originally adorned the door-jambes of the chapel for protective purposes.<sup>45</sup> *Lamassu* figures of the goddess type were also worn as amulets.<sup>46</sup> These architectural sculptures, as well as the art objects, indicate again a relationship between the two manifestations (the supplicant goddess and the demonic figures) and suggest related functions—protective spirits.

Now let us return to our target topic, the "Investiture of King Zimrilim" painting at Mari, in which we find again the figure of the supplicant goddess and demonic figures depicted together.

Mukannišum in reporting back to his lord Zimrilim about the fixing of the palace *lamassus*, says: "Now since my arrival here, they have positioned the prancing *lamassus* . . ." (ARMT XIII, 16:10). Thus, the text indicates that the Court of the Palms (Inner Court 106) or another area related to it had *lamassu* decoration of some sort. We mentioned above that the "Investiture" painting displays representations of the *lamassu* figures. The mural shows two figures of the supplicant goddess in the middle scene interceding for Zimrilim with the goddess Ishtar and one more goddess standing next to the palm tree at either end of the painting, as well as a vertical frieze of three quadruped composite figures/dragons of bull, lion, bird, and human features on either side of the middle scene (pl. IV).

The figures of the dragons starting from the bottom of the frieze are: a human-headed bull with his forefeet resting on the top of a conical-shaped mountain. The heads of both bulls are damaged,

<sup>41</sup>D. Oates, "The Excavations at Tell Al Rimah, 1966," *Iraq* XXIX (1967), pp. 74-78, pl. XXXI.

<sup>42</sup>E. Porada, *Corpus of Ancient Near Eastern Seals in North American Collections* I, figs. 399, 440.

<sup>43</sup>E. Strommenger, *5000 Years of the Art of Mesopotamia*, trans. by C. Haglund (New York: Abrams 1964), pl. 180.

<sup>44</sup>C.L. Woolley, "The Excavations at Ur, 1930-31," *The Antiquaries Journal* XI (1931), pp. 368-372; also D. Wiseman, "The Goddess Lama at Ur," *Iraq* XXII (1960), p. 170.

<sup>45</sup>C.L. Woolley, op. cit., p. 368, pl. L:1.

<sup>46</sup>D. Wiseman, op. cit., pl. XXIII:e-h.

but the remnant of a beard and braid of the bull on the left suggest that the head was frontally represented.<sup>47</sup> The middle and upper dragons appear to be similar to each other, with body and paws of a lion and large wings. Their heads, unfortunately, are damaged, but there are still enough traces of painted outline to suggest a human head for the top figure,<sup>48</sup> and a beak-like head for the middle one.<sup>49</sup> The former with its feathered crown resembles the winged human-headed lion/bull of the Assyrian palaces (fig. 7), whereas the latter recalls the common figure of the crested griffin of the 14th and 13th centuries and 1st millennium art, and especially (to mention just one) the well-executed griffin in an ivory plaque from Megiddo.<sup>50</sup> We have, therefore, restored these three figures on pl. VI as a human-headed bull, a winged eagle-headed lion (griffin), and a winged human-headed lion.

The three dragons face the "Sacred Tree" and the middle one has one foot raised and propped against the tree, as if he is holding it. A similar motif of composite figures of a bull, lion, bird, and human features propped against a decorative tree also appears on 14th century seals.<sup>51</sup> Our restoration of the painting and consequently the ornamentation of the facade of Sanctuary 66 (see pp. 37ff.) seems to be supported by the fact that figures of winged human or bird-headed lions are among the common motifs rendered on the seals of the "First Syrian Group," which are dated approximately to the same time of that of Mari painting.<sup>52</sup> These figures on seals closely resemble those of Mari mural, and rendered with one of the forelegs raised up (figs. 5-6). They are usually associated with figures of the Old Babylonian repertory such as the supplicant goddess and the goddess with the flowing vase.

Again on the Old Babylonian mural of Mari, the two basic manifestations of the protective genii are depicted—the interceding of a supplicant goddess for a worshipper (Zimrilim) to a deity (Ishtar), and the guarding of the entry to the cella (the middle scene) by dragon figures (see also pp. 45-6). Now the question arises: to which one of these protective representations does the text refer in the phrase, "They have positioned the prancing (*raqidūtum*) lamassus"? The text indicates that Zimrilim is concerned with certain genii—the prancing ones.

The *lamassu* figures could have been simply identified with the known figure of the standing goddess, but here the situation is different. Is it possible that the text is describing the dragon figures, and in particular the middle one (griffin) which has one foot raised and propped against the "Sacred Tree"? And is the sacred tree meant to symbolize a door-post as the palm tree sometimes does?<sup>53</sup> This is conceivable as the door-post symbol originated from a plant and it takes various forms—tree, spear or standard.<sup>54</sup> One more interesting and supportive observation concerns

<sup>47</sup>A. Parrot, *Le palais: peintures murales: MAM II, 2*. BAH 70 (Paris: Geuthner, 1958), pls. VIII-IX and A; also S. Lloyd, *The Art of the Ancient Near East* (New York: Praeger, 1969), fig. 96.

<sup>48</sup>Also Parrot, *op. cit.*, p. 59; and R. Boulanger, *Egyptian and Near Eastern Painting* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1965), pp. 86-88.

<sup>49</sup>Parrot, *op. cit.*, p. 59; M-T Barrelet, "Une peinture de la cour 106 du palais de Mari," *Studia Mariana* (1950), fig. 12:D.

<sup>50</sup>H. Frankfort, *Art and Architecture of the Ancient Orient* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1970), fig. 304.

<sup>51</sup>Porada, *op. cit.*, fig. 592.

<sup>52</sup>*Ibid.*, pl. CXL.

<sup>53</sup>D. Oates, *op. cit.*, *Iraq XXIX* (1967), pp. 77-78.

<sup>54</sup>E. During Caspers, "The Gate-Post in Mesopotamian Art: A Short Outline of Its Origin and Development," *Jaarberich van het vooraziatisch-Egyptisch Genootschap ex Oriente Lux XXII* (1971-72), p. 211.

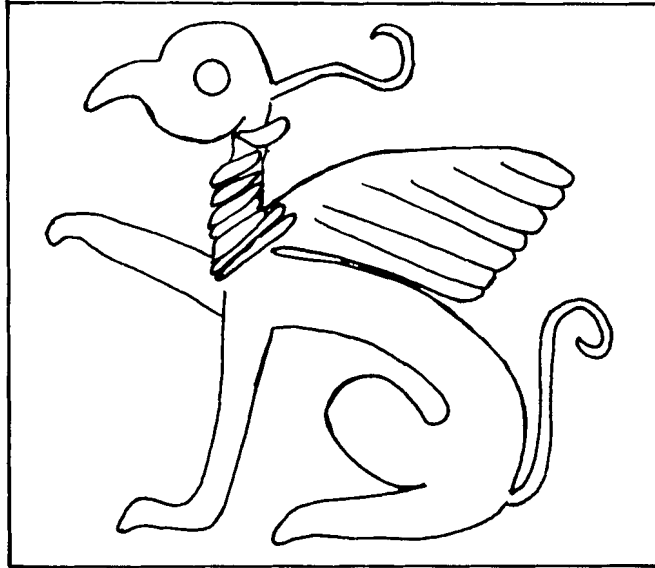


Figure 5. Winged bird-headed lion (griffin) of the First Syrian Group seals.



Figure 6. Winged human-headed lion of the First Syrian Group seals.

the human-headed bull of the mural. This bull is depicted with body in profile, toward the central scene, but its human head is turned frontally toward the spectator.<sup>55</sup> Indeed, this attitude of the Mari human-headed bull recalls the colossal winged human-headed bull (*lamassu*) which flanked the throneroom entrance in the palace of King Sargon at Khorsabad<sup>56</sup> (fig. 7). Frankfort describes the Khorsabad bull as follows: "Even the bulls with bodies in profile turn their heads to scrutinize the visitors and to cast their spell over potential evil."<sup>57</sup> Moreover, the winged human-headed lion in the top left of the mural (see above) is strikingly similar to the Assyrian winged human-headed lion or bull which always has a feathered crown (cf. fig. 7 and pl. IV).

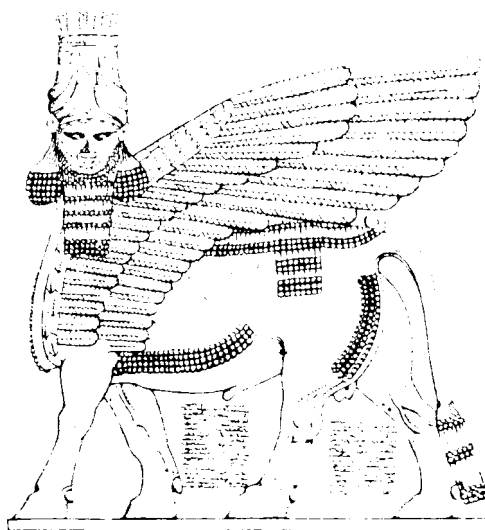


Figure 7. The colossal winged human-headed bull from Sargon's palace at Khorsabad.

It is significant that representations of a human-headed bull with his head turned toward spectators and other animals (bull-man among them) with one or both forelegs raised up against a tree are archaic attitudes, and among the favorite themes in the Mesopotamian repertory for several periods. To name only two: some of the Early Dynastic sculptures,<sup>58</sup> and the limestone plaque of a human-headed bull, which was part of the architectural decorations of the temple of Nin-hursag at the site of Al-Ubaid.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>55</sup>A. Parrot, op. cit., pl. A.

<sup>56</sup>G. Loud, *Khorsabad I; Palace and City Gate*. The Oriental Institute Publications 38 (Chicago: the University of Chicago Press, 1936), fig. 56.

<sup>57</sup>Frankfort, op. cit., p. 154.

<sup>58</sup>H. Frankfort, *Sculpture of the Third Millennium B.C. from Tell Asmar and Khafajah*. The Oriental Institute Publications 44 (Chicago: the University of Chicago Press, 1939), pl. XIII:h.

<sup>59</sup>C.L. Woolley, "Excavations at Tell el Obeid," *The Antiquaries Journal* IV (1924), pl. XLIV:a.

It is interesting to note here that the phrase <sup>d</sup>LAMA.HI.A *raqidūtīm* of *ARMT* XIII, 16:6,10 appears with a masculine adjective rather than a feminine one as the term *lamassu* is usually interpreted. This has led von Soden to assume that the masculine *raqidūtīm* was a scribal error and he consequently emended *raqidātīm*.<sup>60</sup> One might wonder in this context whether the masculine form of the text was intended to refer to a male genius (perhaps the griffin of the painting) rather than to the more known female figure of the suppliant goddess. This should remain an open question for further information.

The question that arises now is: does Mukannišum's letter (*ARMT* XIII, 16) refer to the figures of *lamassu* of the "Investiture" painting, or some other objects, e.g. sculptures or reliefs?

We have four other texts from the Mari palace which help us in clarifying the identity of the *lamassu* figures. These are letters, one from Yasīm-sumū to Zimrilim (*ARMT* XIII, 42); two texts from Zimrilim to Mukannišum (*ARMT* XVIII, 2-3); and the second half of the letter from the latter to Zimrilim (*ARMT* XIII, 16:16-25, see p. 6).

#### 5. *ARMT* XIII, 42, Ins. 5-14

- 5 LÚ NAGAR LÚ *Ya-am-ḥa-du-um*  
*ša la-ma-as-sà-am*  
 [ip-p]é-šu  
 1 GUN *ši-ir-ḥa-ni i-ri-ša-a[n-ni]*  
*ù ši-ir-ḥa-ni i-na é-kál-[lim]*
- 10 *šu-ta-am-ti-ù*  
*be-li li-wa-e-er-m[a]*  
 2 GUN *ši-ip-pa-tam*  
*pu-ḥa-at ši-ir-ḥa-ni*  
*li-ša-aḥ-mi-ti-ni-im*

The *Yamhadean Carpenter*, who was to have *made the lamassu*, has asked me for *one talent of sinews*.  
 But, the sinews in the palace have been depleted.  
 (Therefore,) my lord should give orders that they should rush to me *two talents of reeds* (or metal pegs)<sup>61</sup> as a substitute for the sinews.

#### 6. *ARMT* XVIII, 2, Ins. 4-13

- 4 *aš-šum* <sup>d</sup>LAMA *ša in-ne-ep-šu* <sup>d</sup>LAMA *ši-i*  
*i-na e-pé-ši-im ma-di-iš ma-ás-ḥa-at*  
*ù ih-zu-ša ú-ul ru-úš-šu-ku*  
 • *ù i-nu-ma* <sup>d</sup>LAMA *ši-i iz-za-a-zu iš-tum ša pí*

<sup>60</sup>W. von Soden, *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch* (Wiesbaden, 1959-) p. 957b.

- [i]n-na-am-mar-ma ù a-mar-[x x]-ma  
 [x x] [š]i-i-ri ma-di-iš i-na-az-zi-iq  
 10 [i-n]a-an-na u<sub>4</sub>-um tup-pí an-ni-a-am te-še-em-mu-ú  
 [i]l-z[i] ša<sup>d</sup> LAMA ša-a-ti ù GI.HI.A ma-aḫ-ri-ka  
 [ . . . ]šā-ni-i-iš-ma li-ir-ku-su  
 [ . . . ]ú GI.HI.A

Concerning the fabrication of the *lamassu*: this *lamassu* has been very badly constructed. And its platings are not solid. Because, when this *lamassu* is put in place, one can see the base (?) of the openings (?), and I have seen it. . . . it displeases me greatly. Now, when you hear this tablet of mine, the platings of that *lamassu* and the reeds (?) which you have . . . and have them attach it again. . . . and the reeds (?) . . .

7. ARMT XVIII, 3, obv. lns. 4-10 and rev. lns. 2-8

- 4 aš-šum šī-pí-ir la-ma-as-sí-ím  
 šā ma-ās-ḫu i-na pa-ni-tim-ma  
 aš-pu-ra-ak-kum i-na-an-na iḫ-zi  
 ša la-ma-sà-tim li-pa-te<sub>4</sub>-ru-ma  
 dam-qí-iš li-ra-aš-ši-ku  
 ù qa-mu-ú ù-ul ru-šu-ku-ma  
 10 pi-šū-nu i[š-t]u? [x xù]qa-né-[e]  
 rev. 2 la na-ab-ši-i-i[m x x x]  
 šum-ma la-ma-as-sú-u[m?] š[i-i?] x x]  
 ù qa-an-ú dam-q[í-i]š [ú-ul? ru?-su?-ku?]  
 5 mi-nam ta-ab-r[i-i]k? [ x x x]  
 ša šum-ma za-an la-ma-as-sí-[im]  
 ša-a-ti la na-ab-ši-i-im  
 e-pu-úš

About the work on the badly executed *lamassu* of which I wrote to you before: now, have them take off the platings of the *lamassus* and have them made perfectly solid. Also the reeds (?) are not solid, their openings (?). [their (?)] base (?), and some reeds (?). Rev. . . . is not available. If this (?) *lamassu* . . . and the reeds (?) (are not) well (fixed). Why have you examined (the *lamassu*) . . . in the event that the decorations of this *lamassu* is not available, make it . . .

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 'sippatum', p. 1104, II-III.

These letters, of Yasim-sumū, Zimrilim, and Mukannišum, do not specify the *lamassus* nor do they tell us about their location. They do, however, give us valuable information about the construction and the substance of the *lamassus*, especially concerning the technique of their attachment and that they were plated. One text informs us that a carpenter from Yamhad was required to fix the *lamassu*. Sinews were used to fix them, and sinews could be replaced by reeds (*ARMT* XIII, 42). *ARMT* XVIII, 2-3 states in part that reeds were actually applied in the armature of the *lamassus*, and also suggests that they were plated or ornamented with possibly metal or precious materials.<sup>62</sup> Mukannišum's job in the palace may have had a bearing on the plating/decoration of the *lamassus*; he seems often to be supervising royal business involving cultic objects made of precious materials.<sup>63</sup>

Therefore, these four texts cannot describe the *lamassus* of the "Investiture" painting, but instead other objects, most likely reliefs which had to be attached to other material such as walls.<sup>64</sup>

On pages 37ff. of this work, we have restored Sanctuary 66 with sculptures in the Tribune-Cella and engraved reliefs adorning its facade (pl. VI). This restoration is based on the representation of the "Investiture" painting, architectural features, installations, art objects, and texts, which were discovered in the palace. If this restoration is accepted, then these reliefs of the *lamassus* would be the ones referred to in the texts. One more obstacle to this conclusion is found in *ARMT* XIII, 16, where the figures are described as "the prancing *lamassus* of the Court of the Palms," which suggests that the figures would be in the Inner Court (106). But, it is significant in this regard that Sanctuary 66 is also called the "sanctuary of the Court of the Palms" (*ARMT* IX, 236; see below). Accordingly, the statement in *ARMT* XIII, 16 may be explained as an attributive description. The sanctuary facade is the best possible area in the palace where the *lamassu* reliefs might have been installed (see pp. 45 ff.). Finally, it would be intriguing to know if Zimrilim's complaints to Mukannišum about the construction and reed attachments of the *lamassus* (*ARMT* XVIII, 2-3) were because Yasim-sumū had replaced the sinews needed with reeds (*ARMT* XIII, 42).

## VI. The Sanctuary of the Court of the Palms

This is the last area to be identified in this work. *ARMT* IX, 236:10-11 mentions an order for an amount of food "in the sanctuary/*papāḥum* of the Court of the Palms," and *ARMT* XIII, 40:30-31 states that some wooden object is broken "on the terrace of the sanctuary (*ūr papāḥim*)." Both texts refer to a sanctuary associated with the Court of the Palms. The identification of the sanctuary is difficult to ascertain at this stage and requires a careful examination of the architectural units surrounding or close to Inner Court 106. In other words, our purpose is to recognize an architectural form that has religious characteristics comprehensible in Mesopotamian architecture.

When looking for a sanctuary in this area, one should immediately recall the discovery of the statue of the goddess with the flowing vase (fig. 8) in the Throneroom 64, and the subsequent interpretations concerning the functions of the large double Throneroom Suite 64/65 by various scholars. Parrot, who perceived some cultic function in the area, has found it difficult to locate the original place of the statue of the goddess, and thus define the functions of the two Rooms 64

<sup>62</sup>Also O. Rouault, *Mukannišum: l'administration et l'économie palatiales à Mari*. Archives Royales de Mari XVIII (Paris: Geuthner, 1977), p. 187.

<sup>63</sup>J.M. Sasson, "Some Comments on Archive Keeping at Mari," *Iraq* XXXIV (1972), p. 59.

<sup>64</sup>Rouault, op. cit., p. 187 in discussing these letters, suggests sculptures in the round for the *lamassu* figures.



and 65 (pl. II). He first placed the statue of the goddess on the dais of Throneroom 64 and considered the room as a cultic place or an ante-cella.<sup>65</sup> He later modified his viewpoint about the placement of the statue because of the absence of libation facilities, which he justifiably thinks should have accompanied the statue. He finally suggests three possibilities as to the place of the statue: on the dais of Throneroom 64, in front of or in the tribune 66 of Throneroom 65, or on the west side of the Inner Court on the axis of Room 107.<sup>66</sup> Barrelet also hints at a religious significance to Throneroom 64 because of the murals found on its exterior walls.<sup>67</sup> Frankfort, discussing the functions of Room 64 and Room 65, regards the former as a throneroom and the latter as an open court.<sup>68</sup> Oates seems to consider Room 65 as the principal throneroom and proposes that the king of Mari might have sat on the dais in Room 64 on certain occasions.<sup>69</sup>

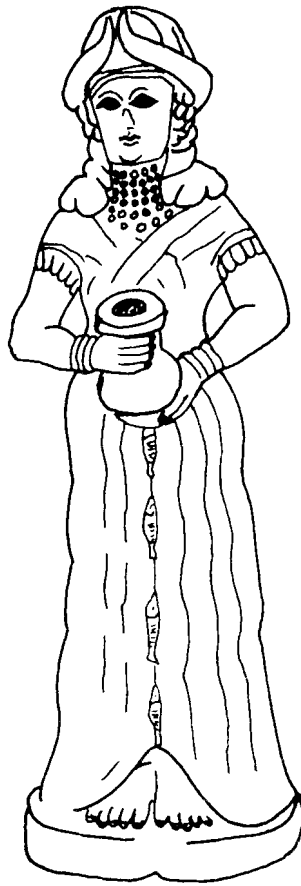


Figure 8. The statue of the goddess with the flowing vase, Mari.

<sup>65</sup>A. Parrot, "Les fouilles de Mari, troisième campagne (hiver 1935-36)," *Syria* XVIII (1937), p. 70; "'Cereemonie de la main' et reinvestiture," *Studia Mariana* (1950), p. 39.

<sup>66</sup>A. Parrot, *Le palais; documents et monuments*, MAM II, 3. BAH 69 (Paris: Geuthner, 1959), pp. 5-11.

<sup>67</sup>M-T. Barrelet, "Une peinture de la cour 106 du palais de Mari," *Studia Mariana* (1950), p. 31.

<sup>68</sup>H. Frankfort, *Art and Architecture of the Ancient Orient*, p. 387, n. 47.

<sup>69</sup>D. Oates, "The Excavations at Tell Al Rimah, 1971," *Iraq* XXXIV (1972), p. 82.

Moortgat and Lloyd are inclined to compare the arrangement of the double Rooms 64 and 65 with that of the Palace of the Rulers at Tell Asmar (Rooms N13/6, N30/3), in such a way that Room 64 would be the throneroom and Room 65 the "Great Hall."<sup>70</sup> Lloyd concedes, however, that this suite has a ritual purpose and refers to the Tribune-Room 66 as a sanctuary. Hrouda considers Room 65 a religious area and Room 66 its cella.<sup>71</sup>

The fact remains that none of the above scholars has really discussed the architectural layout, details, and installations of Area 64/65/66. Some of these interpretations appear to be based, one suspects, on intuition rather than on any systematic analysis of the architectural material available from the 2nd millennium B.C., or from other periods. We shall discuss here the arrangement of the Area 64/65/66 and its components, stressing similarities to and differences from other structures of the Near East. We shall also see that the correlation between the various archaeological materials (architecture, art objects, artifacts, and written documents) is of valuable help in the functional interpretation of this area. But, since such a study has already been done,<sup>71a</sup> here we shall confine ourselves to the most important aspects of the discussion. The evaluation will be divided into three parts:

## 1. GENERAL OUTLINE OF THE MESOPOTAMIAN ROYAL SUITE

In our work (1975) we divided Mesopotamian reception suites into two types and designated them the "Standard Reception Suite (SRS)" and the "Variant Reception Suite (VRS)." The SRS is further divided into "Central" and "Side-located" suites, depending upon their location in the public sector of the palatial building. The central suite is always located between and connecting the forecourt and inner court of the public sector, while the side-located suite opens off one court at one side of the public sector. The VRS, on the other hand, is always side-located in the public sector. The SRS consists of *two* lines of parallel rooms—a large oblong throneroom opening off a courtyard, and a set of much smaller rooms behind it (fig. 9). The VSR consists of *three* lines of parallel rooms—a large front oblong room opening off a court and leading to a larger throneroom behind it, which in turn leads to a set of much smaller rooms beyond it (figs. 10-11). Thus, the throneroom of the SRS opens directly onto the court, while that of the VSR is separated from the court by a front large room. This front room appears to have also been used as a throneroom, not in all cases, but on certain occasions, or in some structures.

The means of differentiation between the SRS and VRS are several, but the fundamental feature here is the location of the line of small rooms in connection with the throneroom. They appear behind the first large room, i.e., the throneroom in the SRS, and at the back of the second room, i.e., the throneroom or the principal one in the VRS (figs. 10-11). Comparative analysis indicates that these arrangements of the small rooms are regular and consistent features of 2nd millennium palaces.

<sup>70</sup>A. Moortgat, *The Art of Ancient Mesopotamia; The Classical Art of the Near East*, trans. by J. Filson (London: Phaidon, 1969), p. 80; S. Lloyd, H. Müller and R. Martin, *Ancient Mesopotamia, Egypt, Crete, Greece* (New York: Abrams, 1974), p. 23.

<sup>71</sup>B. Hrouda, *Vorderasien I; Mesopotamien, Babylonien, Iran und Anatolien* (München: C. H. Beckische Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1971), p. 157.

<sup>71a</sup>Y. Al-Khalesi, "Mesopotamian Monumental Secular Architecture in the Second Millennium B.C.," (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Yale University, 1975), pp. 82 ff.

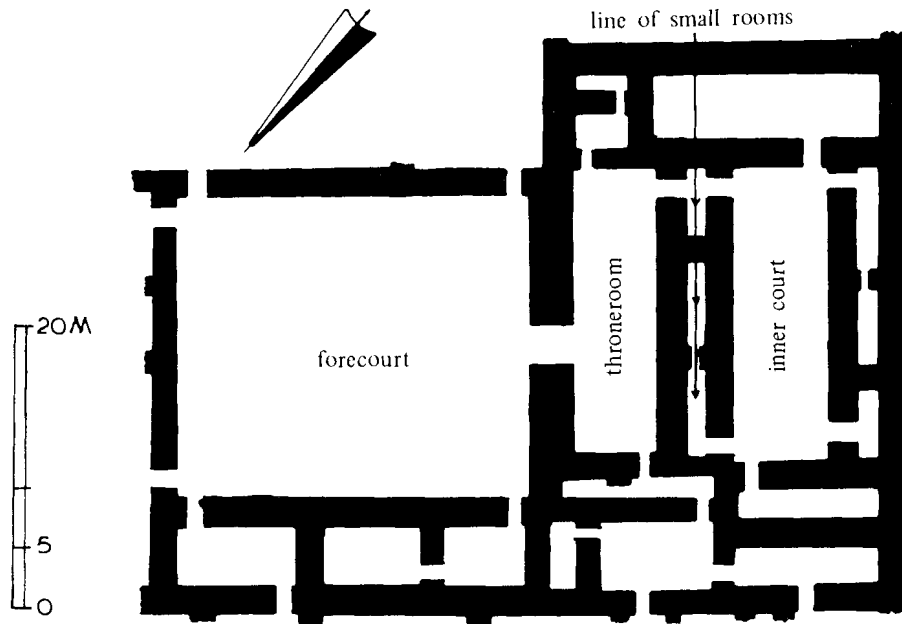


Figure 9. The Standard Reception Suite of the palace at Larsa.

The SRS type seems to have had no chronological or regional distinctions. It first occurred in Early Dynastic II (for example "House D" at Khafajah) and continued through the millennia even after the final fall of Babylon. It has been found in Sumer, Babylonia, Assyria, Elam, and northern Syria. The VRS type appeared first in the Old Babylonian period around the 18th century B.C. in a few sites: Mari, Bakrawa (northeast Iraq), Nuzi, and the Middle Assyrian "Old Palace" at Assur. It has not been attested thus far in any 1st millennium structure. Therefore, chronological and regional factors can be deduced from the distribution of the VRS. The occurrence of the VRS at a few sites during the 2nd millennium only and the resemblance in location of its principal throneroom (the second room) to that of the *Bīt ḫilani* reception suite may suggest a foreign influence which might have modified the traditional SRS of Mesopotamia.<sup>71</sup> This influence can hardly be verified at the present, but the presence of Hurrians is well attested in those cities during the time these palaces were built.

## 2. THRONEROOM SUITE 64/65 OF THE MARI PALACE

It has already been indicated that the reception suite at Mari is of the VRS type, but let us be more explicit and explain the reasons for that identification and its architectural details. The block 64/65/66/79-82, which is situated on the south side of the Court of the Palms (106),

<sup>72</sup>Al-Khalesi, op. cit., pp. 87, 101-104.

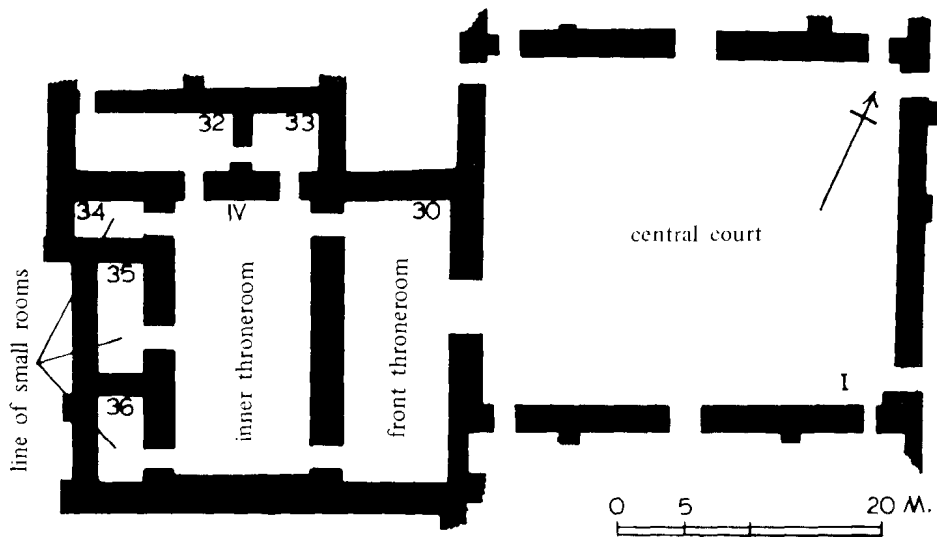


Figure 10. The Variant Reception Suite of the Middle Assyrian palace at Assur.

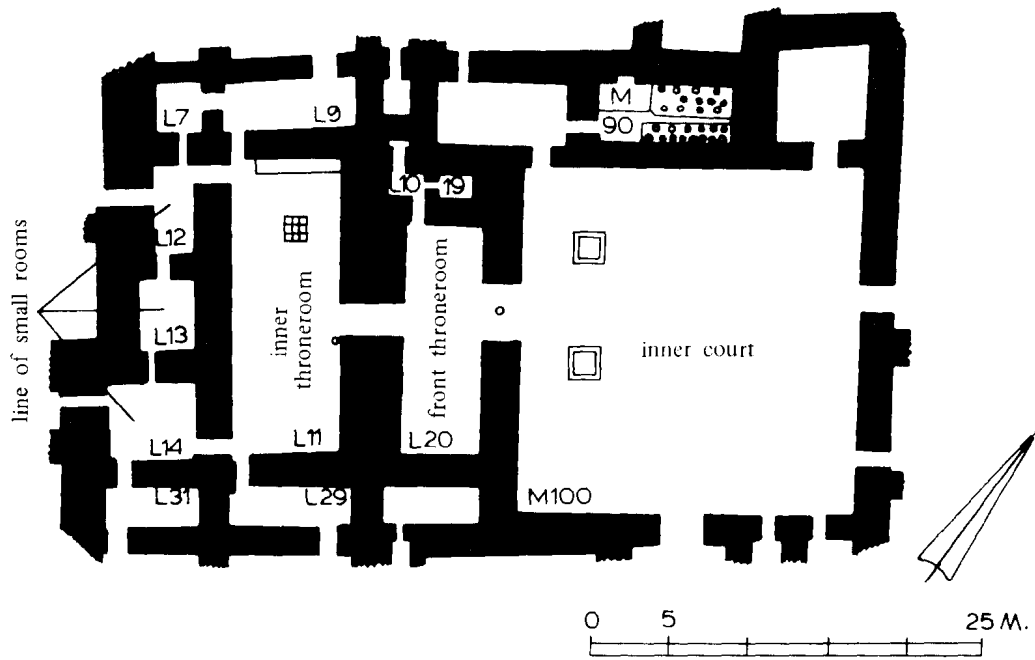


Figure 11. The Variant Reception Suite of the palace at Nuzi.

consists of three lines of parallel rooms: a large oblong Front Throneroom (64; measuring 25.60 x 7.70 m.) with a broad central entrance opening onto Court 106; a larger Inner Throneroom (65; measuring 26.35 x 11.70 m.) behind it; and a line of much smaller Rooms (79-81) beyond that (pl. II). We believe that both Rooms 64 and 65 were thronerooms used for different ceremonial and state purposes.

The Front Throneroom (64) contains an elaborately painted throne dais facing a broad central entrance from Court 106. Hence, it is of the so-called broad-room type. This arrangement with the throne in straight axis achieves an internal symmetry of the room appropriate for ceremonies. Zimrilim probably sat on this elaborate throne facing the broad central entrance from the Court of the Palms, on public occasions that required majestic ceremonial display. The Inner Throneroom (65), which is the largest room in the palace and the most stately and dignified of all, has a different arrangement. It can be approached only from the Front Throneroom through two side-located doorways. It has a throne platform on the west side and Tribune-Room 66 on the east side. In the middle of the room there are two squares of brick pavement similar to the one found in the Front Throneroom, which were used as placements for heating braziers.<sup>73</sup> Inner Throneroom 65 is, therefore, of the bent-axis type which has a function different from that of the straight-axis room. Bent-axis rooms are the most common type in Mesopotamian architecture. They seem to have served two basic purposes: social, to assure privacy and intimacy; and functional, to better utilize the space of the room. The straight-axis of the Front Throneroom and the bent-axis of the Inner Throneroom are highly functional, serving contrasting purposes: public display for the former and privacy for the latter. We should think that the king of Mari used the Inner Throneroom for occasions which did not require public appearance, such as private meetings with dignitaries or high officials; he might also have used it during a specific cultic ceremony in connection with Sanctuary 66, which will be discussed below. The third line of small rooms (79-82) of the reception suite at Mari is reserved for storage and archival purposes.<sup>74</sup>

Moreover, the throneroom suite of Mari illustrates most, if not all, the other characteristics of the Mesopotamian throneroom: 1) large dimensions; 2) contiguous to a usually square courtyard; 3) facing the prevailing northerly wind; 4) thick façade wall (thickest wall inside the building); 5) without decorations such as niches or pilasters; 6) a broad central entrance with no rebates; 7) no murals on the interior walls; and 8) a fine clay floor never paved with brick or other materials.<sup>75</sup> Throneroom Suite 64/65 of Mari has one important feature which stands out among those of the other palaces: the Tribune Unit, which has been given the numbers 66/66*ter*/66*bis* by the excavator. This unit is, we believe, the sanctuary (*papālum*) of the Court of the Palms. The reasons are presented in the following section.

<sup>73</sup>Ibid, pp. 113-120.

<sup>74</sup>A. Parrot, *Le palais; architecture*. MAM II, 1, pp. 144-154.

<sup>75</sup>Al-Khalesi, *op. cit.*, pp. 104-123.

### 3. SANCTUARY 66: "THE *PAPĀHUM* OF THE COURT OF THE PALMS"

The Sanctuary Unit 66/66*ter*/66*bis*/66A consists of four parts (fig. 12 and pl. III)

- a. Ante-Cella 66A in front of Tribune-Cella 66.
- b. Stairway
- c. Tribune-Cella 66
- d. Cubicles 66*ter* and 66*bis*.

a) ANTE-CELLA 66A: measures 4.75 m. wide and 11.60 m. long. This area is included as part of the sanctuary because of its bitumen pavement, the elaborate drains, and the large drainage sink (see pp. 43-5). We noted above that Mesopotamian thronerooms are never paved with any material except layers of fine clay. Therefore, the bitumen in this area indicates the usage of a large amount of water and thus a function different from that of the rest of Throneroom 65. The walls surrounding this area also have a plinth of bitumen, 60-70 cm. high. In addition, the ante-cella has two doorways; one communicates with Throneroom 64, and the other with the back Storeroom 81.

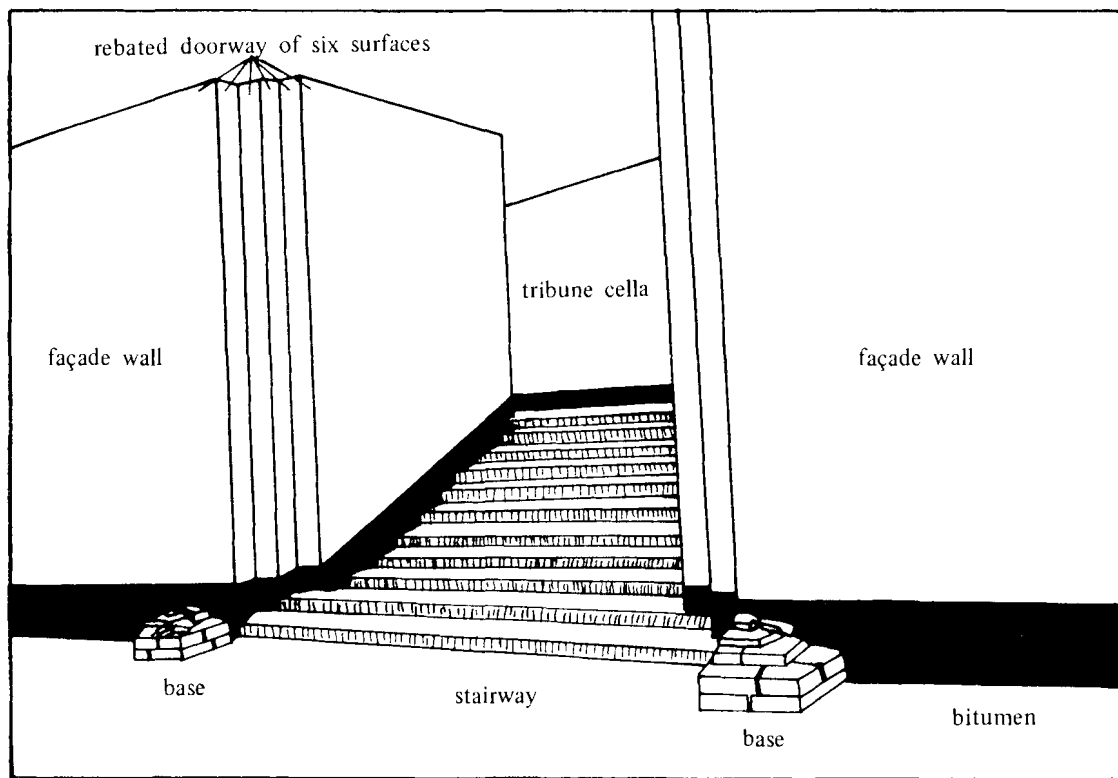


Figure 12. Sanctuary 66 of the palace at Mari.

b) THE STAIRWAY: 4 m. wide, which is the width of the cella entrance, and 1.68 m. high with 11 steps. It begins from the floor level of the bitumen paved Area 66A and ascends to Tribune-Cella 66. It is built of baked brick and is heavily coated with bitumen. Two boxes or containers made of wood and coated with bitumen were found at either side on the middle of the stairway. They were empty except for five bronze hooks and traces of red paint.<sup>76</sup> A rectangular niche (40 x 85 cm.) was found in the right side wall of the stair.<sup>77</sup> At either side of the base of the stair and built against the wall is a statue pedestal, (right side: 68 x 69 cm.; left side: 56 x 60 cm.). The sides of the pedestals and probably the tops also (they were not complete during the discovery) and the wall behind them have a bitumen plinth (see p. 44).

c) TRIBUNE-CELLA 66: a shallow rectangular room 5.40 m. long, 2.25 m. wide and 1.68 m. high above the floor level of Throneroom 65.<sup>78</sup> It is paved with baked brick and coated with bitumen like the stairway. Both the cella and the stairs have a plinth of bitumen, 21-24 cm. high. Nothing important was found in the cella, except for a foundation deposit in the southwestern corner, an architectural tradition found only in religious structures. The cella is of the straight-axis type with a broad central entrance 4 m. wide, suggesting therefore a ritual display rather than an area of seclusion. Another important religious element is the rebated entrance of the cella.

d) CUBICLES 66*ter* and 66*bis*: appear at the sides of Tribune-Cella 66. Cubicle 66*ter* is almost square (2.40 x 2.26 m.) and 66*bis* is smaller and almost rectangular (1.86 x 1.33 m.). They are separated from the cella (66) by walls preserved as high as the remains of the other walls in this area. Parrot thinks that those walls were added later because they were unbound with the cella walls. Unbound walls, however, do not always indicate a later addition, and in the present case, we think the cubicles are part of the original plan of the sanctuary. This is suggested by the fact that their bottom floor is lower than the floor of the Tribune-Cella by 1.33 m.,<sup>79</sup> and by their arrangement and functional purpose (discussed below). Hundreds of clay prisms and cones were found in those cubicles, especially in 66*bis*, and their inside walls were coated with clay plaster.<sup>80</sup>

Although the presence of the Sanctuary (*papāhūm*) 66 in Inner Throneroom 65 is peculiar (so far) to the Mari Palace, its plan and architectural features are not unknown in the religious architecture of the Near East. At Beth-Shan in Palestine, a series of overlapping temples was discovered, two of which have been associated with the Egyptian kings Amenophis III (1398-1361 B.C.) and Seti I (1302-1290 B.C.).<sup>81</sup> The temple of Amenophis shows a striking resemblance to the sanctuary of Mari. It has a central stairway, leading up to a tribune-cella with cells at both sides. The cella is a shallow rectangular room of the straight-axis type with a broad central entrance (fig. 13). The resemblance between the sanctuary of Mari and Amenophis' temple is great indeed, though the former is much more monumental (cf. fig. 13 and pl. III). Although the temple of Seti I has some modifications in that there is a small room with a cubicle at one side of the cella, the basic arrangement of a central staircase leading up to a tribune-cella of straight-axis type is still represented.

<sup>76</sup>Parrot, *op. cit.*, figs. 141-142.

<sup>77</sup>*Ibid*, figs. 142-143.

<sup>78</sup>*Ibid*, fig. 142, pl. XXXI.

<sup>79</sup>*Ibid*, fig. 125.

<sup>80</sup>*Ibid*, figs. 153, 156.

<sup>81</sup>M.V.S. Williams, "Palestinian Temples," *Iraq* XI (1949), pp. 85-86, figs. 7-8. However, K. Kenyon thinks that the dates assigned to the levels of Beth-Shan must be lowered, *Archaeology in the Holy Land* (London: Methuen, 1965), p. 309.

The arrangement of a tribune-cella with a central stairway is also known in Mesopotamia although it appeared rather late. It first occurred in Assyria during the 2nd half of the second millennium B.C., when we find it in Assur temple in Kar-Tukulti-Ninurta, and Ishtar temple of the kings Tukulti-Ninurta I (1244-1208 B.C.) and Aššur-rēš-iši I (1133-1116 B.C.).<sup>82</sup> The tribune-cella, sometimes with side steps, became a standard form in 1st millennium Assyrian temples, as, for example, in the religious complex at the southern corner of Sargon's palace at Khorsabad. Another good example is the Neo-Babylonian temple of Ningal on the ziggurat terrace at Ur, where the ante-cella and tribune-cella are connected by a central flight of stairs.<sup>83</sup> An Old Babylonian clay relief shows a deity standing on the top of a central stairway inside his/her shrine.<sup>84</sup> Elevating the god's enthronement, the cella on top of stairs could have been inspired by the tradition of elevating the temple or part of it upon a platform a very old practice in Mesopotamian religious architecture.

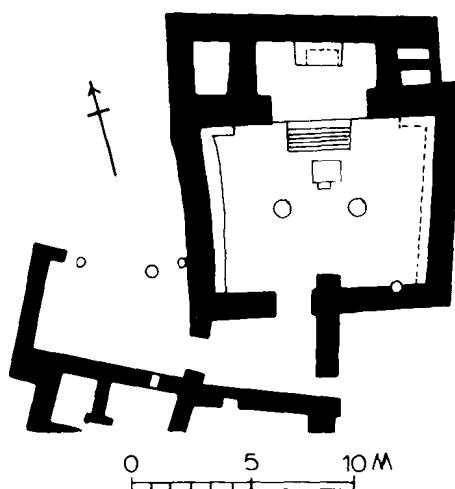


Figure 13. The temple of Amenophis III at Beth-Shan, Palestine.

<sup>82</sup>W. Andrae, *Das Wiedererstandene Assur* (Leipzig: Hinriches, 1938), figs. 42, 47, 56.

<sup>83</sup>C.L. Woolley, "The Excavations at Ur, 1923-24," *The Antiquaries Journal* V (1925), pp. 366-368, pl. XXXIV:2, fig. 3; also *Ur Excavations V: The Ziggurat and its Surroundings* (London: British Museum; Philadelphia: University Museum, 1939), pp. 60-67, fig. 27:a, pl. 75.

<sup>84</sup>E.D. Van Buren, *Clay Figurines of Babylonia and Assyria*. Yale Oriental Series XVI (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1930), fig. 255.



The original form and the function of the cubicles *66ter* and *66bis* which appear on the sides of Tribune-Cella 66 at Mari are other points to be discussed here. The cubicles of the temple of Amenophis III at Beth-Shan have already been noted above. The only other comparable examples in Mesopotamia of a similar arrangement came from the site of Nuzi. In this site seven superimposed temples (G-A) were discovered.<sup>85</sup> These temples consist basically of one or two rectangular cellae of the bent-axis type. The northern cella (G 29) of the "Hurrian" temples (C,B,A) had consistently contained two cells (G 51, G 73), one on either side of the altar (fig. 14). They are rectangular in shape, measuring approximately 2 x 3 m. (G. 51) and 1 x 1.90 m. (G 73). These measurements are coincidentally close to those of the cubicles at Mari (2.40 x 2.26 '*66ter*'; 1.86 x 1.33 '*66bis*'). The cells at Nuzi yielded a large number of stored objects, tablets, glazed pots and wall-nails, and hundreds of beads; consequently, they have been considered storage areas for cult objects not in constant use.<sup>86</sup> Starr has also presumed that these areas were accessible from the cella and not from the roof. His suggestion was motivated by the wall decoration inside G 73, which he believed would not have been installed had the storage area not been visible from the cella. There is no way to confirm or to refute his view without clear published illustrations, which are not available.

At Mari, the cubicles seem to have been accessible only from the roof, most likely by means of a wooden ladder. Their walls, which separate them from the Tribune-Cella as well as the surrounding walls, were preserved as high as 4.50 m.,<sup>87</sup> with no doorways. We agree with Starr's opinion that those cells were storerooms for cultic objects not in constant use. At Mari this storage function is confirmed by the fact that the bottom floors of the cubicles are deeper than the floor in the Tribune-Cella by 1.33 m.. However, the impracticality of these storerooms is self-evident, regardless of whether the access is from the cella as at Nuzi or from the roof as at Mari. Security would have provided true justification for constructing such types of storages. They could have easily been concealed during an enemy attack. It is also possible that they were always sealed, except when they were needed during certain religious rituals.

Although the form of these storage cubicles on the sides of the cella in the above mentioned shrines appears peculiar, the functional origin has, we think, a long tradition in Mesopotamian religious architecture. A small storeroom on one or both sides of the cella occurs as early as the formation of the religious monumental architecture in the Ubaid period. The examples cover all the periods of Mesopotamia and there are far too many to be enumerated here. As representative samples, we refer to: the Ubaid temple VI at Eridu (fig. 15), the Uruk temple C at Warka (fig. 16), the Early Dynastic Sin temple at Khafajah, the Ur III palace chapel at Asmar (fig. 17); the Old Babylonian Dagan temple at Mari (fig. 18),<sup>88</sup> the Middle Assyrian main temple at Rimah and

<sup>85</sup>R.F.S. Starr, *Nuzi: Report on the Excavations at Yorgan Tepa Near Kirkuk, Iraq ... 1927-31* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1937/39), plans 6-9, 11-13.

<sup>86</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 101-103.

<sup>87</sup>A. Parrot, *Le palais; architecture*. *MAM* II, fig. 152.

<sup>88</sup>It is perhaps useful to note here that Parrot discovered a room (213) inside the palace of Zimrilim with an arrangement similar to that of Dagan temple. Room 213 is accessible from Corridor 133/139/120 at the southeastern side of the building. It is identical (long type with two cell-like rooms at the back) with the cella of Dagan temple, but has a bent-axis instead of a straight-axis as is the case in the latter structure (cf. figs. 18 and 19). We would like to think that Room 213 was a secondary shrine for the workmen in the southern area (Unit No. 6; pl. I) of the palace. Parrot writes a few lines about Room 213, and curiously considers its cells to be hearths without giving any reason—he reports, for example, no traces of fire (*Ibid.*, pp. 273-74, figs. 329-31).

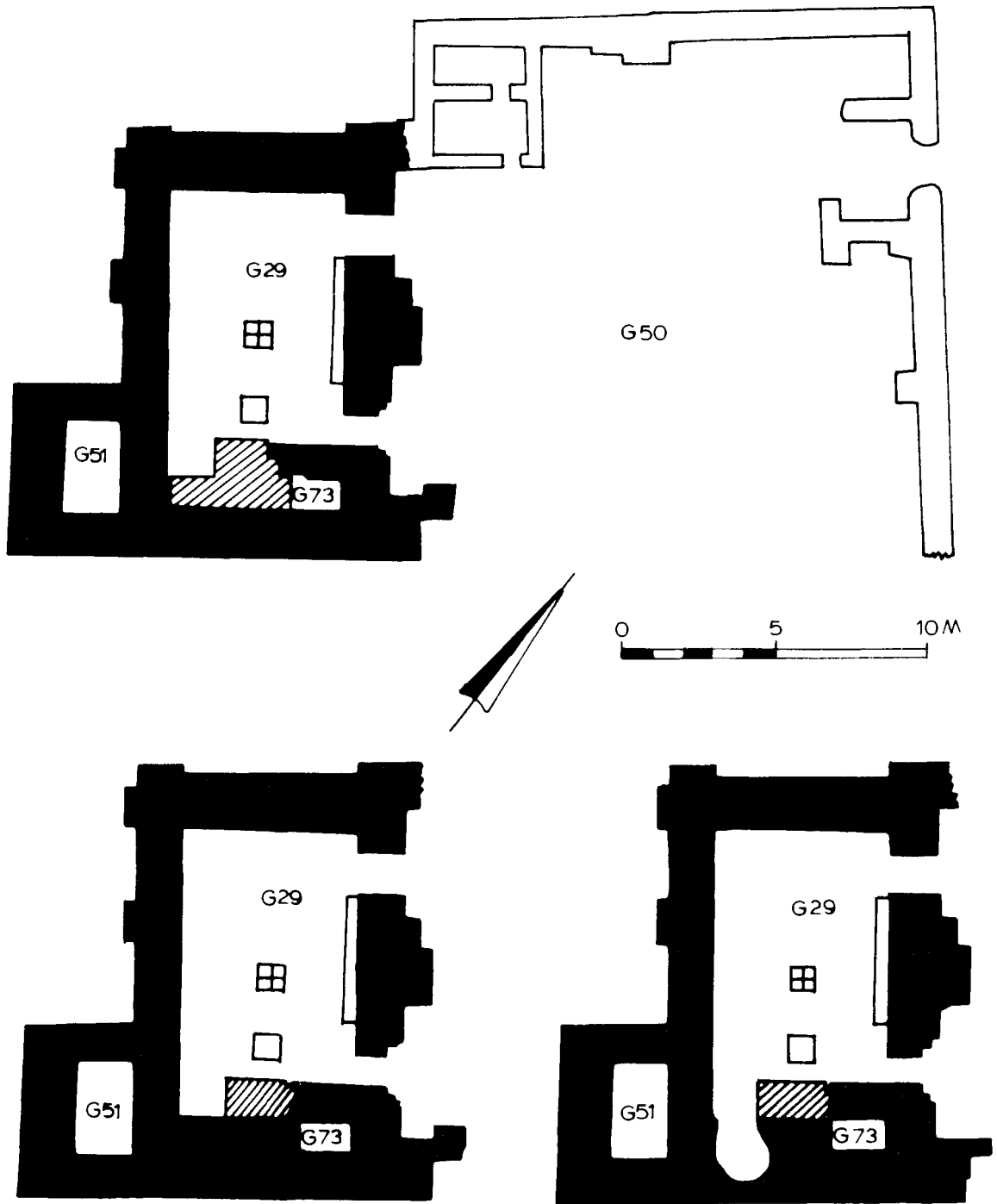


Figure 14. The northern cella of temples C, B and A at Nuzi with cells (G51, G73) on the side of the altar.

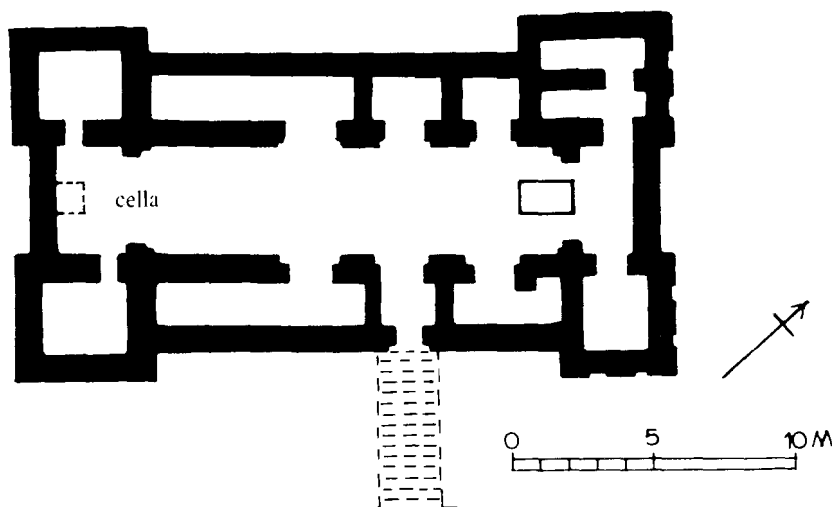


Figure 15. The Ubaid temple VI at Eridu.

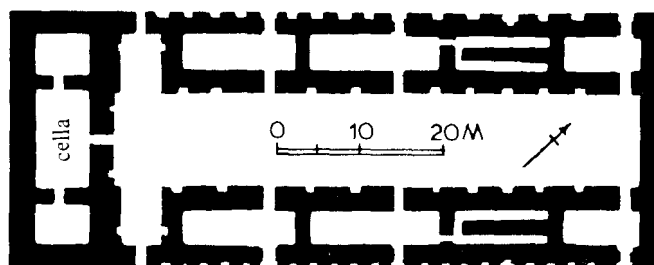


Figure 16. The Uruk temple C at Warka.

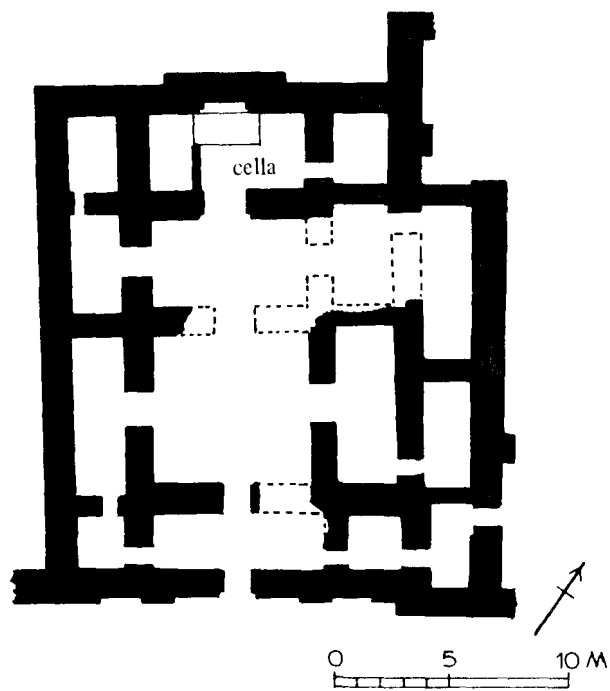


Figure 17. The Ur III palace chapel at Tell Asmar.

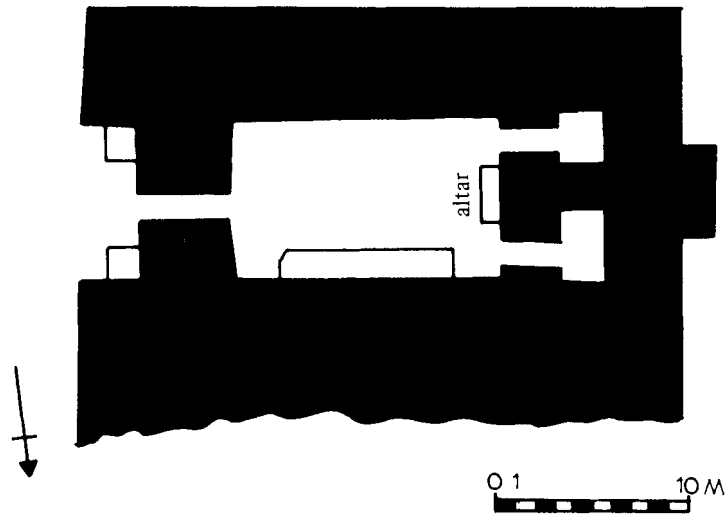


Figure 18. The temple of Dagan at Mari.

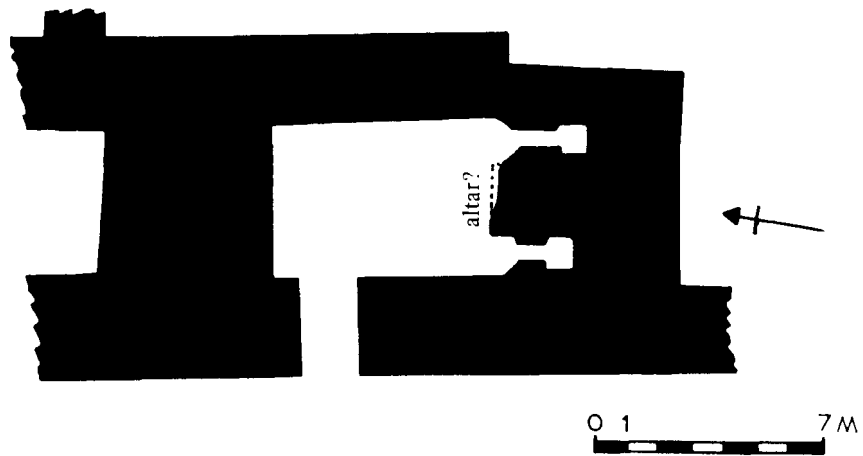


Figure 19. Room 213 (small chapel) in the palace at Mari.

Ishtar temple of Tukulti-Ninurta I at Assur, and the Neo-Babylonian Ninmah temple at Babylon. These rooms have generally been considered as sacristies. We would like to see a direct connection of motif and function between a small room flanking the cella and the cubicles of Mari and other sites.

The occurrence of a cell-like room on either side of the altar of Dagan temple at Mari is further evidence supporting the cultic function of Room 66. One more indication is the partition of the series of Rooms 79-82 at the back of Throneroom 65 into two parts with no apparent communication between them—Rooms 79 and 80 connected with the Throneroom side (65), and Rooms 81 and 82 with the Sanctuary side (66/66A).<sup>89</sup>

Thus, the above architectural analysis—plan, form, location, constructional material and installations, as well as objects—indicates that the east side (66/66ter/66bis/66A) of Inner Throneroom 65 is a shrine. Due to the fact that it is the only such unit in this area of the palace, and because of its closeness and sole accessibility from Inner Court 106, we would like to consider it as the “*papāhūm* of the Court of the Palms.”

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid, figs. 161-165, pl. XXXV:1-2.

## CHAPTER IV

### The Reconstruction of Sanctuary 66

The question of the type of ritual ceremony which took place in Sanctuary 66 and its cultic installations, e.g. sculptures or reliefs, is another major subject of the present study. The sanctuary which occupies part of the central Throneroom 65 of the palace must have had a great importance, and its installations may well be expected to have been equally monumental and comparable to the majesty of the room. Indeed, the following reconstruction and other suggestions as to what the sanctuary looked like make Throneroom 65 and its Sanctuary 66 the focal point of the palace. Our restoration is based primarily on the comparison between the representations of the "Investiture" painting and the architectural components and installations of the sanctuary. Certain art objects and texts found in the building provide strong support for this restoration.

The "Investiture" painting has been studied and its artistic details discussed by many archaeologists and art historians. Among the studies are those of Parrot and Barrelet,<sup>90</sup> in *Studia Mariana*, which raised interesting questions concerning the artistic composition and symbolic meaning of the painting. Some of the questions suggested by Barrelet and Parrot are: the identity of the figures, the cultic meaning of the representations, and the area where the ritual might have taken place. Both agree that the mural depicts a ritual ceremony in which Zimrilim participates by touching the hand of the statue of the goddess Ishtar, as they are seen in the central scene of the painting (pl. V). They disagree, however, on the place where the ritual is performed. Barrelet suggests a temple outside the palace, whereas Parrot thinks it is inside the building, in the "palace sanctuary of Ishtar." Parrot maintains that the statue of the goddess with the flowing vase (fig. 8) was erected in Throneroom 64 (he later changed his mind about this location, see pp. 23-4) and that Zimrilim actually touched the hand of Ishtar's statue in Throneroom 65. Parrot comes very close to the place (Room 65) of the ceremony and hints at the Tribune-Cella 66 as the place to which the statues of Ishtar and other deities might have been brought.<sup>91</sup> This is a good example of the value and limits of an intuitive procedure -Parrot seems to have realized the religious overtones in the eastern side of Throneroom 65, but did not offer any substantiating arguments.

We would like to propose that Sanctuary 66 of the Court of the Palms is the most probable place for the king's ritual ceremony as it is shown in the "Investiture" scene.<sup>91a</sup> Below is our analytical comparison between the figurative representation of the mural and the actual sanctuary.

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<sup>90</sup>M.-T. Barrelet, "Une peinture de la cour 106 du palais de Mari," *Studia Mariana* (1950), pp. 9-35; A. Parrot, "Cérémonie de la main et réinvestiture," *Studia Mariana* (1950), pp. 37-40.

<sup>91</sup>Parrot, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

<sup>91a</sup>B. Hrouda (*Vorderasien I; Mesopotamien, Babylonien, Iran und Anatolien* [München: Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1971], p. 159) makes a similar association between the painting and Sanctuary 66, but also includes Throneroom 66.

## I. A CORRELATION OF ARCHITECTURE AND FIGURATIVE REPRESENTATION: THE CENTRAL SCENE

The painting known as the "Investiture of King Zimrilim," which is about 8 feet wide and 6 feet high, was found at eye level on the right hand facade of the Front Throneroom 64. The central area is given over to the "Investiture" scene, which is horizontally divided into two parts by a band of six stripes (pl. V). In the upper register we find the figure of Zimrilim (dressed in an elaborate robe and high dome-shaped headdress) in a ritual ceremony about to receive or touch the emblems of kingship (the rod and the ring) held by the goddess Ishtar. She stands in her familiar warlike posture: her bare right foot over a recumbent lion, she is wearing war attire, three emblems appear behind her shoulders, and she carries a curved ax with her lowered left hand. Her right hand is stretched out toward Zimrilim and holds the kingship emblems. A supplicant goddess (*lamassu*) in a long flounced dress and horned crown stands behind Zimrilim and Ishtar; there is another figure of a minor god behind the latter. In the lower register there are two identical minor goddesses facing one another. Each carries a vase from which flow four streams of water connected at the top of the register (pl. V). The two registers of the Central Scene are bordered on three sides (but not on the bottom) by a band of six stripes similar to the one separating the two panels of the theme.

On either side of the central "Investiture" scene there is a representation of a sacred tree, followed by a vertical frieze of three composite dragons, a date-palm tree, and a supplicant goddess. The mural is surrounded by a border of running spirals, probably symbolizing water, and there is another band of dome-like motif with a knob at the top and the bottom of the mural (pl. IV). It is interesting to note that the latter motif is somewhat similar to the tassels which adorn the robe of Ili-ilum's statue from Mari.<sup>92</sup>

By virtue of its iconography and style, the painting stresses two important features which clearly stand out. First, the contrasting manifestations of war and fertility, the two main attributes of the Semitic Ishtar—these two elements being clearly represented by the goddess figure and the abundance of water. Second, the emphasis on the symmetrical arrangement of the figures—there are two figures of every motif, except for the figures of Ishtar, Zimrilim, and the minor god in the top register. This uniformity is very significant for the reconstruction of Sanctuary 66, as we shall see below.

It has already been suggested that the central "Investiture" scene represents a religious ceremony taking place inside a cella as viewed through an open door.<sup>92a</sup> Indeed, in our opinion this scene is a *figurative representation of the actual architectural form of Tribune-Cella 66 and the statues which were originally set up inside it. Sanctuary 66 is represented diagrammatically by the two registers and the surrounding border* (cf. figs. 20 and 21). Here, then, are the main points in support of our thesis.

a) FRAME OF THE CENTRAL SCENE = FRAME OF THE DOORWAY OF THE SANCTUARY: the band of six stripes, which deliberately surrounds the scene on *three sides only*, is depicted here as a replica

<sup>92</sup>Parrot, *Le palais: peintures murales*, MAM II, 2. BAH 70 (Paris: Geuthner, 1958), pl. A; *Le palais: documents et monuments*, MAM II, 3. BAH 69 (Paris: Geuthner, 1959), figs. 13-16, pls. IX-XI.

<sup>92a</sup>M.-T. Barrelet, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

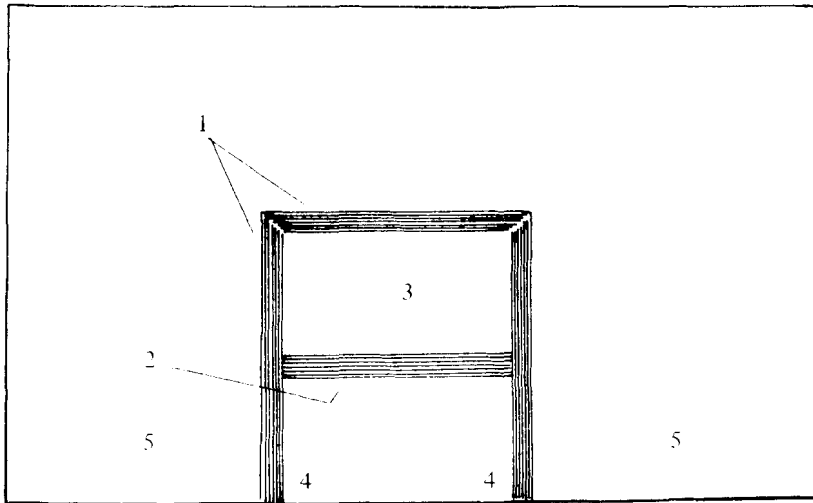


Figure 20. Diagrammatic drawing of the "Investiture" painting.

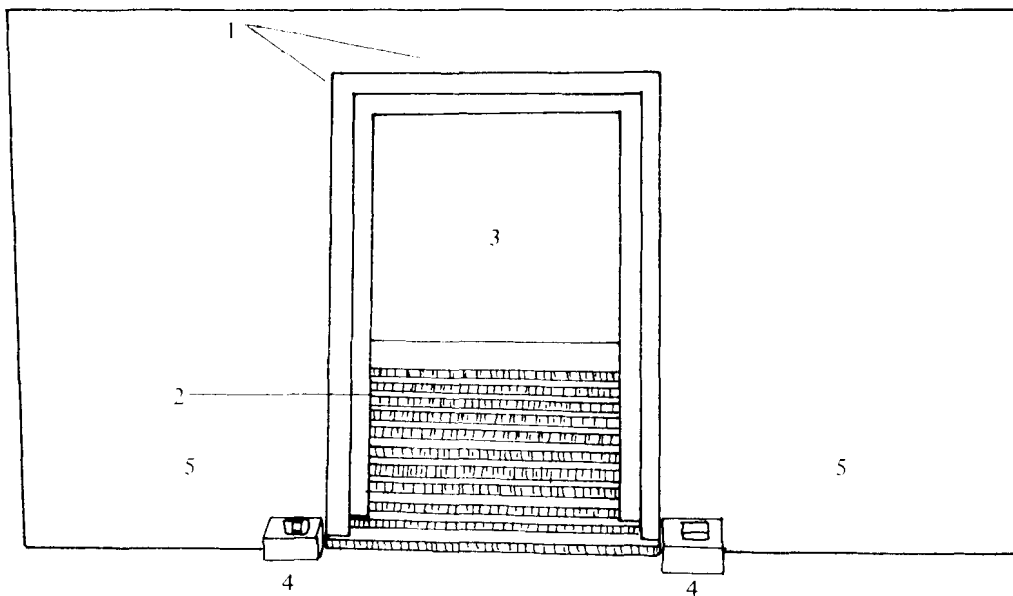


Figure 21. Diagrammatic drawing of the Sanctuary 66 and its façade walls.

**PAINING ELEMENTS AND SANCTUARY COUNTERPARTS:**

- 1: Band of six stripes - Rebated doorway of six recesses
- 2: Middle band/steps - Stairway
- 3: "Investiture" scene - Tribune-Cella (top register)
- 4: Ante-cella (lower register) two goddesses with flowing vases - Ante-Cella (two static bases)
- 5: Side theme - Façade walls



of the Tribune-Cella rebated doorway with its lintel.<sup>92a</sup> In fact, it is not a coincidence that the jambs of the cella entrance consist of six recessed surfaces—the same number as the stripes which surround the Central Scene (cf. fig. 12 and pl. V). Mesopotamian artists always rendered rebated doorways in this manner.

b) UPPER CENTRAL REGISTER = TRIBUNE-CELLA: We believe that the upper register, where the figures of Zimrilim, Ishtar, and the other deities are seen, is equivalent to the Tribune-Cella itself (66)—the area on the top of the stair.<sup>93</sup> Accordingly, we presume that the cella originally contained sculptures similar to those of the mural, namely statues of Zimrilim, Ishtar, the two supplicant goddesses, and the minor god (pl. V). This reconstruction of the sculptural elements is supported by the discovery of four statue bases, one on the top of the cella and the others at the foot of the stair.<sup>94</sup> The largest base is made in the shape of steps, which might have been the pedestal for Ishtar's statue (fig. 22). The discovery of the statue of the Mari *shakkanakku*, Ishtup-illum, in Ante-Cella 66A in front of the stair<sup>95</sup> suggests the possibility of other sculptures of high officials in the cella or the surrounding area. The inscription on the statue of Idi-illum, another *shakkanakku* of Mari, which was found in the palace mentions the dedication of the statue to the goddess Ishtar.<sup>96</sup> The size of the Tribune-Cella (5.40 m. long and 2.25 m. wide) certainly allows for more than five statues—the number of figures depicted in the upper register of the painting.

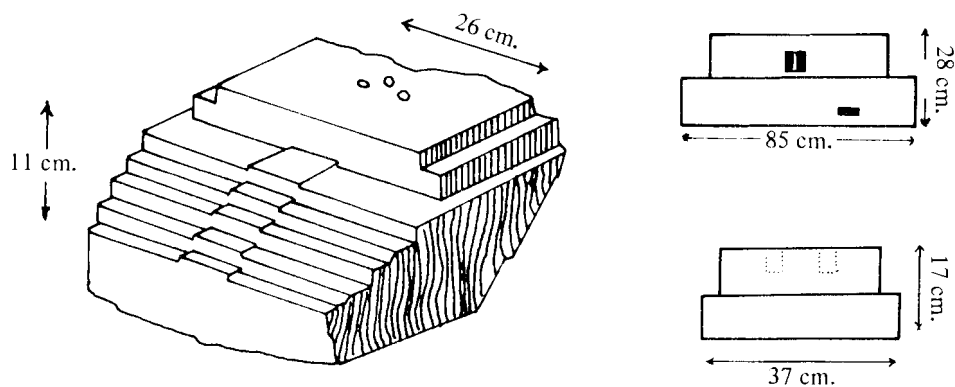


Figure 22. Three statue bases from the Sanctuary 66.

<sup>92a</sup>Also Hrouda, *op. cit.*, p. 159.

<sup>93</sup>Parrot, *Le palais: architecture*. *MAM* II, I. BAH 68 (Paris: Geuthner, 1958), pl. XXXI.

<sup>94</sup>*Ibid.*, figs. 147-150, pls. XXXI:2, XXXIV:1.

<sup>95</sup>*Ibid.*, fig. 140; *Mari capitale fabuleuse* (Paris: Payot, 1974), fig. 66.

<sup>96</sup>Parrot, *MAM* II, 3, p. 20; also Barrelet, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

c) LOWER CENTRAL REGISTER = FLANKING STATUES WITH FLOWING VASES: the lower register of the middle scene, which shows two identical goddesses with flowing vases, will be parallel, therefore, to the Area 66A, directly at the foot of the steps. Two well-made statue bases of brick, fairly large in size (69 x 68 cm.; 60 x 56 cm.), were found built against the sanctuary façade, one at either side of the cella entrance (fig. 12).<sup>97</sup> To restore what could have been erected on these two bases with the help of the evidence presented by the lower register of the painting: one immediately remembers the statue of the goddess with the flowing vase which was discovered in the adjacent Throneroom 64.<sup>98</sup> Indeed, this statue is identical to the two figures of the goddess holding a flowing vase in the lower scene (cf. fig 8 and pl. V): i.e. similar horned headdress, and long robe rendered by vertical wavy lines to indicate an abundance of water with fish depicted swimming in it. The goddess' statue is almost life-size (1.42 m.), holding a vase in front of her body. She wears a horned headdress and a long garment covering all but her toes and arms. The robe has engraved vertical wavy lines representing streaming water as is shown by the fish engraved alongside, similar to those shown on the painting. The statue has a unique feature—a channel drilled inside the body from the vase to the base indicating actual water flowed out of the vessel. Because of the provision for flowing water, Parrot was unable to decide on the original location of the statue (see pp. 23-24).

We would like to propose that the statue of the goddess with the flowing vase is one of two identical statues as they appear in the lower register of the painting. Parrot also speaks about two statues.<sup>98a</sup> The second statue was lost or destroyed, possibly during the destruction of the palace. If this is plausible, then the logical place for the two statues is the brick base flanking the entrance of the Tribune-Cella (pl. VI).<sup>99</sup> This proposal is supported by five important factors: 1) the presence of two identical goddesses with flowing vases in the mural represented at the sides of the lower register; 2) the occurrence of two statue bases at the sides of the cella entrance; 3) the conclusion that the two bases probably supported similar, if not identical, statues, this conclusion based on a standard tendency toward symmetry in Mesopotamia, especially in monumental architecture and its decor; 4) the occurrence of ample libation facilities and the use of water-proof structural material (baked brick and bitumen) in the sanctuary; and 5) a somewhat similar arrangement of a god with a flowing vase found flanking the entrance of the ante-cella of Sin temple at Khorsabad (fig. 23).

The presence of the figures of the goddess with the flowing vase inside the frame of the Central Scene may suggest to the reader that the location of their counterpart statues should be *within* the entrance to the Tribune-Cella. There is no archaeological evidence found in the sanctuary to support such a placement. On the contrary, the evidence is strongly in favor of placing them on the pedestals flanking the doorway. Artistic and compositional traditions easily explain how three-dimensional reality may have been telescoped as we see it now in the painting. The artist of the Mari mural appears to have had two alternatives in regard to the representation of the area below the higher floor of the Tribune—either to leave it blank or paint in the steps of the Cella. The former alternative would have been implausible because there would have been no sense at all in defining the space and leaving it empty; also Mesopotamian art shows a tendency toward not having

<sup>97</sup>Parrot, *MAM* II, 1, pl. XXXI.

<sup>98</sup>Parrot, *MAM* II, 3, pp. 2-11, figs. 4-8, pls. IV-VI.

<sup>98a</sup>Parrot, op. cit., *Studia Mariana* (1950), p. 39.

<sup>99</sup>Hrouda, op. cit., p. 159, also associates the statue of the goddess with the water installations in Area 66A.

empty areas which might have been caused by a religious belief that blank spaces are likely to be occupied by evil spirits. The option to fill in the whole lower register with steps would also have been unacceptable, both visually and artistically, because the whole area would have merely been covered with horizontal stripes (cf. figs. 20-21).

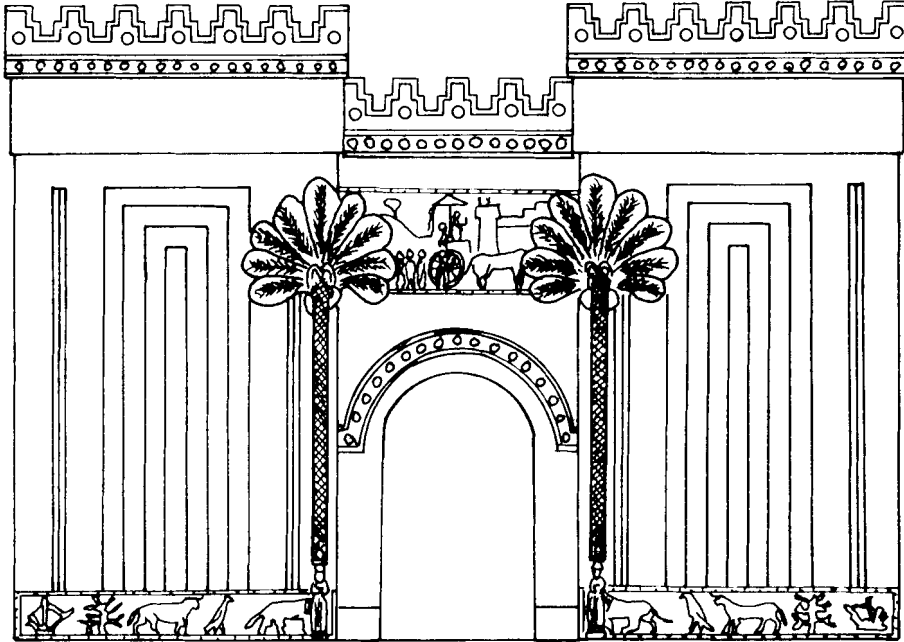


Figure 23. The façade wall of Sin temple at Khorsabad.

d) **HORIZONTAL CENTRAL BAND = STAIRWAY TO THE TRIBUNE-CELLA:** The above discussion also raises the question as to how the cella stairway may have been represented in the painting. The upper and lower registers of the mural are separated by a six-stripe band similar to that surrounding the scene. It is justifiable to suppose that this band is intended to depict the steps. One should not forget that a stair is simply a recessed surface like a rebated doorway, with one difference (beside absolute dimensions), namely, that the line of orientation is horizontal in the former and vertical in the latter. As a good example of a similar telescope device we may refer to an Old Babylonian clay relief depicting a deity standing on the top of a stair inside a shrine with a recessed entrance.<sup>100</sup>

Moreover, the lines of the horizontal band (stairway) are represented disconnected from the lines of the surrounding border (rebated doorway), creating an effect of perspective. The middle lines appear as if they are beyond the lines of the frame, a true three-dimensional linear perspective of

<sup>100</sup>E.D. Van Buren, *Clay Figurines of Babylonia and Assyria*. Yale Oriental Series XVI (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1930), fig. 255.

the six top steps of the stairs. The reason for rendering the stairs and the doorjambs by the same number of stripes (six) is, understandably, to maintain the uniformity or symmetry of the scene. However, we are not quite certain that the horizontal stripes of the scene represent the stairs of the sanctuary, although it is a good possibility.<sup>101</sup>

It is very significant for the history of art to indicate here that the "Investiture" painting displays other three-dimensional elements represented in the linear perspective. These perspective features, beside the one mentioned above are: 1) the scene of investing the king is shown in the upper register, because it is the most inner area (the cella) of the Sanctuary—the more distance in the eyes of the viewer;<sup>102</sup> in this case, however, the cella is actually raised up on the top of a stairway. 2) the figures of Zimrilim, Ishtar, and other deities in the top register, which were set up inside the cella, are depicted smaller in scale than the figures of the Side Scene (trees, dragons and goddess) which adorned the façade wall of the cella. For example, the proportional measurements of the figure of the king (top register) and the figure of the supplicant goddess (Side Scene) are 2.7 cm. to 4.5 cm., respectively.<sup>102a</sup> Again, objects that are further away appear smaller than nearer objects of the same dimension. The Mari artist had carefully followed his artistic insight of perspective even with the most traditional trend in representational art of Mesopotamia; namely, kings or deities, as the most important personages of any work of art, are normally depicted in larger size. 3) the "Sacred Tree's" trunk is represented tapering toward the top of the tree, as a tree is naturally. The fan-shaped leaves of the tree also display elements of a depth perspective by coloring part of each leaf in white on darker paints of red and black.<sup>103</sup> These perspective elements in the Mari murals open for us new avenues in understanding ancient art, and we think that Mesopotamian art needs to be reconsidered in the light of such subtleties.

## 2. DRAINAGE INSTALLATIONS: ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

Let us return to the two statues of the goddess with the flowing vase, which we have placed on the brick pedestal flanking the cella entrance. Since the statue of the flowing vase shows that actual water streamed out of the vase, then a special type of piping and draining as well as waterproof structural material must be expected in the sanctuary. Indeed, the three types of installations were discovered, though we are not quite sure about the piping facilities. Unfortunately, there is reason to feel that significant information was lost during the excavations, and it seems there was little effort to complete the investigations of the sanctuary area and its surroundings, in order to gain comprehensive information about the ample evidence of the drainage system. The final publications say little in this regard.<sup>104</sup> However, it is only fair to say that there are some excellent illustrations and drawings of those installations, from which one can draw some information concerning the drainage system.

*The archaeological evidence of waterproof building material used in the sanctuary and the adjacent rooms (31-32) is abundant. The Tribune-Cella and the stair are built of baked bricks and coated*

<sup>101</sup>A similar analogy between the stairs and the horizontal stripes is already made by Hrouda (*Vorderasien I; Mesopotamien, Babylonien, Iran und Anatolien* [München: Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1971], p. 159).

<sup>102</sup>H. Schäfer, *Principles of Egyptian Art*, ed. J. Baines (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), pp. 80 ff.; also M-T. Barrelet, "Remarques sur une découverte faite à Tell Al-Rimah; 'face de Humbaba' et conventions iconographiques." *Iraq* XXX, pp. 208-209.

<sup>102a</sup>Measurements are taken from Parrot, *MAM* II, 2, pl. A, therefore there is a margin of error.

<sup>103</sup>See Parrot, *MAM* II, 2, pl. A.

<sup>104</sup>Parrot, *MAM* II, 1, pp. 127-130, 153-154.

with bitumen; they also have a bitumen plinth, 24 cm. high. The floor in Ante-Cella 66A is covered with a thick layer of asphalt, while the rest of the Room (65) has a clay floor (fig. 5 and pl. III). The walls surrounding the Ante-Cella have a plith of bitumen, 60-70 cm. high, and the statue bases of the goddess with the flowing vase are also coated with asphalt.<sup>105</sup> The foundations of the Sanctuary façade wall and the surrounding are carefully laid down in stone and baked brick.<sup>106</sup>

Rooms 79-82 are completely paved with baked bricks; it is significant to indicate here that such a series of subsidiary rooms at the back of the throneroom in the Mesopotamian palaces is not usually paved with brick. One can assume, therefore, from the abundance of the bitumen and brick used in the sanctuary that a large amount of water was used in some ritual ceremony.

Drainage and possibly piping systems were also discovered under the bitumen pavement of the Ante-Cella. Across the sanctuary façade wall and close to the statue bases of the goddesses with the flowing vases two drain holes were found (pl. III). The left hand hole is connected to a short drain made of baked brick (66 cm. long) under the floor. Whether the drain had a cistern or not was not determined during the excavations, although a cistern has been suggested by the excavator.<sup>107</sup> On the other hand, the investigations of the drain on the right side revealed a very elaborate drainage installation made of baked brick, bitumen, and terracotta. The system consists of a rather wide opening (22 cm.) connected to a pottery basin (55 cm. deep and 44 cm. in dia.) joined in turn to a pipe, which empties into a large pottery cistern, 1 m. in diameter and 10 m. deep (fig. 24).<sup>108</sup>

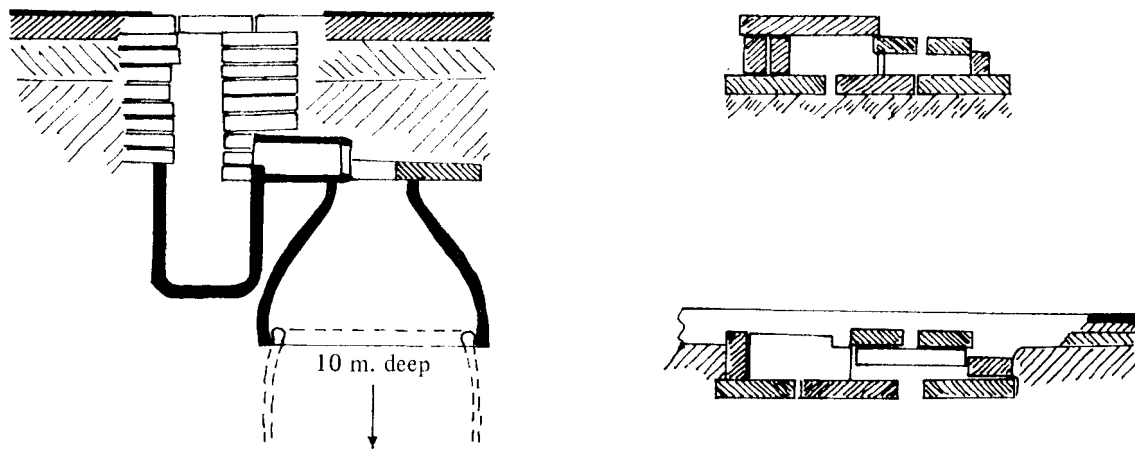


Figure 24. Drainage installations in the Ante-Cella 66A of Sanctuary 66 of the palace at Mari.

<sup>105</sup>Ibid, fig. 146.

<sup>106</sup>Ibid, pp. 115-117.

<sup>107</sup>Ibid, pp. 127-128, fig. 137, pl. XXXIII:1,

<sup>108</sup>Ibid, pp. 128-130, figs. 138-139, pl. XXXIII:4.

The size and the complexity of this drainage system as well as the drain on the left side, and their location *across* from the statue bases, indicates they were probably intended to *receive* the water flowing out of the goddesses' vases.

Of special interest is a feature which the excavator has called a "drain." This was discovered at the foot of the statue base on the left, underneath the floor of the room. It is a channel made of brick about 70 cm. long with an opening in the top and the bottom.<sup>109</sup> No outlet was connected with the channel to indicate its drainage purpose. However, its location at the foot of the pedestal suggests a relationship with the statue of the goddess. Is it possible that the channel was part of a missing pipe(s) that carried water inside the statue from a tank placed at a higher level (roof). Unfortunately, evidence of any such arrangement has been lost and the connection between the channel and the statue remains unknown. However, if there were such installations it would be possible to find similar ones next to the right hand pedestal, which does not seem to have been investigated yet.<sup>110</sup>

In general, Ante-Cella 66A needs to be more carefully investigated. For example, on Fig. 145 of the *MAM* II, 1, Parrot indicates the area of the wall against which the channel is built as being "*nu des briques crues*," (bare of mud brick). From the drawing one cannot precisely interpret this phrase. Does it mean there is a hole inside the wall? If so, one may assume the existence of a vertical pipe, which could have been built inside the wall connecting a water chest on the roof with a channel underneath the floor of the room.<sup>111</sup>

There are still ample remains of an elaborate drainage system, as well as waterproof construction material discovered in the area of the Sanctuary; the archaeological evidence presented at this point supports our restoration.

### 3. A CORRELATION OF ARCHITECTURAL AND FIGURATIVE REPRESENTATION: THE SIDE SCENE

If the parallelism between the Central Scene and Sanctuary 66 is accepted, then it is probably equally reasonable to examine the rest of the "Investiture" mural, that is, the figures on either side of the middle scene. These figures have already been described on pp. 11, 17-18, therefore they will only be mentioned here, without details. Immediately next to the central theme (on either side) there is a "Sacred Tree" with fan-shaped leaves depicted in a decorative manner higher than the Central Scene. Next there is a vertical frieze of three quadruped genii (a winged human-headed lion, a winged bird-headed lion, and a bull-man), followed by a date-palm tree represented with great naturalism and drawn as high as the sacred tree; at the end of the painting and standing beside the palm tree is a figure of the supplicant goddess looking toward the "Investiture" rite (pl. IV). Hereafter, we shall call these figures at the sides the Side Scene.

At first glance, considering both the painting and Sanctuary 66, one can see the great resemblance between the area at the sides of the Central Scene and the façade wall on either side of the entrance to the Tribune-Cella (cf. figs. 20 and 21). Whether the sanctuary walls were decorated with figures

<sup>109</sup>Ibid, pp. 127-128, figs. 135-136, 145, pl. XXXIII:2.

<sup>110</sup>Ibid, pl. XXXI:2.

<sup>111</sup>There are other drainage installations found in the ante-cella and Rooms 81-82, but they were not completely uncovered and their purposes remain unexplained (Ibid, pp. 152-154, figs. 171-173, pls. XXXV:2-3, XXXVII:3).

similar to those of the painting is difficult to ascertain. Here, we will raise questions about the material of the decoration (stone, clay, mosaic, etc.); their type and form (sculpture, relief); the size (height and width); the relationship between the figures (whether or not each figure is engraved on a separate slab); the technique of attaching the decoration to the wall; and finally the question of the temporal and regional setting and their artistic value in the ancient art of the Near East.

The analogous evidence of Near Eastern art in general and Mesopotamian art in particular suggests stone, or clay, in the form of sculptured slabs as the best possible substance, technique, and form to adorn the façade of the sanctuary. It appears that four separate slabs at either side of the entrance, one for each of the four figures of the Side Scene of the painting, is the likely method of execution. The measurements of these orthostats, as they are shown in pl. VI, are based on the width of the walls, the positions of some preserved holes in the façade, and on the size of the statue of the goddess with the flowing vase, which we have placed flanking the entrance.

The left-hand wall, which is 3 m. wide, will allow 70 to 75 cm. of space for each of the four slabs, whereas the right-hand wall (3.30 m.)<sup>112</sup> permits more than that, 80-82 cm. each. The 70-75 cm. broad orthostat seems to be more plausible. We have nothing to say about the band of running spirals which surround the whole mural (pl. IV), and we have no way of knowing if it also adorned the sanctuary walls. We will therefore omit discussing it, and it is not shown in our reconstruction (pl. VI). The rectangular shape of the orthostats is suggested by the general form of the heroic figures of the Side Scene—tall trees, the panel of three vertical genii and the figure of the supplicant goddess. We would like to restore the slabs to 1.20 m. high, so as to keep their height less than that of the statue of the goddess with the flowing vase (1.42 m.) and so they would be somewhat similar to the façade decoration of the Sin temple at Khorsabad (fig. 23). Thus, each of the reliefs has been restored to a width of 70-75 cm. and height of 1.20 m.

The orthostats as they are shown on pl. VI have been set up above the bitumen plinth which runs around the walls of the sanctuary—that is, about 60 cm. high above the floor level of the room. The pedestals of the statues of the goddess with the flowing vase are restored to a height of 50 cm. It is done in this way because it seems highly possible that the bitumen plinth was not covered by the slabs, since it was intended for waterproofing and also because the height of the reliefs will match with the two horizontal lines of holes that can still be seen on the left hand side of the façade.<sup>113</sup> It is conceivable in this connection that these two lines of holes, which would correspond with the upper and lower edges of the reliefs, were used for the attachments of the slabs.

It is not known how or with what these orthostats were attached to the wall. We have, however, some clue as to how they might have been positioned. This comes from the letter of Yašim-sumū to Zimrilim (*ARMT* XIII, 42) and the two letters from the latter to Mukannišum (*ARMT* XVIII, 2-3), discussed above on pages 21-3. The texts inform us that sinews were used to attach the *lamassu* figures and sinews could be replaced by reeds or metal pegs. Wooden beams were used to attach the orthostats at Tell Halaf.<sup>114</sup>

<sup>112</sup>The measurements of these walls are taken between the outer edge of the statue base and the corner of the room and they are made from the large plan of the palace (Parrot, *MAM* II, 1). There is, therefore, most likely a margin of error of a few centimeters.

<sup>113</sup>The surface of the right-side wall is damaged (see Parrot, *MAM* II, 1, pl. XXXI).

<sup>114</sup>M. Veyra, *Hittite Art, 2300-750 B.C.* (London: Tiranti, 1955), p. 83.

#### 4. ARCHITECTURAL DECORATIONS IN THE NEAR EAST BEFORE THE 1ST MILLENNIUM B.C.: OVERVIEW OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

The restoration of stone reliefs adorning the façade of Sanctuary 66 inevitably leads us to the question of the history of this type of art, and, therefore, we must now consider that subject. We are quite aware of the fact that we are restoring probably one of the earliest known architectural decorated orthostats in the Near East. It is perhaps useful to indicate here that we are using the term "orthostat" to describe a stone slab engraved with a figure(s) and set up against the lower part of the wall for decorative purposes, and not a plain stone found integrated into the lower wall for protective purposes.

a) ARCHITECTURAL DECORATIONS OF THE 3RD MILLENNIUM B.C.: The evidence available for architectural decorations before the second half of the 2nd millennium B.C. is fragmentary. There are several individual pieces without architectural context. These have never been collected or studied as one type or types of building decoration. This subject is too lengthy and complicated to be fully discussed here. We would like, however, to mention at least some of the well known examples of the pictorial ornamentations (sculpture and relief) for the purpose of giving the reader an insight into the proposed orthostats at Mari.

In Mesopotamia, it seems we first encounter sculptured decoration applied to architecture in the Early Dynastic II temple of the goddess Nin-hursag at Tell Al-Ubaid. At this site a large number of sculptures in metal, stone and shell were found and restored by the excavators.<sup>115</sup> Woolley has been able (on the basis of a careful study of the positions of the pieces in relation to the collapsed walls) to restore the façade of the temple and assign several classes of architectural decorations: standing bulls, kneeling calves or cows, a milking scene, birds, flowers, and the famous copper relief of the so-called Imdugud, now read Anzu. The sculptures are arranged in friezes with the figures cut out of shell or stone and set in on dark slabs of slate, fastened with bitumen onto wood and framed by copper. The metal figures are made differently; the animal bodies are worked in relief, while their heads are cast separately in round and are detached from the walls in frontal view.

Another type of architectural decoration is a group of square or rectangular reliefs known as "Votive Plaques" (fig. 25). These were common in Early Dynastic II-III and some dating to the Neo-Sumerian period.<sup>116</sup> The group depicts a variety of themes, the most common one being a religious scene of three registers, with a male and female feasting. The plaques are small and the largest do not exceed 45 cm. They always have a circular or a square perforation in the center, which appears to have been used to attach the plaque to the temple wall. Unfortunately, none of those plaques was found *in situ*, therefore their architectural context and the technique of attachment are not

<sup>115</sup>C.L. Woolley, "Excavations at Tell el Obeid," *The Antiquaries Journal* IV (1924), pp. 329-344.

<sup>116</sup>H. Frankfort, *Sculpture of the Third Millennium B.C. from Tell Asmar and Khafajah*. Oriental Institute Publications 44 (Chicago: the University of Chicago Press, 1939), pls. 105-114; *More Sculpture from the Diyala Region*. Oriental Institute Publications 60 (Chicago: the University of Chicago Press, 1943), pls. 62-67; A. Moortgat, *The Art of Ancient Mesopotamia*, transt. J. Filson (London: Phaidon, 1969), pls. 185-186; for thorough studies see J. Boese, *Altmesopotamische Weihplatten*. Untersuchungen zur Assyriologie und Vorderasiatischen Archäologie 6 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1971); S.M. Pelzel, "Dating the Early Dynastic Votive Plaques from Susa," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 36 (1977), pp. 1-15.



known. However, it has been suggested that the votive plaques served a decorative purpose and were attached to the walls of the temple's doorways.<sup>117</sup>

It is usually thought that wooden pegs were used to fix the plaques to the walls. Interesting in this connection is a number of stone objects which are contemporary with the reliefs. They are small, measuring between about 14 cm. to 15 cm. long. One side of the stone is always sculptured in round, usually a bull's head with human-bearded face, while the other side is intentionally cut plainly into either a circle or square in section (fig. 26).<sup>118</sup> The plain side of the stone appears to fit well, in shape and size, the hole in the middle of the plaque. It seems reasonable to assume that these objects (at least some of them) are specially made as pegs alongside of the wooden ones (which were probably also engraved) to fit through the relief hole and into the wall. If this suggestion proves to be correct, we will have two types of sculpture, in relief (the plaque) and in round (the head of the peg) similar to metal figures of Tell Al-Ubaid. This is an interesting subject for future research.



Figure 25. An Early Dynastic votive plaque

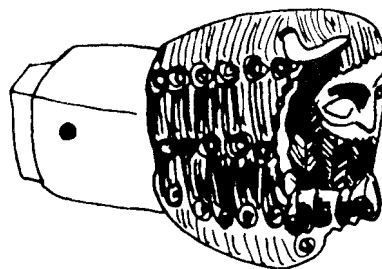


Figure 26. An Early Dynastic stone peg.

<sup>117</sup>J. Boese, *op. cit.*, pp. 162-163.

<sup>118</sup>I. Frankfort, *More Sculpture from the Diyala Region*. OIP 60, pls. 49-50; C.L. Woolley, "The Excavations at Ur, 1927-8," *The Antiquaries Journal* VIII, pl. LV:2; A. Parrot, *Le palais: documents et monuments*. MAM II, 3. BAH 69 (Paris: Geuthner, 1959), pl. LXXIV:2274.

b) ARCHITECTURAL DECORATIONS OF THE 2ND MILLENNIUM B.C.: The most recent architectural stone decoration of the second millennium was discovered at Tell Rimah in northern Iraq and associated with the main temple, phase III, which might have been built by the Assyrian king Shamshi-Addu I.<sup>119</sup> Here two identical blocks of gypsum stone (measuring 1.19 m. long, 33 cm. wide and 58 cm. high) were found set in the jambs of the recessed doorway of the ante-cella of the phase IIb temple. The blocks have vertical and horizontal holes, which lead the excavator to suggest that "they were impost blocks for the lintels of one or the other principal door." More significant about these stones are the figures engraved in high relief on their face—one represents a demonic face usually associated with "Humbaba" and the other depicts the supplicant goddess *lamassu* standing frontally between two palm trees (figs. 27-28).

Also at Tell Rimah was found a sculptured slab measuring 80 cm. high and 65 cm. wide, now in the Iraq Museum. This relief is badly damaged, but what is preserved of its original representation is highly pertinent to our discussion here. It shows a composite figure with wings holding what was most likely a vase (missing now) out of which flow several streams of water, two of them looping like a loose knot around the waist of the figure and continuing down both sides of the body (fig. 29). The state of preservation of the relief (badly damaged and weathered) makes it difficult to determine precisely the identity of the figure. For example, there are two wavy bands in relief at the left side of the figure; it is hard to decide whether the top band is an "upturned scorpion tail,"<sup>120</sup> or a stream of water emptying into a small vase as is the case in many representations of a figure holding a flowing vessel.<sup>121</sup> We would like to accept, however, the former and consider the lower band ending in a spiral as a stream of water.

We can say with little doubt that the relief represents a composite figure of a man's bust and the lower body of a bird. The form and the outline of the legs tapering down are those of a bird, as seen in other works of art.<sup>122</sup> This identification is supported by the fin-like protuberance attached to the legs of the figure. Such fins are normally portrayed on the legs of birdlike dragons<sup>123</sup> or composite creatures such as the figure of the winged nude goddess with falcon's legs<sup>124</sup> or the *mušhuššu* figure.<sup>125</sup>

The Tell Rimah relief was found in the Middle Assyrian temple, phase I, but was correctly associated by the excavator with the Old Assyrian temple, phase III. Oates also suggests a recess beside one of the main doorways of the temple as the location of the slab. The discovery of the stone block with the figure of the goddess *lamassu* in the Old Assyrian temple (see above) during the following seasons makes the association of the three architectural decorations (reliefs of *lamassu*, "Humbaba,"

<sup>119</sup>D. Oates, "The Excavations at Tell Al Rimah, 1966," *Iraq* XXIX (1967), pp. 74-78, pl. XXXI.

<sup>120</sup>D. Oates, "The Excavations at Tell Al Rimah, 1965," *Iraq* XXVIII (1966), p. 131, pl. XXXIV:b.

<sup>121</sup>Moortgat, op. cit., fig. 243; P.R.S. Moorey, *Ancient Iraq: Assyria and Babylonia* (Oxford: University of Oxford, Ashmolean Museum, 1976), pl. II.

<sup>122</sup>Cf. e.g. Assurnasirpal's relief of a bird-man flanking a "sacred tree," A.H. Layard, *The Monuments of Nineveh*, vol. I (London, 1853), pl. 44, fig. 2; and the clay relief in the collection of Colonel N. Colville of a nude goddess with falcon's feet, Frankfort, *Art and Architecture of the Ancient Orient* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1970), fig. 119.

<sup>123</sup>E. Porada, *Corpus of Ancient Near Eastern Seals in North American Collections 1. The Collection of Pierpont Morgan Library*. Bollingen Series 14 (New York: Pantheon, 1948), pl. LII:356, 360, 362.

<sup>124</sup>H. Frankfort, op. cit., fig. 119.

<sup>125</sup>Ibid, fig. 101 'the stone vase of Gudea'; E.D. Van Buren, *Clay Figurines of Babylonia and Assyria*. Yale Oriental Series XVI (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1930), fig. 240.

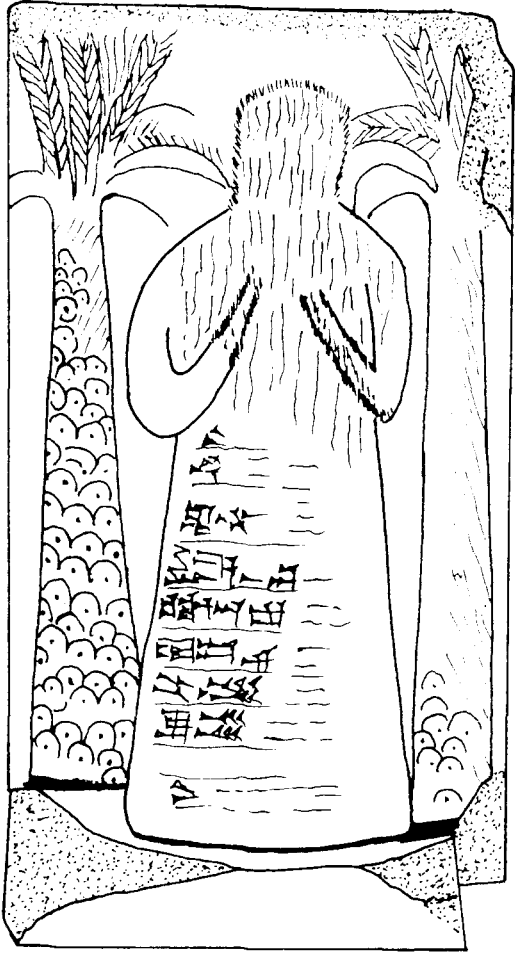


Figure 27. Stone block with the figure of the goddess *Lamassu* standing between two palm trees, Main Temple at Tell Rimah (1.19x0.58x0.33 m.).

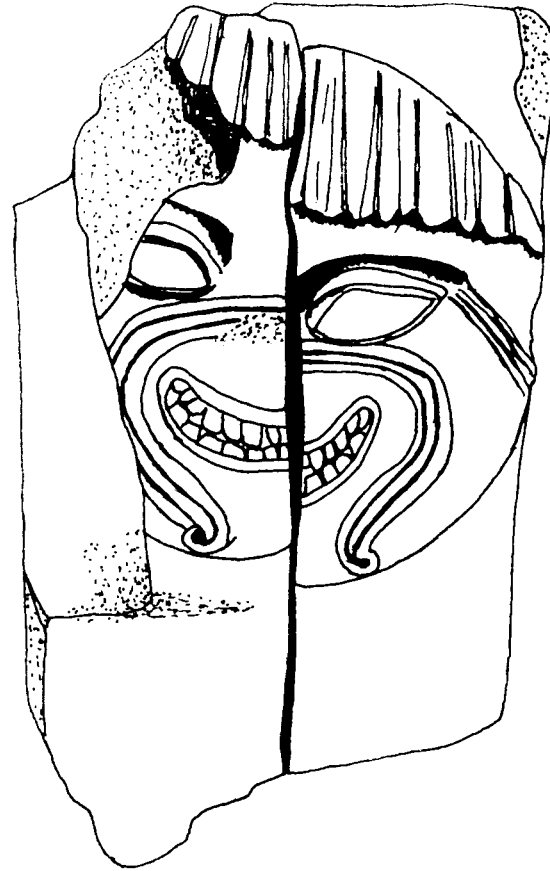


Figure 28. Stone block with the face of "Humbaba," Main Temple at Rimah (1.10x0.58x0.35 m.).

and the bird-man) in one area very plausible. Consequently, we would like to assume that the three pieces decorated the recessed doorway of the ante-cella of the Old Assyrian temple.



Figure 29. Gypsum relief of a composite figure holding a flowing vase (damaged), Main Temple at Rimah (80x65 cm.).

The combination of the artistic features of the architectural decorations (suppliant goddess *lamassu*, the palm trees, the bird-man genii, the monster "Humbaba," and the flowing vase) at Rimah are strikingly similar to various elements in the "Investiture" painting of Mari and should be considered, therefore, as good archaeological evidence in support of the reconstruction of the orthostats adorning the façade of Sanctuary 66 at Mari. The contemporaneity of the structures of Mari and Rimah strengthen our restoration at Mari.

We may also mention here as architectural ornamentation two large clay reliefs which were discovered in the Old Babylonian small chapels at Ur.<sup>126</sup> One of those reliefs measures 61 cm. high and represents a bull-man holding a door-post, which Woolley thinks was one of a pair decorating the doorjamb of the Hendur-sag chapel (fig. 3). The other relief measures 73 cm. high and depicts a goddess with a vase out of which run two streams of water (fig. 30). It is interesting that those architectural reliefs were found associated with other art objects depicting

<sup>126</sup>C.L. Woolley, "The Excavations at Ur, 1930-1," *The Antiquaries Journal* XI (1931), pp. 368, 371-72, pls. L:1, LIII:1.

the supplicant goddess (*lamassu*) and other demonic figures (see p. 17)—elements which appear to be important components of the architectural art.



Figure 30. Large clay relief (73 cm.)  
of a goddess with a flowing vase, a small chapel at Ur.

In connection with the sculptures of the *lamassu*, the bird-man genii holding a flowing vase, and “Humbaba” decorating the ante-cella of the main temple at Rimah, it is appropriate to refer to a group of Old Babylonian terracotta reliefs. This type of terracotta is divided into two horizontal registers: in the upper register there is a god surrounded by various weapons; the lower part shows a male figure standing between four animals, two at each side; at either side of them is an animal with a “Humbaba” face and beneath it a male figure holding a flowing vase (fig. 31). Inspired by the discovery at Rimah, Barrelet has suggested that those terracottas represent a god in his cella (the upper register), with its façade or ante-cella decorated by sculpture of “Humbaba,” a male with a flowing vase, and other figures similar to the ornamentation of Rimah temple.<sup>127</sup>

These representations of a decorated cella appear to indicate that monumental structures (specifically religious) in Mesopotamia were adorned with sculpture of various natures—a tradition which seems to have been common in the Old Babylonian period. Indeed, the temple façades of Rimah were richly adorned — besides the above mentioned reliefs — with mud-brick engaged columns of spiral and

<sup>127</sup>M.-T. Barrelet, “Remarques sur une découverte faite à Tell Al Rimah; ‘face de Humbaba’ et convention iconographiques,” *Iraq* XXX (1968), pp. 206-214.

palm-tree trunk forms.<sup>128</sup> Similar rich architectural decorations of spiral and palm-tree trunk columns have recently been discovered in the Ebabbar temple at Larsa.<sup>129</sup>

From 15th century Mesopotamia comes the remarkable architectural sculpture of the façade of Inanna temple, which was built at Warka by the Kassite king Karaindash. The façade consists of alternating male and female deities standing in niches, each with a vase from which flow two streams of water. This is completely made of molded brick in relief, and therefore the sculpture is an integrated part of the wall. Fragments of similar molded brick reliefs of the Kassite period have also been reported at Ur, Nippur and Aqar Quf.<sup>130</sup> It is significant to our restored orthostats at Mari that the façade of Inanna temple also has a plinth underneath the sculptured wall.

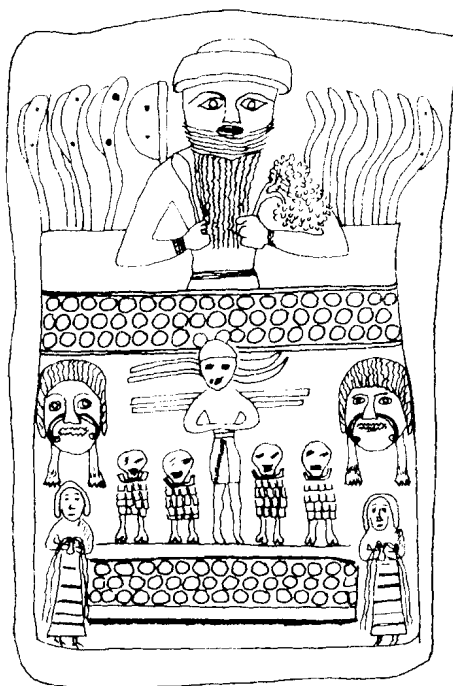


Figure 31. Terracotta relief representing a god in his cella (top part) and other figures adorning the shrine façade.

<sup>128</sup>D. Oates, "The Excavations at Tell Al Rimah, 1966," *Iraq* XXIX (1967), pp. 70-79, pls. 32, 33, 36 and 40.

<sup>129</sup>Y. Calvet et al., "Larsa rapport préliminaire sur la sixième campagne de fouilles," *Syria* LIII (1976), pp. 1-45, pls. I-IV. It is also noteworthy mentioning here that the 2nd year date formula of Gungunum of Larsa reads: "the year he brought two bronze palm trees to the temple of Shamash" (A. Ungnad, "Datenlisten," *Reallexikon der Assyriologie* II, Berlin: Gruyter, 1938, p. 155). The Assyrian king Tiglath-pileser I (1115-1077 B.C.) describing his palace as having date palms made of glazed bricks decorating the towers of its gateway (L. Oppenheim, *Glass and Glassmaking in Ancient Mesopotamia*, New York: The Corning Museum of Glass, 1970, p. 17). The large wooden palm tree which flanked the entrance of Sin temple at Khorsabad (fig. 23) was originally plated by bronze casing with "scale-like design," representing the palm trunk (G. Loud, *Khorsabad I, Palace and a City Gate*, The Oriental Institute Publications 38, Chicago: The University of Chicago, 1936, pp. 97-98, fig. 99). We owe the references about Gungunum and Tiglath-pileser to the kindness of Prof. J.-R. Kupper.

<sup>130</sup>A. Moortgat, *The Art of Ancient Mesopotamia*, transt. J. Filson (London: Phaidon, 1969), p. 94.

There are two identical stone reliefs representing the suppliant goddess *lamassu*. One of the reliefs came from the site of Warka and is now in the Baghdad Museum (fig. 32). The other, which is in the New York Metropolitan Museum, from an unknown source, was said to have also come from Warka (fig. 33). These two reliefs are identical in every respect (material: gypsum stone, general form, measurements: Baghdad, 85 cm. high and 30 cm. wide; New York, 83.8 cm. high and 30.5 cm. wide, artistic details, and the content of the inscriptions) with one exception: the figures of the goddesses face opposite directions. The inscriptions, which contain few minor variants,<sup>131</sup> dedicate the two reliefs to the goddess Inanna for the life of the Kassite king Nazimaruttash (1323-1298 B.C.) by Kartappu, an official of the ruler.<sup>132</sup> The dedication of the



Figure 33. The Kassite stone relief of *lamassu* in New York.



Figure 32. The Kassite stone relief of *lamassu* in Baghdad.

<sup>131</sup>J.A. Brinkman, *Materials and Studies for Kassite History*, vol. I (Chicago: the University of Chicago Press, 1976), pp. 265-266.

<sup>132</sup>I would like to thank Dr. P. Michalowski for helping me read the inscription of the Metropolitan Museum relief. For the publications of the relief in Baghdad: H. Lenzen-A. Falkenstein, *Vorläufiger Bericht über ... Uruk-Warka*, 1953/54-1954/55, 12/13 (1956), pp. 42-45, pl. 23:b; A. Spycket, "La Déesse Lama," *Revue d'Assyriologie et d'Archéologie Orientale* LIV (1960), pp. 73-84, fig. 2; for the relief in New York: V. Crawford et al., *Ancient Near Eastern Art*. Metropolitan Museum of Art, Guide to the Collection (New York: 1966), p. 17, fig. 27; A. Parrot, *Sumer/Assur Ergänzung* 1969 (München: 1970), p. 24, fig. 48.

two reliefs of *lamassu* by the same person and the great resemblance between them indicate without doubt that they must have originated in one site—Warka. Furthermore, the fact that the goddesses face opposite directions suggests that they could have decorated a doorway façade of one structure, probably the temple of Inanna. However, their architectural context is unfortunately not known.

The four gates of the Middle Elamite ziggurat of Untash-Gal (13th century B.C.) at Tchoga Zanbil seem to have been guarded against evil spirits by large statues in glazed clay. Figures of a bull (1.35 m. high and 1.105 m. long) and a griffin (70 cm. high and 51 cm. long) were discovered protecting the NE and NW gates, respectively.<sup>133</sup> Certainly, this is not the earliest example of sculpture in the round guarding the gates of a religious structure. We have from Mesopotamia guardian sculptures of lions dated as early as Early Dynastic III—the copper lions of the temple of Nin-hursag;<sup>134</sup> the basalt lion of Eridu from the Ur III period;<sup>135</sup> from the Old Babylonian period the well-known large terracotta lions of the main temple at Tell Harmal,<sup>136</sup> and the bronze lion of Dagan temple at Mari.<sup>137</sup>

A molded brick relief (a technique similar to that of Karaindash's temple at Warka) of alternating figures of a bull-man and supplicant goddess was discovered ornamenting the façade of the Middle Elamite temple of Inshushinak (12th century B.C.) at Susa.<sup>138</sup>

In Anatolia, the earliest reported relief was found in the Hittite capital, Boghazkoy, in a level dated to the 17th century B.C.<sup>139</sup> Its architectural surrounding is not known, and, consequently, it is uncertain whether it can be related to the orthostats of the later periods. However, Canby in her reevaluation of the styles of the Hittite sculpture suggests the "Colony Period" (19-18th century B.C.) as the date for the beginning of the Hittite sculpture.<sup>140</sup> It is useful to the discussion here that the earliest Hittite architectural reliefs, such as those found guarding the gates of the cities of Boghazkoy and Alaca Hüyük, contain figurations similar to architectural decorations from Mesopotamia which anticipate them by several centuries. Specifically, the Hittite protective sculptures consist of features, human, lion and bird, depicted with one element (as the lion gate of Boghazkoy) or with composite components (as the sphinxes at Yerkapi and Alaca Hüyük).<sup>141</sup>

<sup>133</sup>R. Ghirshman, *Tchoga Zanbil: la ziggurat*, I. Mémoires de la délégation archéologique en Iran 39 (Paris: Geuthner, 1966), pp. 49-51, pls. XXXIII:3-5, XXXIV-XXXV and LXIX.

<sup>134</sup>H.R. Hall and C.L. Woolley, *Ur Excavations I: Al-Ubaid* (London: the British Museum and Philadelphia: University Museum, 1927), pp. 30 ff., pl. X; also H. Frankfort, *Art and Architecture of the Ancient Orient* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1970), p. 60.

<sup>135</sup>F. Safar, "Excavations at Eridu," *Sumer* III (1947), pp. 110 f., pls. VII-VIII.

<sup>136</sup>T. Baqir, "Tel Harmal, A Preliminary Report," *Sumer* II (1946), pp. 23 f., frontispiece.

<sup>137</sup>A. Parrot, *Mari capitale fabuleuse* (Paris: Payot, 1974), pl. XII.

<sup>138</sup>E. Strommenger, *5000 Years of the Art of Mesopotamia*, transt. C. Haglund (New York: Abrams, 1964), pl. 180.

<sup>139</sup>M. Veyra, *Hittite Art, 2300-750 B.C.* (London: Tiranti, 1955), p. 23.

<sup>140</sup>J.V. Canby, "The Sculptures of the Hittite Capital," *Oriens Antiquus* XV (1976), pp. 38-39.

<sup>141</sup>M. Veyra, op. cit., pls. 12-13, 26-27; also U. Bahadır Alkım, *Anatolia I (From the Beginning to the End of the 2nd Millennium B.C.)*, transt. J. Hogarth (New York: World Publishing Co., 1968), pls. 123-124.



c) CONCLUSIONS: Five important facts come out of the above overview of the architectural decorations. *First*, the reconstructed sculptured reliefs adorning the façade of Sanctuary 66 at Mari do not constitute the earliest example of this type of art: architectural decoration in one form or another is known in Mesopotamia as early as the first part of the 3rd millennium B.C., if not earlier--the Protoliterate temple at Uqair, for example, was painted with figures of bulls and lions/leopards guarding the altar.<sup>142</sup> *Second*, the architectural art of Mesopotamia must be assessed not only in an aesthetic but in a mythological/prophylactic manner. It is intended to protect the structure by keeping or introducing good spirits and averting evil forces. This is a significant role of this type of art, a fact which is not only indicated in written documents, but also confirmed by the representational tradition. *Third*, there seems to be consistent tendency to depict figures of combined features: human, bull, lion, bird, and vegetation--very likely symbolizing forces of nature. These elements are either rendered separately or two or more features are combined in one figure, such as the bull-man, the winged human-headed bull/lion. Examples of these are architectural decorations of the temple of Nin-hursag at Tell Al-Ubaid, the murals at Mari, the façade decoration of Sin temple at Khorsabad and the figures of bull, lion, and *mušhuššu* which ornament the walls of Ishtar Gate and the city of Babylon. The ancient artist wanted, in combining those different features, to create more powerful figures, in order to be of greater resistance to various forces of evil.<sup>143</sup> *Fourth*, Mesopotamia appears to provide the prototypic tradition of guarding buildings by *lamassu* figures, which was fully developed and utilized during the 1st millennium B.C. However, 1st millennium *lamassu*, namely those of the Late Assyrian palaces and temples, show not only Mesopotamian but also Syrian artistic features.<sup>144</sup> *Fifth*, it is indeed significant for the history of art in general that the "Investiture" painting of Mari and consequently our restoration of the sculptured orthostats adorning the sanctuary façade (if it is to be accepted) constitute, so far, the earliest example of monumental architectural art that displays repertoires of both Syrian and Mesopotamian origins--the winged human-headed lion and the winged eagle-headed lion/griffin from the former, and the supplicant goddess and the bull-man from the latter.

## 5. THE PHYSICAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THRONEROOM 65 AND SANCTUARY 66

Two more points need to be investigated in order to conclude this research. One is the physical relationship between Sanctuary 66 and more specifically its Ante-Cella 66A and the rest of the Throneroom (65); the other is the religious significance of the sanctuary.

By physical relationship, we mean the type of communication and the flow of traffic between the two sides of the room (65 and 66A), whether they were wide open onto each other, or whether there was a partition, perhaps a portable one or curtains of some sort (pl. III). There is hardly any evidence to suggest a permanent partition of any kind. However, we would like to think that the two sides were separated somehow, very likely by some perishable material--woven textile or wood. This view is motivated by two considerations. First is the function of the sanctuary and the kind of ritual ceremony which was performed in it. The sanctuary seems to have been used strictly for religious ritual highly important to the person of the king (see below). Therefore, the

<sup>142</sup>S. Lloyd and F. Safar, "Tell Uqair, Excavations by the Iraq Government Directorate of Antiquities in 1940-41," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* II (1943), pl. X.

<sup>143</sup>C.J. Gadd, *The Assyrian Sculptures* (London: British Museum, 1943), p. 14.

<sup>144</sup>For more information on this subject, see T.A. Madhloom, *The Chronology of Neo-Assyrian Art* (London: Athlone, 1970), pp. 94-117.

cult area was used only on those occasions, and, consequently there was no reason to have it exposed all year long to viewers in the other side of the throneroom.

The second reason is archaeological. In fig. 129, *MAM* II, 1, Parrot shows a drawing of the bitumen pavement of the Ante-Cella 66A. At a distance of 4.80 m. from the northern wall of the room (the wall between Rooms 64 and 65) he marks a tiny rectangular chink (approximately 12 cm. wide and 25 cm. long) in the pavement without bitumen—it is not due to damage because it has straight sides and is still surrounded by asphalt (pl. III). Archaeologically speaking, an area like this would indicate the place of another object, and in this case, a post seems highly plausible. Pieces of wooden beams of different lengths were found lying on the floor at a distance of about 11 m. from the throne side of the room.<sup>145</sup> Although Parrot points out that this wood was part of the roofing beams of the room, it is also possible that it was part of the partition structure. If we marked a place for a second post at the same distance (4.80 m.) from the southern wall, we are left with an area about 2 m. wide in the center of the room (pl. III).<sup>146</sup> This centrally located area has left us with one probable explanation, that is to assume the central area between the two posts as a doorway. Indeed, this proposal is strengthened by the fact that the doorway is situated in the middle of the room, on the same axis between the throne platform on the west side and the Tribune-Cella on the east side. It is certainly a functional as well as a ceremonial location. Zimrilim could have viewed the statue of the goddess Ishtar set up in the middle of the Tribune-Cella from his throne on the other side of the room. Again we have no idea of the type or form of the partition, although we would like to assume it was of ornamented woven material supported on a wooden structure.

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<sup>145</sup>A. Parrot, *Le palais; architecture*. *MAM* II, 1. BAH 68 (Paris: Geuthner, 1958), p. 143, fig. 156.

<sup>146</sup>Unfortunately, almost all the bitumen on the southern side of 66A had disappeared.

## CHAPTER V

### The Religious Significance of the Sanctuary (66) of the Court of the Palms

The location of the Sanctuary 66 inside the central Throneroom (65) of the palace and the restoration of its cultic statues and reliefs indicate that the religious function of the shrine was highly important to the person of the king. To understand the purpose of the Tribune-Cella 66, the identity of the statues, the cultic occasion(s), and the character of the ritual that was performed by the king and its royal significance, we have available two types of evidence—textual and artistic.

The question of the identity of the figures which are represented in the “Investiture” mural (pl. V), namely, those in the upper register of the Central Scene, has been discussed by more than one scholar. This chapter is divided into five sections, in which we attempt to identify the principal figures of the “Investiture” painting (king and goddess); analyze the significance of Sanctuary 66 and its religious ceremony; and interpret some other figurative evidence for the ceremony and speculate on the location of *Bēlet-ekallim*’s shrine.

#### 1. THE GODDESS: ISHTAR

The two figures in the center of this register are generally identified as that of the king Zimrilim touching or receiving the emblems of kingship (the rod and the ring) from the goddess. The person of the goddess has been given, however, various identifications: *Annunītum*,<sup>147</sup> *Bēlet-ekallim*,<sup>148</sup> or Ishtar.<sup>149</sup> Thus, we have three candidates for the figure of the middle goddess of the scene. *Annunītum* was an important goddess at Mari, as early as the Ur III period, but the deity and her cult seem to have fallen under royal displeasure during Zimrilim’s reign.<sup>150</sup> Of the two other goddesses, *Bēlet-ekallim* and Ishtar, each is well-qualified to be the personage on the painting. This makes it more difficult to identify the figure with one of the two deities. To help solve the problem, let us first seek the assistance of the textual evidence.

The tablet of the “Pantheon of Mari,”<sup>151</sup> which was found in the Mari palace (Room 143) mentions the names of the goddesses *Bēlet-ekallim* and Ishtar in lines 1 and 3, respectively. The two deities

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<sup>147</sup>G. Dossin, “Le panthéon de Mari,” *Studia Mariana* (1950), p. 47.

<sup>148</sup>J. Bottéro, *Textes économiques et administratifs. ARMT VII* (Paris: Geuthner, 1957), 196, s.v. *iltu*; W.L. Moran, “New Evidence from Mari on the History of Prophecy,” *Biblica* 50 (1969), p. 32.

<sup>149</sup>M.-T. Barrelet, op. cit., *Studia Mariana* (1950), p. 31; A. Parrot, *Le palais: documents et monuments. MAM II*, 3. BAH 69 (Paris: Geuthner, 1959), p. 55; A. Moortgat, *The Art of Ancient Mesopotamia*, transt. J. Filsion (London: Phaidon, 1969), p. 70.

<sup>150</sup>W.L. Moran, op. cit., *Biblica* 50 (1969), pp. 18-19 and 30.

<sup>151</sup>G. Dossin, op. cit., *Studia Mariana* (1950), pp. 41-50.

also figure in an economic text from Mari.<sup>152</sup> The names *Bēlet-ekallim* “mistress of the palace” and *Ishtar ša ekallim* “Ishtar of the palace,” as they appear on the “Pantheon,” tablet indicate that the goddesses are associated with the royal palace in some religious capacity.

*Bēlet-ekallim* was a very popular deity at Mari; she seems to have been the patroness of Lim dynasty and the only goddess among the gods who marched into battle with Zimrilim.<sup>153</sup> A text in *ARM* X, 50 informs us that the temple of *Bēlet-ekallim* contained her statue, as well as other statues, possibly those of the dynasty kings and other worshipers.<sup>154</sup> The text also implies that the absence of her statue from the temple symbolizes “the exile of the Yahdun-Lim dynasty and parallels the absence of Dagan, who gives kingship in the land . . .”<sup>155</sup>

The name *Bēlet-ekallim*, “the mistress of the palace,” is an epithet and does not necessarily mean that the goddess resided inside the palace. She was the patroness of the dynasty,<sup>156</sup> in other words she was the protector (personal goddess) of the residence of the palace—the royal family. The shrine of this important deity has not been found at Mari. It could have been inside or outside the royal palace. We may tentatively assume, on the basis of weak evidence at the best, that the statues of *Bēlet-ekallim*, which are mentioned in *ARM* X, 50 as being missing from the temple, might have been housed inside the palace in the area called the “Royal Chapel” by the excavator (pl. I).<sup>157</sup> There is an indication that the palace in Mesopotamia had its own gods.<sup>158</sup> Intermediary deities (like *Bēlet-ekallim*) were of considerable importance in Mesopotamian religion.<sup>159</sup> However, this assumption must remain as a mere hypothesis.

Ishtar is, on the other hand, a major Babylonian deity, whose role as a war and fertility goddess is well documented. Her association with the palace of Zimrilim suggests perhaps a specific implication of some religious significance to the king. The above mentioned phrase “*Ishtar ša ekallim*” may imply that the goddess was a permanent resident of the palace—in other words had a sanctuary inside the building. However, we cannot put too much weight on a single text concerning the identity of Sanctuary 66, and the only other document associating Ishtar with the palace gives us different information. This is an economic tablet found in the palace and dated to the reign of Zimrilim. Lines 5-7 of the text read: “for the *zurayum* festival upon the entry of Ishtar into the palace” (*ARMT* IX, 90). This phrase indicates that Ishtar used to enter the palace during a certain ritual ceremony—in this case, the *zurayum* festival. We know little about the *zurayum*, and the *CAD*, vol. Z, pp. 166-67 states only: “the term refers to a festival and may denote some activity connected with it.”

The custom of gods visiting royal palaces is, however, not peculiar to 2nd millennium Mari only, but seems to have had a long history in Mesopotamian religion (see also below). A number of Ur

<sup>152</sup>M. Birot, “Textes économiques de Mari (IV),” *Revue d'Assyriologie et d'Archéologie Orientale* 50 (1956), pp. 57 ff., tablet C.

<sup>153</sup>W.L. Moran, op. cit., *Biblica* 50 (1969), pp. 32 and 49.

<sup>154</sup>Ibid, p. 38; A. Spycket, “La Déesse Lama,” *Revue d'Assyriologie et d'Archéologie Orientale* 54 (1960), pp. 97-98.

<sup>155</sup>Moran, op. cit., *Biblica* 50 (1969), p. 32.

<sup>156</sup>Ibid, p. 32.

<sup>157</sup>A. Parrot, *Le palais: architecture*. *MAM* II, 1. BAH 68 (Paris: Geuthner, 1958), pp. 250-273, fig. 325.

<sup>158</sup>Dr. G. Van Driel, *The Cult of Aššur* (Netherlands: Koninklijke van Gorcum N.V., Assen., 1969), p. 167.

<sup>159</sup>L. Oppenheim, “Analysis of an Assyrian Ritual (KAR 139),” *History of Religions* 5 (1966), p. 261.

III economic texts mention sacrifices offered during the procession of a deity from his/her temple to the palace and also inside the palace.<sup>160</sup> The tradition continued in Assyria, where we have a few Middle and Late Assyrian royal texts describing the visit of the great gods to the palace of the king.<sup>161</sup>

The representation of the "Investiture" mural appears to confirm the association of Ishtar with the palace of Zimrilim. The figure in the center of the "Investiture" scene is typical of that of Ishtar as she is depicted in art—her posture, horned crown, short skirt and long dress opened in front, several necklaces, belts across her chest, weapons and emblems, and lion under her foot.<sup>162</sup> Those features of the goddess are well-established as the conventional attributes of the figure of Ishtar. Her name is sometimes found inscribed on such representations, which are also confirmed by the goddess' description given in prayers and hymns.<sup>163</sup> However, this should not necessarily mean that other female deities in war roles were not represented in a similar attitude.<sup>164</sup> The interpretation of the central figure of the upper register of the painting as representing Ishtar in her role as a goddess of war is perhaps the best acceptable explanation.<sup>165</sup>

## 2. THE KING: ZIMRILIM

Parrot has already proposed, on the basis of the textual evidence, that the "entry of Ishtar into the palace" should be understood as the procession during which her statue and other deity statues, as they are shown in the upper panel of the painting, are moved from their temple and set up inside the palace during a cultic ceremony.<sup>166</sup> He is less certain about the king's statue, and assumes that Zimrilim himself performed the rite of touching the hand of the statue of Ishtar in Room 65.<sup>167</sup> Barrelet and Parrot give the same reason for assuming Zimrilim's participation instead of his statue: statues of kings in an attitude similar to that of the king on the painting have not been found.<sup>168</sup>

We realize that the question as to whether the king's representation in the scene refers to the ruler himself or to his statue is a very thorny subject and we have no answers to the problem, except for a few remarks. First of all, there are few sculptures in the round representing rulers from 3rd and

<sup>160</sup>L. Legrain, *Le temps des rois d'Ur* (Paris: Champion, 1912), text no. 273; B. Landsberger, *Der Kultische-Kalender der Babylonier und Assyrer* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1915), p. 75; N. Schneider, *Der Drehem und Djohatexte im Kloster Montserrat (Barcelona)*. *Analecta Orientalia* 7 (1932), texts nos. 61 and 83; R. Labat, *Le caractère religieux de la royauté assyro-babylonienne* (Paris: A. Maisonneuve, 1939), p. 159.

<sup>161</sup>R. Labat, *op. cit.*, pp. 159-160; Dr. G. Van Driel, *op. cit.*, p. 166; A.K. Grayson, *Assyrian Royal Inscriptions I*. Records of the Ancient Near East, ed., H. Goedicke (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1972), pp. 69-70, 106-109, nos. 3 and 5.

<sup>162</sup>Also A. Haldar, "On the Wall Painting from Court 106 of the Palace of Mari," *Orientalia Suecana* I (1952), 51-65, especially p. 64.

<sup>163</sup>E.D. Van Buren, *Clay Figurines of Babylonia and Assyria*. Yale Oriental Series XVI (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1930), p. LI.

<sup>164</sup>It may serve some purpose to note here that the goddess *Bēlet-ekallim* as "the eldest daughter of Sin" is associated with Inanna (W.L. Moran, *op. cit.*, *Biblica* 50 (1969), p. 32).

<sup>165</sup>Also A. Parrot, "'Cérémonie de la main' et réinvestiture," *Studia Mariana* (1950), pp. 39-40; *Le palais: peintures murales*. *MAM* II, 2. BAH 70 (Paris: Geuthner, 1958), pp. 61-63; A. Haldar, *op. cit.*, *Orientalia Suecana* I (1952), pp. 64-65.

<sup>166</sup>A. Parrot, *op. cit.*, *Studia Mariana* (1950), p. 39.

<sup>167</sup>Parrot, *Le palais: peintures murales*. *MAM* II, 2, pp. 62-63; Barrelet, *op. cit.*, *Studia Mariana* (1950), pp. 30-31.

<sup>168</sup>Barrelet and Parrot in *Studia Mariana* (1950), pp. 30 and 39, respectively.

*2nd millennia Mesopotamia.* On the other hand, the posture of Zimrilim on the mural is a very common figure in relief and glyptic art. A representation of a king in front of a deity seems to have historico-religious significance, that is, the enthronement or the re-affirmation of the ruler by the major god. Accordingly, it is justifiable to assume that royal sculptures like these *should have been a favorite target of destruction by the enemy, in order to discredit the ruling dynasty of the conquered city and break its historical and religious continuity.* There are many cases, which are documented archaeologically and historically, of enemies carrying away or destroying monumental sculptures of kings or gods—the Code Stele of Hammurapi was found at Susa in Iran, to mention one example.

We are inclined to think that the presumption of Zimrilim performing the rite in person, on the basis of the absence of statues in that posture, is ill-founded. We do not intend to assume, however, that Zimrilim was not a participant in the cultic ceremony. The king could have taken part in the festival in the presence of his statue, and that is how we would like to understand the upper register of the “Investiture” scene.

The figures of Zimrilim and Ishtar of the painting have been reconstructed in sculpture in the round in pl. VI<sup>169</sup> (see also p. 40) and set up in the Tribune-Cella facing the spectator. The position (frontal) of the two statues is different from the way they appear in the painting, where the king and the goddess face each other (pl. V). This was done in this way because the two types of art (sculpture and mural) were intended to serve different functions. It has been stated earlier that the painting scene is a two-dimensional representation of the three-dimensional Sanctuary 66 and its sculptures. The ceremony of Zimrilim touching the hand of Ishtar took place in the sanctuary inside Throneroom 65, where presumably only a few people could have been present. We would like to think, therefore, that the purpose of the mural was to illustrate the actual act of the ceremony—a given moment. Accordingly, the figures on the painting are represented in relation to each other—Zimrilim faces Ishtar—whereas the statues in the cella were erected to receive libation or prayer from the king. In other words, the relationship was not between the statues themselves, but between the statues and Zimrilim. This should also explain the purpose of the “Investiture” mural, namely, to illustrate to the audience gathered outside Throneroom 65 in the Inner Court what went on in the nearby sanctuary during the rite.

### 3. THE CEREMONY

We discussed above the identity of the two main figures of the “Investiture” painting and suggested that they represent Ishtar and Zimrilim in a ritual ceremony. The nature of the ceremony and its significance to the king can hardly be explained. Neither textual nor archaeological evidence from Mari provide us with adequate information to understand the character of the festival. Consequently, we must seek the help of written documents of contemporary, earlier or later dates from areas outside Mari. However, the local evidence of Mari should first be investigated.

It was stated above that the “Pantheon” text from the Mari palace refers to “Ishtar of the palace.”<sup>170</sup> The phrase suggests that the goddess had a permanent shrine inside the palace. If this premise is to be accepted, then Sanctuary 66 would be the area of her shrine—based on our analytical study of

<sup>169</sup>We have not restored, however, the statues with bases as the archaeological evidence indicate (see p.40); this is done for merely aesthetic reasons.

<sup>170</sup>G. Dossin, “Le panthéon de Mari,” *Studia Mariana* (1950), p. 47.

the representation of the painting and the sanctuary. Accordingly, one may assume that Ishtar's and Zimrilim's statues, and statues of other deities and possibly some high officials, were permanently set up inside Sanctuary 66 (see pl. VI). However, the location of the shrine inside Throneroom 65 and the archaeological evidence (although not completely conclusive, see pp. 56-7) of a partition between the throne side and the sanctuary suggest that the latter was used on certain occasions.

We are left in the dark concerning the nature and the importance of those religious ceremonies. The only other document associating Ishtar with the Mari palace describes the goddess as a visitor, "for the *zurayum* festival upon the entry of Ishtar into the palace," (*ARMT IX*, 9) rather than as a permanent resident of the building. There is little known about the *zurayum* (*CAD*, Z, pp. 166-67). One can only raise questions: was Ishtar of the *zurayum* festival the same as Ishtar of the palace? If so, where was she? and why did she leave her sanctuary inside the palace and return to it during the *zurayum* festival? Was she attending a ceremony in Ishtar's temple of the city? If Ishtar of the *zurayum* was a different form of Ishtar of the palace, why did the former visit the building? and what happened to the latter during the visit? Or was there only one Ishtar who entered the palace during religious ceremonies--the *zurayum* one of them? These are all problematic questions and cannot satisfactorily be answered at the present time. However, the last question of one Ishtar visiting the royal palace<sup>171</sup> appears to be the best circumstantial solution concerning the nature of the ceremony and the function of Sanctuary 66. It is possible that "Ishtar of the palace" was used as a descriptive address to the visitor, Ishtar.

The custom of major gods visiting royal palaces seems to have had a long tradition in Mesopotamian religion. Texts mentioning this cult range in date (at least) from the Third Dynasty of Ur through the Late Assyrian period (see above p. 60). The nature of the god's visit to the palace is not quite clear, and the reason(s) for the sojourn has received various interpretations. Oppenheim assumes they are a form of royal ritual, the so-called *tākultu*, where the king hosts an assembly of gods during the *akītu* festival.<sup>172</sup> Parrot hints to a relation between the figures of the painting and the New Year festival in which the king is re-enthroned.<sup>173</sup> Another occasion in which gods visit the palace is by invitation from the king to celebrate the inauguration of a newly constructed building; the Assyrian king Sargon wrote:<sup>174</sup>

"When I had finished the construction of their city  
and my palace, I invited there in the month of  
*Teshrit* the great gods, who lived in Assyria, I  
celebrated there a *tashiltu* festival."

Similar ceremonies also took place when a king entered a conquered city and installed himself in the palace of the defeated king, where the victorious ruler ceremonially introduced his gods or perhaps the divine emblems of his army--in this way King Shalmaneser III described his victory over King Giammu in the area of the Balikh River:<sup>175</sup>

<sup>171</sup> Parrot has already interpreted the upper register of the Central Scene of the painting as moving Ishtar's statue and those of other deities into the royal palace during a ceremony (op. cit., *Studia Mariana* (1950), pp. 39-40; *MAM II*, 2, pp. 61-63; also A. Haldar, op. cit., *Orientalia Suecana I* (1952), pp. 64-65).

<sup>172</sup> L. Oppenheim, *Ancient Mesopotamia, Portrait of a Dead Civilization* (Chicago: the University of Chicago Press, 1964), p. 378, n. 33.

<sup>173</sup> A. Parrot, op. cit., *MAM II*, 2, p. 63; also Haldar, op. cit., *Orientalia Suecana I* (1952), pp. 64-65.

<sup>174</sup> R. Labat, *Le caractère religieux de la royauté assyro-babyloniennne* (Paris: A. Maconneuve, 1939), p. 160.

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 160.

"I introduced my gods in his palaces and there I celebrated a *tashiltu* festival."

Although the texts cited above appear to have some bearing on our discussion, and the journey of the gods to the royal palace accompanied with ceremonial rituals seems to be a continued tradition, one should not rush into unwarranted conclusions in connection with the interpretation of the meaning of the figures of the mural. We have here data from a "cultural continuum" of approximately 1500 years. Jacobsen most recently discusses convincingly the complexity of dealing with data of so long a time span—he writes:<sup>176</sup>

"It is not only that older elements disappear and are replaced with new; often the old elements are retained and exist side by side with the new; and often too, these older elements, though seemingly unchanged, have in fact come to mean something quite different, have been reinterpreted to fit into a new system of meanings."

Textual evidence indicates, however, that the "cultural continuum" of gods visiting royal buildings had a long tradition in Mesopotamia, though the reasons for the visits seem to have served different purposes—to reaffirm the king during the New Year festival; to inaugurate a newly constructed palace; to celebrate the victory of the king in the palace of the defeated ruler; and perhaps for other reasons which we do not know.

One of the above-mentioned Ur III economic tablets<sup>177</sup> seems to shed new light on the nature of the cultic sojourn of the goddess Ishtar and gives a clue regarding some of the other murals which were found ornamenting the Court of the Palms (106) at Mari. The text enumerates different animal sacrifices (goats, sheep, and oxen), which are to be offered to the goddess at various stages of her procession from the temple to the royal palace and back. Most interesting for our discussion are those offered to her inside the palace. The text specifies several "fattened oxen" as sacrifices for the goddess while she is taking her place in her sanctuary of the palace.<sup>178</sup>

#### 4. OTHER FIGURATIVE EVIDENCE FOR THE CEREMONY

Indeed, with the help of the above-mentioned text we can now understand better the ritual meaning behind the two mural fragments (A and B), which were found in Court 106 and called the "Sacrificial Scene."<sup>179</sup> The two murals show a number of men in a ceremonial procession leading "bulls" or oxen to be sacrificed (figs. 34-35). The scene has already been interpreted as representing the king (the heroic figure on fragment B) leading a "procession of several temple servants towards" an enthroned god.<sup>180</sup> Moortgat goes even further to conjecture that the king in the ceremony is

<sup>176</sup>Th. Jacobsen, *The Treasures of Darkness; A History of Mesopotamian Religion* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976), p. 19.

<sup>177</sup>L. Legrain, *Le temps des rois d'Ur* (Paris: Champion, 1912), no. 273.

<sup>178</sup>R. Labat, *op. cit.*, p. 159.

<sup>179</sup>A. Parrot, *Le palais; peintures murales*. *MAM* II, 2, pp. 19-23, figs. 18-19, pls. V:2, VI, B:a.

<sup>180</sup>A. Moortgat, *The Art of Ancient Mesopotamia*, trans. J. Filson (London: Phaidon, 1969), pp. 71-72, 83 and n. 367.



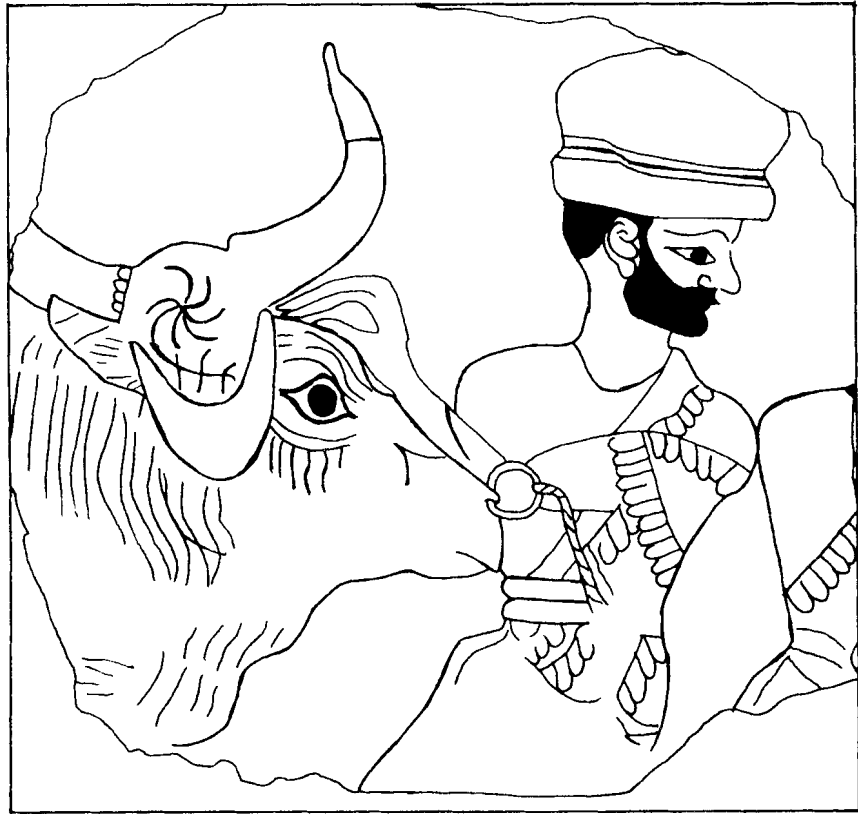


Figure 34. The "Sacrificial" mural (fragment A) from the palace at Mari.

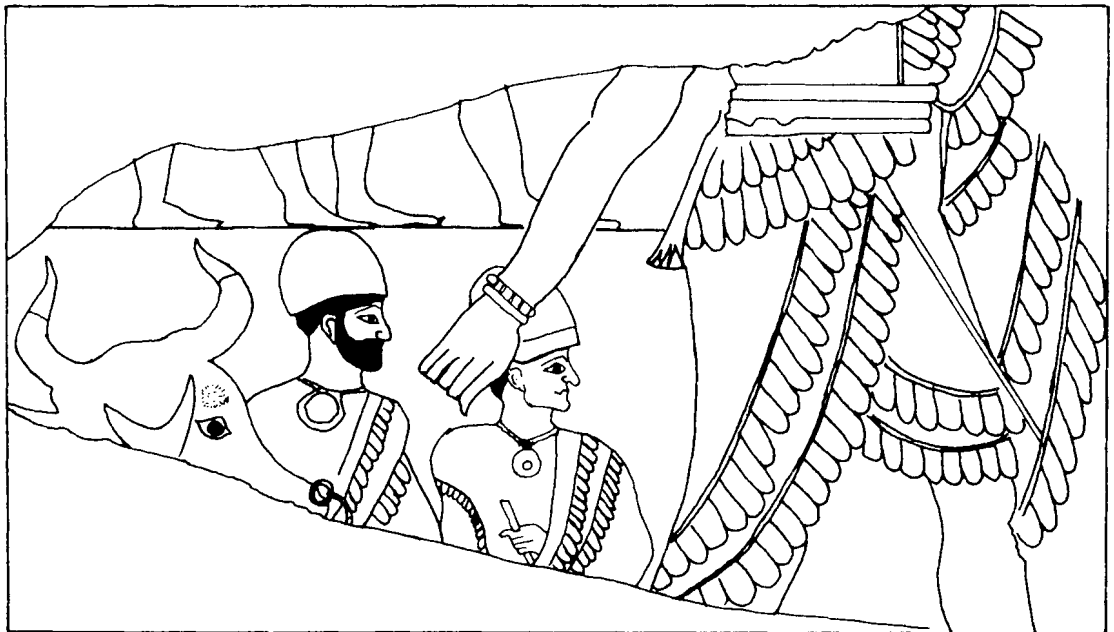


Figure 35. The "Sacrificial" mural (fragment B) from the palace at Mari.

Yasmah-Addu. Accordingly, he dates the paintings to the reign of that king, and thinks that the "Investiture" mural was later added by Zimrilim.<sup>181</sup>

Neither the archaeological nor the artistic evidence supports such a chronology<sup>182</sup> (also pp. 2, 66) and it would be very strange indeed if Zimrilim had preserved a painting showing his rival king Yasmah-Addu in such a magnificent attitude. Moreover, a written document informs us that when Yasmah-Addu left Mari, the palace was plundered (*ARM X*, 140:20-22). This fact might explain the two burnt layers underneath the latest floor level of the building—one resulted from Yasmah-Addu's expulsion and the other by Hammurapi's first campaign against Zimrilim.<sup>183</sup> We would like to believe that the "Investiture" and the "Sacrificial" murals were executed at the same time by Zimrilim. They appear to make more sense together and in relation with Sanctuary 66, as well as with the historical evidence.

Another question raised by Parrot is the date of the "Investiture" mural.<sup>184</sup> He interpreted the painting as representing Ishtar in her role as a goddess of war investing Zimrilim soon after Hammurapi's first campaign at Mari. This date of the mural between the years 33 and 35 of Hammurapi has, on one hand, no evidence to support it, and on the other hand would create rather complicated implications regarding the history of the building and its murals. It could imply, in some sense, that Sanctuary 66 was built at the same time the painting was executed; and the problem would not stop here, but also raise questions about the year dates of the tablets, which refer to the Court of the Palms. This is, indeed, a hazardous path to take and we would not be able to get any satisfactory results at the present, because of the lack of information. In considering the accumulated evidence, it seems more reasonable to assume that the custom of a goddess (maybe Ishtar) visiting the palace to invest Zimrilim during a cultic ceremony had a longer tradition.

To conclude our subject with a touch of imagination (which might be ill-received by some scholars), we seem to have the whole story or most of it told in writing (texts), in art (murals), and in architecture (Sanctuary 66). The ceremonial procession of the statue of the major goddess, possibly Ishtar, and the statues of minor deities accompanied by the statue of Zimrilim and perhaps even others of some high officials are brought into the royal palace for a religious celebration, conceivably the *zurayum* festival. The procession proceeds to Sanctuary 66, where the goddess (her statue and those of the others) takes the throne place in the Tribune-Cella (pl. VI). While the goddess is enthroned in her sanctuary, the king, the high officials, and the deity's priests proceed with the rite of the festival, which must have included the offerings of several "fattened oxen," as they are seen on the "Sacrificial Scene" (figs. 34-35).<sup>185</sup> The "Investiture" and the "Sacrificial" murals were certainly parts of a larger composition representing most likely the various phases of the goddess' journey,<sup>186</sup> which reached its highest drama with the investiture of Zimrilim in Sanctuary 66, as he is shown in the "Investiture" scene. This should also explain why the painting occupied the façade wall, just to the right side of the entrance to Throneroom 64.

<sup>181</sup>Ibid, pp. 80, 82-84.

<sup>182</sup>This is fully discussed in my unpublished dissertation "Mesopotamian Monumental Secular Architecture in the Second Millennium B.C." (Yale University, 1975), pp. 44-47.

<sup>183</sup>J.M. Sasson, "Some Comments on Archive Keeping at Mari," *Iraq XXXIV* (1972), p. 63; also H. Ph. Rölling, "Zur Datierung Zimri-Lims," *XV<sup>e</sup> Rencontre assyriologique internationale*, Liège (1966), pp. 97-102.

<sup>184</sup>A. Parrot, op. cit., *Studia Mariana* (1950), pp. 39-40; *MAM II*, 2, pp. 61-63.

<sup>185</sup>Fragments A-B and also other fragments (cf. Parrot, *MAM II*, 2, fig. 25).

<sup>186</sup>Other themes were also depicted (cf. Ibid, figs. 31-45).

## CHAPTER VI

### Conclusions

The Palace of Zimrilim at Mari has been one of the most important discoveries of Near Eastern archaeology and will probably remain so for many years to come. Its importance lies not only in the grandiose size, numerous rooms and courts and the elaborate layout, but also in the historical, cultural, and artistic materials which were found in it. Published literature dealing with this building and its finds have justifiably exceeded in number those of any other building.

With the present work, the intention is not to add merely one more book to the long bibliographical list of Mari. As indicated earlier in this paper, we are interested in a new method of investigation to help us understand the functional architecture of urban society. This can only be done, we believe, by integrating written documents, art objects, artifactual findings, and installations with the larger architectural context in which they occur. For such a functional analysis, the palace of Mari is an ideal example because of the richness of its cultural materials which were uncovered *in situ*, as well as the large number of publications dealing with the site. Texts, in particular, have proved to be of great significance in the functional interpretations of urban architecture.

This research deals mainly with what we called the Inner Court Block (106/116/64/65/66; pl. III) because of the evidence of the architectural information available in the texts which we examined. This fact does not indicate by any means that there are no other tablets describing other areas in the palace, but we have to wait for their publication.

We discuss, however, the general layout of the building and its various functional units. We are of the opinion—based on our studies and the recent excavations at Mari—that the palace was most likely constructed during the reign of Zimrilim. The building offers a total architectural effect with a harmonized functional unity, which could not have been accomplished without a preconceived overall plan. The palace has all the architectural characteristics of a Mesopotamian palace, except for its Throne Suite (64/65) which is of the “Variant Reception Suite” type and not of the “Standard Reception Suite” type of Mesopotamia.

The research began with examining the published texts from the Mari palace, and then choosing those which contained architectural or artistic references to areas in the structure. We were able to find seven (*ARMT* XIII, 16, 40, 42; *ARMT* IX, 9, 236; *ARMT* XVIII, 2-3) containing information pertinent to the work. These documents refer to several units located in the most important area of the palace, the Inner Court Block (106). They also furnished significant information concerning some art objects and the technique of their construction.

The texts refer to at least six units and features associated with them. These areas are: the “Court of the Palms”; the “railing of the Court of the Palms” and the “metalworker who has to make the railing”; “covering the Court of the Palms, at the entrance to the personnel quarters”; the “sealed oil storehouse of the Court of the Palms”; and the “sanctuary of the Court of the Palms.”

As the texts indicate, all these elements are associated with the “Court of the Palms”: therefore, we first identified this area with Inner Court 106. This was done by analyzing the different units of the palace and their installations and artifactual findings; the occurrence of the above-mentioned features of the texts in one area surrounding Court 106; and the discovery of the “Investiture” painting in Court 106, which represents palm trees with great naturalism. Indeed, we have been able to recognize all those units grouped around the Inner Court with communication accessible only from this Courtyard.

In one text (*ARMT* XIII, 16), we find the phrase “*lamassū raqidūtum . . . ša kisal gišimmarī*” (“the prancing *lamassu* of the Court of the Palms”). The term *lamassu*, “protective spirits,” seems to refer to a group of figures of different representational manifestations, at least as early as the Old Babylonian period. Those protective figures are depicted in human or demonic form—the supplicant goddess for the former and composite creatures of bull, lion, bird, fish, or human features for the latter. These figures appear to have had different mythological functions, and we have been able to recognize two protective roles for those representations: one is the introduction of worshippers to the presence of the god, a function usually associated with the genii of the supplicant goddess type; the second is guarding buildings against evil forces, a role played by the composite figures, such as the bull-man and the winged human-headed bull/lion. There are also signs of a shift of emphasis in the representational manifestations of the *lamassu*—in the 3rd and 2nd millennia there was emphasis on the protective spirit in the form of the supplicant goddess, whereas in the 1st millennium, the stress was on the demonic forms. The concept of the genii figures in various and sometimes contradicting forms is in full agreement with the mythological psychology of ancient Mesopotamia.

With the help of four other texts (*ARMT* XIII, 16, 42; *ARMT* XVIII, 2-3), which also refer to the *lamassu* figures, as well as the archaeological analysis, we interpreted the phrase as referring to sculptured reliefs which were originally decorating the façade wall of Sanctuary 66 of the Court of the Palms.

The phrase “the sanctuary of the Court of the Palms” has been identified with the Area 66, which is located on the eastern side of Throneroom 65. The identification resulted from a thorough study of the palace units and particularly the Throneroom Suite 64/65. The systematic analysis of the form, space and layout of the suite in connection with its contents (installations, decorations, art objects, artifacts, and inscribed texts), and regional comparison indicate without doubt the religious function of Area 66 and consequently its identification as the “sanctuary of the Court of the Palms.”

The physical relationship between the two sides of Room 65, in other words the western throne side (65) and the eastern sanctuary side (66), is also discussed. It is concluded, on the basis of archaeological evidence and the type of ritual ceremony which took place in the Sanctuary, that the two sides of the Room (65) were separated by a partition, most likely made of ornamented woven material and supported on a wooden structure. This partition seems to have had a central doorway located on the same axis between the throne dais on the west side and the Tribune-Cella on the east side of the room.

The reconstruction of Sanctuary 66 is another major contribution of this research. This is discussed in detail in Chapter Four. The restoration is essentially based on the correlation of Sanctuary 66 as an architectural form and the figurative representation of the “Investiture” painting. Integration of other archaeological finds, structural materials, installations, art objects, and artifacts have proved again their important role in our understanding of urban architecture. Written documents also

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furnished information regarding the form and the substance of the restored decorations. So that the reader may find it easier to follow our discussion, this chapter is divided into several sections: A Correlation of Architectural and Figurative Representation: the Central Scene; Drainage Installations: Archaeological Evidence; A Correlation of Architectural and Figurative Representation: the Side Scene; and Architectural Decorations in the Near East Before the 1st Millennium B.C.: Overview of the Archaeological Evidence.

The resemblance between the representation of the “Investiture” painting and Sanctuary 66 is great. Indeed, we believe that the painting scene is a two-dimensional copy of the three-dimensional architectural form of Sanctuary 66 (cf. figs. 20-21). Moreover, the artist of Mari was able to overcome skillfully some artistic difficulties in transforming his subject from three- into two-dimensional figuration. He also shows some awareness and understanding of three-dimensional rules by linear perspective in his painting.

The analogies between the scene on the painting and Sanctuary 66 are the following (figs. 20-21, and pls. IV and VI):

1. The six-stripe frame that surrounds the Central Scene is a diagrammatic representation of the Tribune-Cella rebated doorway with its lintel—interestingly, the cella doorway consists of six recessed surfaces, the same number as the stripes around the scene.
2. The six-stripe band which horizontally separates the Central Scene is likely intended to depict the steps of the staircase of the Sanctuary.
3. The upper register where Zimrilim and Ishtar are seen is equivalent, therefore, to the Tribune-Cella—the area at the top of the stairs.
4. The lower register of the Central Scene, which shows two goddesses with flowing vases, is parallel to Ante-Cella 66A, directly at the foot of the stair—more specifically, the statue brick-base which was found flanking the doorway of the Tribune-Cella.
5. If the above similarities are accepted, then the area at the sides of the Central Scene is equivalent to the façade wall on either side of the doorway of the Tribune-Cella.

Because of these striking similarities between Sanctuary 66 and the architectural representation on the mural, we propose that the former must have been decorated with sculptures similar to the figures of Zimrilim, Ishtar, and other deities on the painting. On pl. VI, the reader will find a reconstruction of what Sanctuary 66 might originally have looked like. We restore five statues in the round in the Tribune-Cella—the same as the number of figures (of Zimrilim, Ishtar, and others) shown in the upper register of the painting. We place the statue of the goddess with the flowing vase, which was found in the palace, on the brick-base flanking the entrance to the Tribune-Cella, similar to the two identical figures of the goddess holding a vase in the lower register of the scene. We adorn the façade wall of the Sanctuary with sculptured reliefs like the figures flanking the Central Scene.

This reconstruction is in accordance with the archaeological evidence which we have thoroughly investigated: the Sanctuary is carefully paved with baked brick and coated with thick layer of bitumen (there is also a plinth of bitumen), waterproof materials against the water which flowed out of the statues with the flowing vases; the occurrence of elaborate drainage installations and possibly a piping system in Ante-Cella 66A; the discovery of four statue bases in the shrine, as well as the statue bases which were built against the façade wall of the Sanctuary; the presence of two horizontal lines of holes in the Sanctuary façade, which likely helped support the stone reliefs on the wall. Texts also hint at the existence of such sculptures and suggest that they were plated with precious materials.

Therefore, there are good reasons to believe that the problem of identifying the shrine where the religious ceremony took place, as it is represented in the “Investiture” painting, is solved. It is Sanctuary 66 of the Court of the Palms.

The religious significance of Sanctuary 66, the identity of the statues, the cultic occasion and the character of the ritual that was performed by the king and its royal importance are discussed in Chapter Five. The location of the Sanctuary inside the most dignified room (the Throneroom 65 of the palace) and the richness of its cultic statues and reliefs indicate that the religious function of the shrine was highly important to the king.

The two main figures on the “Investiture” scene have been identified, on the basis of textual and artistic evidence, as those of the goddess Ishtar and Zimrilim. Ishtar is depicted in her role as a goddess of war investing Zimrilim in a certain ceremony, which appears to have historico-religious significance to the king. Two written documents from the Mari palace refer to “Ishtar of the palace,” and “for the *Zurayum* festival upon the entry of Ishtar into the palace.” These two phrases provide contradictory information: the former appears to suggest that Ishtar had a permanent shrine inside the palace, whereas the latter sentence indicates that the goddess used to enter the palace on certain occasions—the *zurayum* festival was one.

The custom of gods visiting royal palaces seems to have had a long history in Mesopotamian religion. However, the reason for the visit appears to have served different purposes through the ages—to reaffirm the king during the New Year festival; to inaugurate a newly constructed royal palace; and to celebrate the victory of the king in the palace of the defeated ruler.

With a background such as this of a long cultic tradition of gods visiting royal palaces, we preferred to interpret the “entry of Ishtar into the palace” at Mari as the celebrated process of moving the goddess’ statue and other deity statues accompanied by the King’s statue, as they are seen in the upper register of the Central Scene, from their temple and their set-up inside the “sanctuary of the Court of the Palms” during the festival—perhaps *zurayum*.

## APPENDIX

### Further Textual Evidence Describing the Architectural Features and Functional Aspects of the *PAPĀHUM* at Mari\*

by  
Ron Glaeseman

The main result of the study presented above has been the proposed identification of two constructions within the Inner Court block: the Court of the Palms and the *papāhum* sanctuary. The Court of the Palms has been located first by interpreting the architectural form in such a way as to differentiate this area from other structures which do not agree with what we know about the position of the court area in Mesopotamian architectural practice. The process of identification then shifted to the archives where it was found that of the several types of courts and rooms mentioned,<sup>1</sup> one, the *kisal gišimmari* could be favorably interpreted as referring to the mural decoration remaining in Court 106. The identification progressed in a positive manner as more texts were gathered which supported the location of Court 106 as the Court of the Palms. It was seen that an oil storehouse, personnel quarters, and a *papāhum* sanctuary were to be found in direct connection with, or in proximity to, the court. Ultimately, the sanctuary mentioned in the texts was found to be most logically identifiable with the Tribune-Cella (66) at the eastern end of Throneroom 65. The intent of this essay is to develop further the study of the Old Babylonian epigraphic materials which mention the *papāhum* and its important features. Within this body of evidence, I shall concentrate upon those documents from Mari which are directly related to our identification. The Old Babylonian evidence will be supported, where possible, by references taken from the earlier or later periods.

It is primarily from royal inscriptions and religious texts which post-date the Mari period that the lexical definition of the *papāhum* as a sanctuary is derived.<sup>2</sup> Middle, Neo-Assyrian, and Neo-Babylonian inscriptions mention the *papāhum* as containing the statue of the god, or in a context which would indicate the sacred nature of the structure.<sup>3</sup> The most frequent feature of the Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions describing the *papāhum* is the lavishness with which the abode of the deity was decorated. This

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<sup>1</sup>M. Birot, *Archives royales de Mari IX, Textes administratifs de la salle 5 du palais* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1960), p. 326.

<sup>2</sup>W. von Soden, *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1959-), p. 823. "Cella, Kultraum, Heiligtum."

<sup>3</sup>To cite only the most important of these; an inscription of Adad-narāri I indicates that the god Aššur was annually installed on a dais in the palace *papāhum*, A. K. Grayson, *Assyrian Royal Inscriptions I* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1972), p. 69 no. 16. A Late Babylonian text describing the New Year's ritual at Babylon mentions the purification rites occurring in the *papāhum* of Nabū, F. Thureau-Dangin, *Rituels accadiens* (Paris: Leroux 1921), pp. 140-41. For Sennacherib's account of the construction and decoration of the *papāhānu* in the "Palace Without Rival," see D. Luckenbill, *The Annals of Sennacherib*, Oriental Institute Publications II (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1924), pp. 106-07. In the reconstruction of a line from a Middle Assyrian ritual text, R. Frankena suggests the restoration of the divine determinative before the term *papāhum* ([d] *pa-pa-hu GAL*) on a comparison with *KAV 86.6: <sup>d</sup>pa-pa-hu la a-š[e-e']*. R. Frankena, *Täkultu De Sacrale Maaltijd in het Assyrische Ritueel* (Leiden: Brill, 1954), p. 31, n. 31.

is particularly true in relation to the national god, Aššur, as an example taken from the building inscriptions of Esarhaddon illustrates:<sup>4</sup>

- 24 . . . *at-man Aš-šur EN-ia KÙ.GI ul-hi-iz*  
<sup>d</sup>*lāh-me* <sup>d</sup>*ku-ri-bi šá ša-ri-ri ru-uš-šú-u i-di*  
 DIŠ *i-di ul-ziz É PA.PAH Aš-šur EN-ia*
- 25 ALAM.MEŠ KÙ.GI *bi-nu-ut ZU.AB ZA[G] u KAB ul-ziz*  
 É.SIG<sub>4</sub>.MEŠ [K]Ù.GI *ki-ma si-i-ri a-si-ir*

. . . The cella of my lord Aššur I overlaid with gold.  
 I had *lahmu* monsters and *kuribu* spirits, which were of reddish gold, placed at either side of the sanctuary of my lord Aššur. Golden statues in the form of fishmen, I had placed on the right and on the left. I used gold like plaster for the walls.

Information of this sort, that is royal inscriptions testifying to the construction of a *papāhūm* as part of a complex of sacred rooms, is rarely found in early second millennium sources. I know of no ruler other than Sin-kašid of Uruk, who left a building inscription describing the *papāhūm* as a feature of a temple.<sup>5</sup> Most commonly, the evidence is comprised of letters and administrative documents which mention the structure in conjunction with the conduct of certain agricultural and rationing activities,<sup>6</sup> as part of a private estate,<sup>7</sup> as a place of oath taking,<sup>8</sup> and possibly as an area where accounts due (*epēš nikkassi*) were settled.<sup>9</sup>

The appearance of the *papāhūm* in everyday correspondence and records raises the question of how narrowly we can limit the interpretation of the *papāhūm* in the earlier periods. The association of this structure with religious architecture in the Old Babylonian period can be stated on the direct evidence of the royal inscription noted above, and on the information presented by a Sumerian ritual text from Babylonia. This text cites the statue of the goddess Nanāya as being brought out of a *papāhūm*.<sup>10</sup> Certain examples from the references collected from administrative texts indicate the *papāhūm* as having

<sup>4</sup>R. Borger, "Die Inschriften Asarhaddons," *Archiv für Orientforschung* 9 (1956), p. 87.

<sup>5</sup>Sin-Kāšid commemorates the construction of a *bīt papāhūm* in the Eanna Temple at Uruk. D. O. Edzard, "Königsinschriften des Iraq-Museums," *Sumer* 13 (1957), p. 187.

<sup>6</sup>G. Dossin, *Archives royales de Mari, Textes cunéiformes: La correspondance féminine* (Paris: Geuthner, 1967), Nos. 136 and 16. For a transliteration and translation, see W. H. Ph. Römer, *Frauenbriefe über Religion, Politik und Privatleben in Mari* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Butzon & Kevalaer, 1971), pp. 89-91; M. Birot, *op. cit.*, No. 236; W. F. Leemans, *Legal and Administrative Documents of the Time of Hammurabi and Samsuiluna (Mainly from Lagaba)* (Leiden: Brill, 1960), No. 184.

<sup>7</sup>An Old Babylonian legal text from Elam mentions a *papāhūm* as part of a private estate, along with a *bītum* 'house' (?) and 5 *kur* of barley. V. Scheil, *Mémoires de la mission archéologique Perse*, XXIV, *Actes juridiques Susiens* (Paris: Leroux, 1933), No. 330. A second legal text from Babylonia includes a *papāhūm* within the constructions on an estate purchased by an individual. B. Meissner, *Beiträge zum Alt-babylonischen Privatrecht* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1893), No. 35.

<sup>8</sup>A tablet from Sippar states that a *nadītum* was required by the judge presiding in a legal dispute to swear an oath in front of a *papāhūm* (*ana pani papāhūm*). P. Koschaker and A. Ungnad, *Hammurabi's Gesetz* Bd. VI (Leipzig: Pfeiffer, 1923), No. 1745. There is, in addition, evidence to propose that women may have been associated with or attached to the *papāhūm*. J. M. Sasson, Review of *Frauenbriefe über Religion, Politik und Privatleben in Mari*, by Wm. H. Ph. Römer, in *Bibliotheca Orientalis*, 28 (1971), 355: X.94.7': SAL.TUR DUMU.SAL SAL *pa!-pa-ḫi-inu* [ . . . ].

<sup>9</sup>J. Bottéro, *Archives royales de Mari VII, Textes économiques et administratifs* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1957), No. 103. See discussion below.

<sup>10</sup>A. W. Sjöberg, "Miscellaneous Sumerian Texts II," *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 29 (1977), pp. 16-24.



a sacred nature, and these examples, especially as they pertain to Mari, will be treated below. However, a significant number of texts from both Mari and Babylonia mention the *papāḫum* in such a way as to imply that it was little more than a storage area for various commodities. Therefore, as this study progresses and the evidence is presented, it will become apparent that the definition of the *papāḫum* cannot be limited purely to its being a religious edifice. In order to synthesize these two types of sources, that is those identifying the *papāḫum* with a religious function and those presenting it in a secular context, I would suggest that the *papāḫum* be broadly interpreted as an area within a structure wherein objects of a diverse nature are kept. A *papāḫum* found in conjunction with religious architecture would contain the statue of the god; and if it were part of a secular building, it could be used for the storage of items of a common nature. However, a *papāḫum* in the latter category could have also been used as a cultic area. The substantiation of this suggestion will be the objective of the remainder of this study.

Sources for the study of the *papāḫum* in the first half of the second millennium are restricted, as we have said, to a small number of letters, administrative, and economic texts, and a few legal documents. Considering the tablets already discussed by Al-Khalesi above (pp. 7-8), the number and quality of references to the palace *papāḫum* at Mari indicate that the information derived from this site will form the basis for our interpretation of the *papāḫum* in the Old Babylonian Period. The salient architectural features of the palace Sanctuary 66 have been discussed relying on both archaeological and written evidence, and so my objective will be to add to what has been presented.

It was suggested in one of the letters already treated that the sanctuary was roofed.<sup>11</sup> This is confirmed by additional texts from the archive which indicate that the term *ūrum* 'roof, platform, magazine', found in this text in construct with *papāḫum*, should be taken as referring to the roof.<sup>12</sup> Two Mari letters, one of which is a response to the other, note the activities of Šibtu, queen of Mari, and her efforts to have 10 *ugar* of *hazzanu*-onions sent to the king.<sup>13</sup> In one of these letters, the queen is instructed to take the onions if they are dry, and seal them in a particular type of jar. If the onions are not dry, she is to have them taken to the roof of the *papāḫum* where they will be dried, and the roof is to be "sealed." Given the conditions for the treatment of the onions presented by this letter, the *ūrum* must indicate an area exposed to the sun. Since the only architectural units which fit this requirement are courts and roofs, we can be reasonably certain that it is to the roof of the *papāḫum* that this letter refers. The drying operation should require enough area to spread out 10 *ugar* or 12,000 liters of onions, estimating that 1 *SĪLA* = 1 liter.<sup>14</sup> Considering the dimensions of Tribune-Cella 66, the two small lateral chambers, and the supporting walls, the area which could be roofed is approximately 200 square meters. If we estimate roughly that 10 liters of onions could be dried within 1 sq. meter, the area required would be 1,200 sq. meters. This is considerably greater than the area of roof covering the Tribune-Cella. If the drying operation can be hypothesized as including the roof of the Throneroom Suite (64/65) and the surrounding storage rooms and passage ways (Nos. 81, 82, 10, 79, 78, 63, and 62), the total area is around 1,500 sq. meters. Thus, the area involved over and around the palace sanctuary is sufficient to support our initial suggestion of how and where the onions were dried. The notation that the roof could be sealed indicates a need for a defined area

<sup>11</sup>M. Birot, "Lettres de Iasim-Sumû," *Archives royales de Mari XIII, Textes divers* (Paris: Geuthner, 1964), No. 40:27-30.

<sup>12</sup>The construction *ūr papāḫim* or the association of an *ūrum* with the *papāḫum* occurs in several texts from Mari and Babylonia: *ARMT XIII*, 40:30; *ARM X*, 136:18, and 16:9; *ARMT VII*, 103:9'(?); Leemans, *op. cit.*, No. 184:12-13; J. van Dijk, *Texts in the Iraq Museum. Old Babylonian Letters and Related Material* (Wiesbaden, 1965), No. 90:4.

<sup>13</sup>Dossin, *op. cit.*, Nos. 136 and 16.

<sup>14</sup>A Segrè, "Babylonian, Assyrian, and Persian Measures," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 64 (1944), pp. 75 ff.

of limited expanse to which access could be controlled. We can suggest that the roof was reached through a door at the top of a stairflight and that the door latch was designed to be sealed. A similar procedure is known on the basis of an Old Assyrian letter from Kültepe.<sup>15</sup> Here, a merchant is instructed to purchase an amount of prepared wood and have it sealed in the *arum* of a building. J. Lewy considers the *arum* to be the equivalent of the Old Babylonian *ūrum*. Judging from this letter, the *arum* refers to a securable area within a larger structure rather than to the roof. The actions described in this letter would roughly parallel those of Šibtum were it not for the requirement that the commodity be dried. For this reason, unless the onion drying process can be demonstrated as taking place within a sacred structure, the *ūrum* of the Mari letter should be seen as referring to the roof.

The extensive archives from Mari do not as yet offer us information on the size or proportions of the palace *papāhum*. We are however, fortunate to have available a letter from Sagarātum wherein Yaqqim-Addu, governor of the city, presents Zimri-Lim with a summary of the problems involved with roofing a *papāhum*.<sup>16</sup> The letter presents some difficulties, as the beginning is lost and the text resumes abruptly with the mention of the construction of an icehouse: Line 2' : É šu-ri-pi-im lu-še-pi-iš . . . . It is possible though to consider that the dimensions given in line 3 describe the *papāhum* and the text pertaining to the icehouse preceded line 2' , and is now lost. Omitting the reference to the *bīt šurīpim*, the text continues:

. . . ù be-lí k[i-a-a]m i[š]-pu-ra-am  
 um-ma-a-mi 2 GI 2 am!-ma-tim li-ib-bi É-tim  
 [1]i-iš-ku-nu be-lí i-de i-ga-ar-tum ša pa-pa-ḫi-im  
 5' iš-tu ša-ap-la-nu-um e-li-iš pa-ḫa-rum! -ma ip-ḫu-ur  
 2 GI 2 am-ma-tim li-ib-bi É-tim iš-ša-ka-an-ma  
 GIŠ.UR.HIA a-ia-nu-um ni-le-eq-qé-em 4 GI UŠ É-t[im]  
 im-ti-il 2 GI-ma li-ib-bi É-tim az-zi-im  
 šī-id-di-šu li-iš-ša-ki-in . . .

. . . And my lord has written the following: 'Let them make the width of the room two canes, two cubits long'. As my lord knows, the walls of the sanctuary are completely finished from top to bottom. If they make the room two canes, two cubits wide, from where will we get the roof beams? (As) the length has been established at four canes, it is necessary to make the width two canes long to keep proportion to its length.

The report of the governor reveals a number of facts about the *papāhum*. It was roofed, as we have determined for the structure at Mari, and the width of the roof was approaching the limit for which suitable beams could be found. The construction measured some twelve meters by six meters (1 GI = 3 meters). Since Yaqqim-Addu indicates that beams of more than 6 meters were difficult to acquire, and the length of the structure was twice this size, it probably was necessary to use columns to support the roof. This practice is known from a text of Tukulti-Ninurta I according to which nine or ten cedar columns were used by him for the *papāhum* in the palace of the Tabira Gate.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>15</sup>J. Lewy, "Studies in Old Assyrian Grammar and Lexicography," *Orientalia* 19 (1950), pp. 10 ff.

<sup>16</sup>M. Birot, *Archives royales de Mari XIV, Lettres de Yaqqim-Addu* (Paris: Geuthner, 1974), No. 25.

<sup>17</sup>E. Weidner, "Säulen aus Nahur," *Archive für Orientforschung* 17 (1954-56), pp. 145-46.

The dimensions of the *papāhum* at Sagarātum are somewhat greater than those presented by the Sanctuary 66 at Mari, but it is to be expected that the dimensions of the religious architecture constructed within the various palaces around the realm would vary according to the plan and requirements of each palace. More important is the statement that the structure be built according to a certain proportion. Yaqqim-Addu is most emphatic that the ratio be maintained at 2:1. It is this proportion which leads us to believe that it is the *papāhum* which is being described in this passage and not the *bit šuripim*. At Mari, the dimensions of the Tribune-Cella are 5.40 x 2.25 meters, almost an exact proportion of 2:1. Ascribing this proportion to a *papāhum* can be documented by an Old Akkadian tablet plan of a temple which is discussed in an article by E. Heinrich and U. Seidl.<sup>18</sup> Within the configuration of the plan, one room has been designated as a *papāhum* (PA.PAH) by the scribe, and its dimensions are given as 1 GI (6 cubits) width by 1 NÍG.DU (12 cubits) length. Conversion to metric measurement gives dimensions of 3 x 6. The authors reject the suggestion that the tablet plan represents a temple, and maintain that it could be identified with a private house. However, on the basis of a comparison of the plan with temples discovered at Nippur, Ur, Uruk, and Aqar Quf,<sup>19</sup> we can definitely state that the tablet plan represents a religious structure.<sup>20</sup> In figure 1, the re-interpreted tablet plan is compared with the Enlil Temple excavated at Nippur.

Comparing the two plans, we see that both are basically rectangular in shape. This is not completely true in the redrawn version of Heinrich-Seidl, however on the original tablet plan first published by F. Thureau-Dangin,<sup>21</sup> a number of vertical lines present at the right side of the tablet have not been considered, and they may have been relevant to the plan. The re-interpretation of the tablet plan by Heinrich-Seidl is based on the premise that the dimensions of the rooms given by the scribe are not consistent with the shape of the various rooms. On this point, Al-Khalesi has suggested that concerning tablet plans, there was little attention given to correlating the plan drawn with the measurements written on the tablet.<sup>22</sup> Thus, the plan drawn on the tablet represents the general layout of the structure, but the correct measurements would be transferred to the actual building.

The second and most important comparison to be made between these two plans is the occurrence of a larger rectangular room featuring two smaller rooms entered through one side. In the tablet plan, this configuration is comprised of the rooms labelled K1.TUŠ 'dwelling', É.ŠÀ 'inner room', and one other small room whose designation is lost. The Enlil Temple shows two such groups of rooms (Nos. 13, 9, 19 and 18, 16, 17) which are reached immediately upon entry at either door. We can then state that already in the Akkadian Period, the *papāhum* is found in relationship with an arrangement of three rooms which can be shown to have religious significance.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>18</sup>E. Heinrich and U. Seidl, "Grundrisszeichnungen aus dem Alten Orient," *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft* 98 (1967), pp. 24 ff.

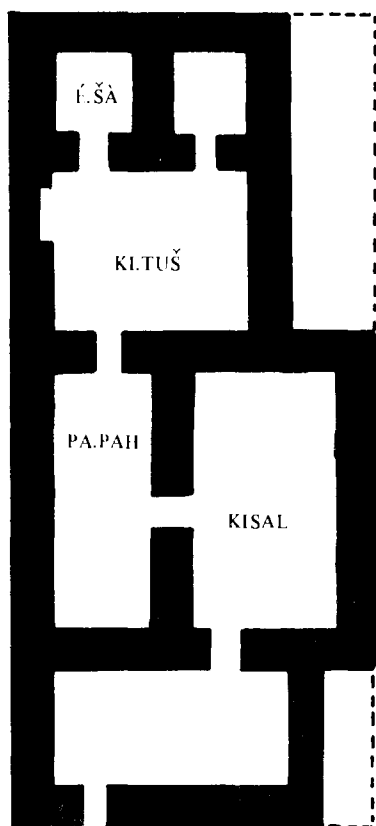
<sup>19</sup>Y. Al-Khalesi, *Mesopotamian Monumental Secular Architecture in the Second Millennium B. C.*, (Unpubl. Yale Ph.D. Dissertation, 1975), pp. 143-44.

<sup>20</sup>This conclusion was suggested by Y. Al-Khalesi.

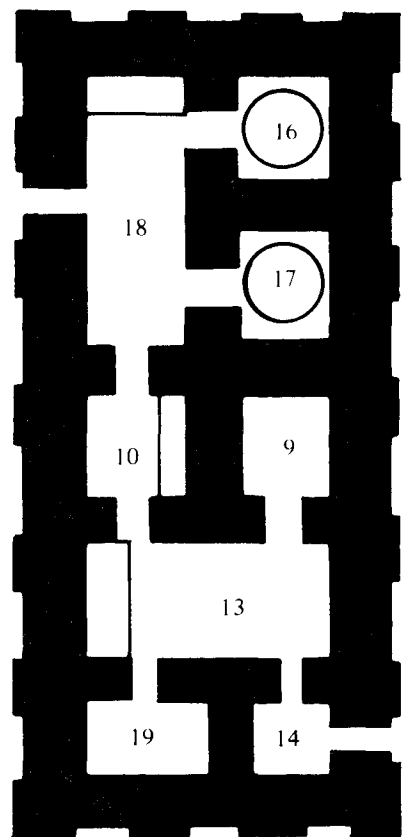
<sup>21</sup>F. Thureau-Dangin, *Recueil de tablettes chaldéennes* (Paris, 1903), No. 145.

<sup>22</sup>Al-Khalesi, *op. cit.*, pp. 5-6.

<sup>23</sup>It is interesting to mention here that those excavated temples with similar plans to that inscribed on this tablet have been termed "Temple-Kitchens" by excavators (C. L. Woolley, *Ur Excavations V: The Ziggurat and its Surroundings* (London: British Museum; Philadelphia: University Museum, 1939), pp. 38, 47; D. McCown *et. al.*, *Nippur I, Temple of Enlil, Scribal Quarter, and Soundings*. Oriental Institute Publications 78 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967), pp. 23-33). A series of temples of this type found at Nippur date from the Ur III to the Kassite periods. At Ur, similar temples have been found as early as the Early Dynastic period (McCown, *op. cit.*, pp. 4-19; Woolley, *op. cit.*, p. 38) suggesting a long tradition for this type of architecture.



Tablet Plan from Tello  
After Heinrich & Seidl



Enlil Temple at Nippur, Level V  
After McCown & Haines, *Nippur 1*

Figure 1.

The preceding discussion has focused on the physical attributes of the *papāḫum* and we have mentioned the evidence which associates the structure with the presence of the statue of the god and as a feature of a temple. The remaining evidence deals with a number of activities which take place in or around the *papāḫum*. We have dealt with the process of drying produce on the roof of the sanctuary, but a second tablet from the Mari archive lists comestibles received within the *papāḫum*. This tablet (*ARMT IX*, 236), which has been previously given by Al-Khalesi (above, p. 8), lists four commodities destined for the official Ilukānum on the occasion of the king's return from a campaign. The transaction occurs in the Sanctuary of the Court of the Palms. The types of commodities received by Ilukānum are typical of those received by him for the king's meal, a subject to be investigated in a dissertation by this author. It is possible that a special meal took place in the vicinity of the sanctuary to celebrate Zimri-Lim's return from the field and his victories there. The allocation of agricultural products in the *papāḫum* is also known from two texts from Babylonia. In a list of barley rations for various workers, 120 SĪLA is noted as having been given out in the *papāḫum* (*ina bīt papāḫim*).<sup>24</sup> The entire allotment is then given as "expended from the magazine" (*ZI.GA ina ú-ri-im*). *Ūrum* in this instance evidently refers to a storage area located near or within the structure. Similarly, the originator of an Old Babylonian letter states that he ordered an amount of barley to be given to the men of the UGULA.MAR.TU.MEŠ. The grain was not handed over and he now asks his father to give two men 1 GUR of barley each in the *bīt papāḫim*.<sup>25</sup>

The use of the *papāḫum* as a place of transferring common commodities is not a function which one would expect to be associated with a religious structure. At Mari, the type of commodities received by Ilukānum do not specifically indicate ritual activities, but are commonly allotted for the king's meal. The observance of the king's meal apparently was practiced on a daily basis indicating that it was not an act of special significance. However, it must be said that a number of religious activities were closely associated with the meal. Commodity allocations for the cult of offerings to dead rulers and the cults of Ištar and Nergal, for example, are often identical to those given for the king's meal. Thus, considering the problem in question, the evidence is not conclusive as to whether Ilukānum is receiving the foodstuffs for a celebration in the *papāḫum*, or whether the commodities were received into storage at the *papāḫum*.

It should be pointed out that in the two examples from Babylonia, the distributions are made in the *bīt papāḫim* (*i-na É pa-pa-ḫi-im*). At Mari, the writing *bīt papāḫim* is not yet attested although there is reason to suspect it did occur (see below). There is then the possibility that the two methods of referring to a *papāḫum* (use of *as* opposed to lack of the logogram) are not synonymous and do not refer to the same location. The difficulty lies in how we are to interpret the logogram É; whether it indicates a separate room within or along side of the *papāḫum* or whether it acts as a determinative which indicates that the *papāḫum* belongs to the class: "buildings." Only one example from the Old Babylonian Period can be produced which shows that É was used as a determinative. The remaining examples are not clear as the writing of *papāḫum* always reflects the genitive.<sup>26</sup> The evidence is inconclusive at this point as to whether scribes at Mari differentiated the *papāḫum* proper from a *bīt papāḫim* or whether they took the two terms as synonymous and conventionally dropped the determinative.

Although we have produced documents from Babylonia to prove that the *papāḫum* was used as a sacred structure in the Old Babylonian Period, such a function has not yet been similarly substantiated

<sup>24</sup>Leemans, *op. cit.*, No. 184:9-13.

<sup>25</sup>R. Frankena, *Altbabylonische Briefe VI, Briefe aus dem Berliner Museum* (Leiden: Brill, 1974), No. 214.

<sup>26</sup>R. Frankena, *Altbabylonische Briefe II, Briefe aus dem British Museum* (Leiden: Brill 1966), No. 110:14 (É *pa-pa-ha-am* . . .). For evidence favoring the interpretation of the logogram as an element of the *papāḫum*, one should note A. Goetze, *Old Babylonian Omen Texts*. Yale Oriental Series X (New Haven, 1947), No. 40:11 (. . . *bi-it pa-pa-[hi-i]m* . . .).

for the *papāḫum* at Mari. On the basis of two administrative texts, it can be suggested that the *papāḫum* was employed in the settling of accounts (*epēš nikkassi*), a procedure which required the presence of the god to insure the validity of the transaction. The first of these texts is a list of oil rations owed to men assigned to an oil processing factory.<sup>27</sup> The sum of the rations owed is stated in two totals designations, followed by the notation:

7' i-[n]u-ma ni-ik-ka-s[i i-pu-šu]  
i-na ū-ur É [pa(?) -pa(?) -hi(?) -im(?) ]

On the day in which accounts (are settled)  
on the roof(?) of the (sanctuary ?)

The proper restoration of line 8' is critical to the interpretation of this document. As mentioned above, the writing of *papāḫum* preceded by É has not occurred at Mari. However, on the basis of examples from Babylonia and the frequent association of *ūrum* with the *papāḫum*, I feel justified in suggesting this reconstruction.<sup>28</sup> The purpose of the document is to note the settling of an account, an activity which could have taken place in the temple on a monthly basis.<sup>29</sup>

A letter from Šamši-Addu I to his son indicates that the procedure occurred at Aššur.<sup>30</sup> Yasmaḫ-Addu is being asked about the delay in accounting for 20 minas of silver sent to him for the making of a statue. The king points out that the accounts for the statues which were made at Aššur and Šubat-Enlil have already been settled:

5 . . . ṣa-al-mu ša an-ni-ki-a-am  
ù i-na [Šu]-ba-at <sup>d</sup>E[N.LÍ]L.KI in-ne-ep-šu  
ni-k[a-a]s-si-šu-nu i-na É <sup>d</sup>A-šur i-[p]u-šu-ma

The statues which have been made here and  
at Šubat-Enlil, they have settled their accounts  
in the temple of Aššur and . . .

The passage indicates that it was the practice to settle certain types of accounts at Assur in the temple of the city god. We can expect the custom to have been the same at Mari. This being the case, the interpretation of another tablet from the Mari archives can be attempted. This tablet is, I suggest, an accounting for silver ornaments used most likely in the construction or decoration of a statue. The copy was published in *ARM* VIII, 89<sup>31</sup> and a complete transliteration and translation is given below:

<sup>27</sup>Bottéro, *op. cit.*, No. 103.

<sup>28</sup>A second possibility for the reconstruction of this line is suggested by an unpublished administrative text from Mari. O. Rouault, "Le système administratif de Mari à l'époque de Zimri-Lim," *Compte rendu de la XIX Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale. Le Palais et la Royauté* (Paris: Geuthner, 1974), p. 269, n. 15: *i-na ū-ur É.UZU.MEŠ* "On the roof(?) of the house of oracles." See now O. Rouault, *Archives Royales de Mari XVIII: Mukannišum, l'administration et l'économie palatiales de Mari* (Paris: Geuthner, 1977), pp. 104-05.

<sup>29</sup>A Neo-Babylonian list of rites and festivals (*inbu bēl arhi*) substantiates this suggestion. G. Van Driel, *The Cult of Aššur* (Netherlands: Koninklijke van Gorcum N. V., Assen, 1969), pp. 154 ff.

<sup>30</sup>G. Dossin, *Archives royales de Mari I: Correspondence de Šamši-Addu* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1950), No. 74.

<sup>31</sup>G. Boyer, *Archives royales de Mari VIII: Textes cunéiformes, textes juridiques et administratifs* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1957), No. 89.

- 1 *i-na* 2½ MA.NA 6 GÍN KÙ.BABBAR  
*i-na* NA<sub>4</sub>.HILA NÍG.ŠU LUG[AL]  
 KI.LAL.BI 4 [hu-u]/t-la-tim  
 4 sù-up-ra-tim
- 5 8 ka-[n]a'-sâ-ra-tim  
 ù 3 GÍN KÙ.BABBAR  
 šī-mi-it-tim  
 ih-ḥa-li-iš-ma<sup>32</sup>  
 12/3 GÍN KÙ.BABBAR
- 10 *im-ti*  
 ša it-ti Ia-šub-A-šar  
 im!-[m]a-ah-ru  
 ḥa-al-sù-um ù ga-am-rum  
 a-na ra-ka-si-im tu-ur
- 15 c[b-b]u-ut A-ḥu-ši-na  
 ù Ip-qu-ša-la  
 i-na pa-pa-ḥi-im  
 «m» GĪR D[a-r]i-iš-li-bur  
 Mu-ka-ni-ši-im
- 20 ù Be-el-šun[u]  
 I[TI] Ki-nu-nim UD.30.KAM  
 MU Zi-im-ri-Li-im  
 til-lu-ut KĀ.DINGIR.RA.KI  
 il-li-ku

From the two and one-half minas, six shekels of silver weighed out by the royal weight standard; four rings, four claw ornaments, eight wheel discs, and three shekels silver scrap(?) have been produced and (there is) one and two thirds shekels silver loss (through refining). That which Yašub-Ašar received has been refined and (the affair) is finished. It (i.e. the silver objects) will be returned to be added (to the storehouse)? Under the notarization of Aḥu-šina and Ipqu-šala in the sanctuary.

Under the control of Dariš-libur, Mukannišum, and Bēšunu.  
 The 30th day of Kinūnum, the year in which Zimri-Lim went to help Babylon.

The account lists a number of silver objects made from an amount of silver stock weighed out by means of the royal standard. The silver was taken most probably by Yašub-Ašar,<sup>33</sup> a craftsman under the direction of Mukannišum, chief of technical production. The objects and scrap(?) silver have been produced by refining the amount received, and a certain amount of silver which has been lost through refining (*imṭū*).<sup>34</sup> The balancing of this account was carried out in the *paḥum* in the

<sup>32</sup>The interpretation of this line and subsequently line 13 follows the meaning of *ḥalāšum* given by the *AHW*, 311a: "auskâmmen, auspressen." The *AHW* suggests that for this text, *ḥlš* may be either a scribal misunderstanding for, or a variant of *hrš*; cf. 324a, 311b, and 313b.

<sup>33</sup>See *ARMT* VII, 285 and 4.2' for the receipt of royal metal by Yašub-Ašar, and *ARMT* XIII, 5 and 6 for this individual's capacity as a craftsman under the direction of Mukannišum.

<sup>34</sup>For a discussion of losses (*muṭā'ū*) incurred while refining silver, see K. Veenhof, *Aspects of Old Assyrian Trade and its Terminology* (Leiden: Brill, 1972), pp. 46 ff., specifically for *ARM* VIII, 89, p. 49, no. 93.

presence of Abu-šina and Ipqu-šala who have been invested with ‘power of notarization’ (*ebbutum*).<sup>35</sup>

It can be suggested that Šamši-Addu was asking for a report similar to the Mari text above. Certain words in the letter (*ARMT* I, 74 above) are reminiscent of those found in the account. At one point, the king asks for tablets listing the silver used for the statue and the ornaments, as well as an accounting for the labor which went into making the object.

15 DUB-*p*[*a*]-*at ni-ka-as-sí* [š]*a* KÙ.BABBAR  
*ša-al-m*[*i*]-*im ša-a-ti* KÙ.BABBAR *ih-zi ši-ip-ra*-[*a*]*m*  
*ša i-na ša-al-mi-im ra-ak-s*[ú]  
 [ . . . ]

The account tablets for the silver (used) in that  
 statue, the silver (used) for the ornaments, (and)  
 the labor required for the statue, . . .

The text breaks off at this point, but it is evident that Šamši-Addu wants an accounting of the silver lost through refinement or fabrication (*imtu*, line 19) also sent to him (line 24). Finally, the total amount of silver used will be verified before the ‘notaries’ (LÚ *e-eb-bu-tum*) and the tablets will be placed in the temple of Aššur (lines 25-28).

The information offered by the three documents mentioned establishes a number of points which can be used in evaluating the palace *papāḫum* at Mari. 1) Accounts outstanding concerning sacred objects are settled in the temple at Aššur. 2) A tablet from Mari (VIII, 89) can be identified as listing silver used in the fabrication of such objects. 3) An accounting for these items takes place in a *papāḫum*. 4) A reconstruction of oil ration text (*ARMT* VII, 103) supports the postulation that account settling at Mari takes place in or near a *papāḫum*. The location of this *papāḫum* can justifiably be equated with our identification of the Sanctuary of the Court of the Palms as Rm. 66. This opinion is based on the information contained in an unpublished administrative text from the Mari archive. This tablet notes a number of quantities of silver and gold assigned to Mukannišum in the *papāḫum* of the Court of the Palms. These metals are described with the designation: *ištu nikkassušu napsū* “From the time that his accounts have been delayed(?)”.<sup>36</sup> We may refer back to *ARM* VIII, 89 where it is stated that the account balancing process taking place in the *papāḫum* is under the control of three officials, one of whom is Mukannišum. It is most likely that the *papāḫum* mentioned in the unpublished text is identical with the one noted in VIII, 89.

Originally, the idea was presented that the *papāḫum* was a room within a building and that it could be generally interpreted as a place where both sacred and profane objects could be stored, depending on the circumstances. The evidence which could be gathered from the Old Babylonian Period does not change this suggestion. The occurrence of tablets which introduce the possibility that the definition of the word as a sanctuary or cella should be considered less strictly cannot be ignored. Quite likely, the use of the *papāḫum* as a purely religious structure did occur as time progressed, as the majority of references from the first millennium consistently associate it with religious

<sup>35</sup>There is sufficient reason to suggest that the sanctuary mentioned in line 17 is the Sanctuary of the Court of the Palms. A note mentioning an unpublished administrative text reveals that transactions concerning precious metals occurred *ina papāḫim ša kisal gišimarrim* (See note 36).

<sup>36</sup>O. Rouault, *op. cit.*, pp. 104-05, 173.



architecture or at least do nothing to prevent such an association. Finally, at Mari we must concede that among the references to the *papāhum* which were presented, certain of them may refer to a structure other than Tribune-Cella 66 which has been identified as the Sanctuary of the Court of the Palms. Those texts which relate agricultural or rationing activities in or near the *papāhum* are suspect as to whether the structure to which they refer is the palace sanctuary. No attempt has been made to identify the location of other *papāhum* structures. At this point, not enough information exists to be able to confidently identify these areas on the basis of their shape or position within the configuration of rooms comprising the palace plan. And the laconic and often obscure nature of much of our written evidence mentioning the *papāhum* does not allow one to distinguish more than one structure with confidence.

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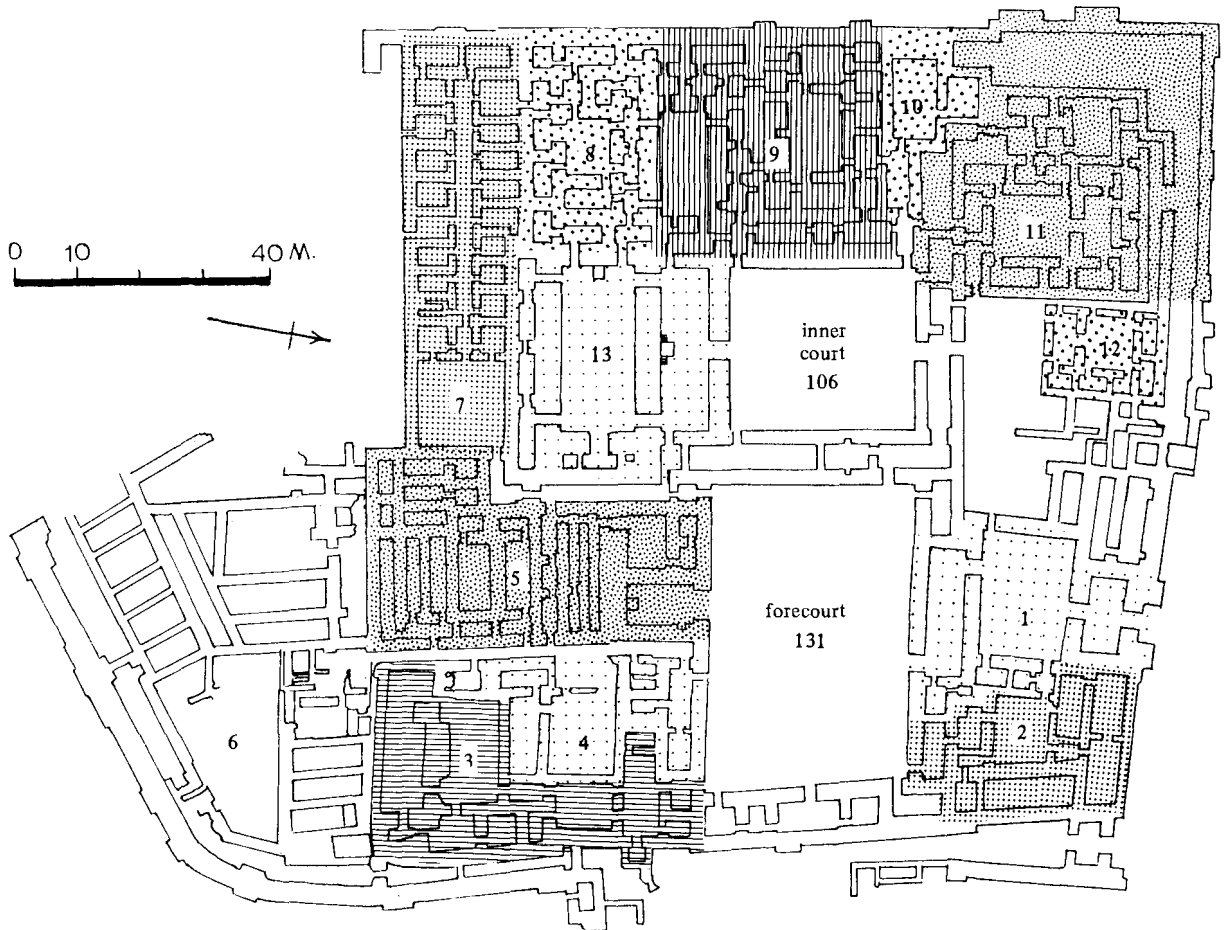


Plate I. The palace of Zimrilim with its various functional units.

- |                           |                                 |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Unit No. 1: Gate-House    | Unit No. 8: Kiln Unit           |
| Unit No. 2: Kitchen Unit  | Unit No. 9: Administrative Unit |
| Unit No. 3: Palace Chapel | Unit No. 10: School             |
| Unit No. 4: Official Unit | Unit No. 11: Royal Residence    |
| Unit No. 5: Funerary Unit | Unit No. 12: Guest Wing         |
| Unit No. 6: Working Area  | Unit No. 13: Reception Suite    |
| Unit No. 7: Storage Unit  |                                 |

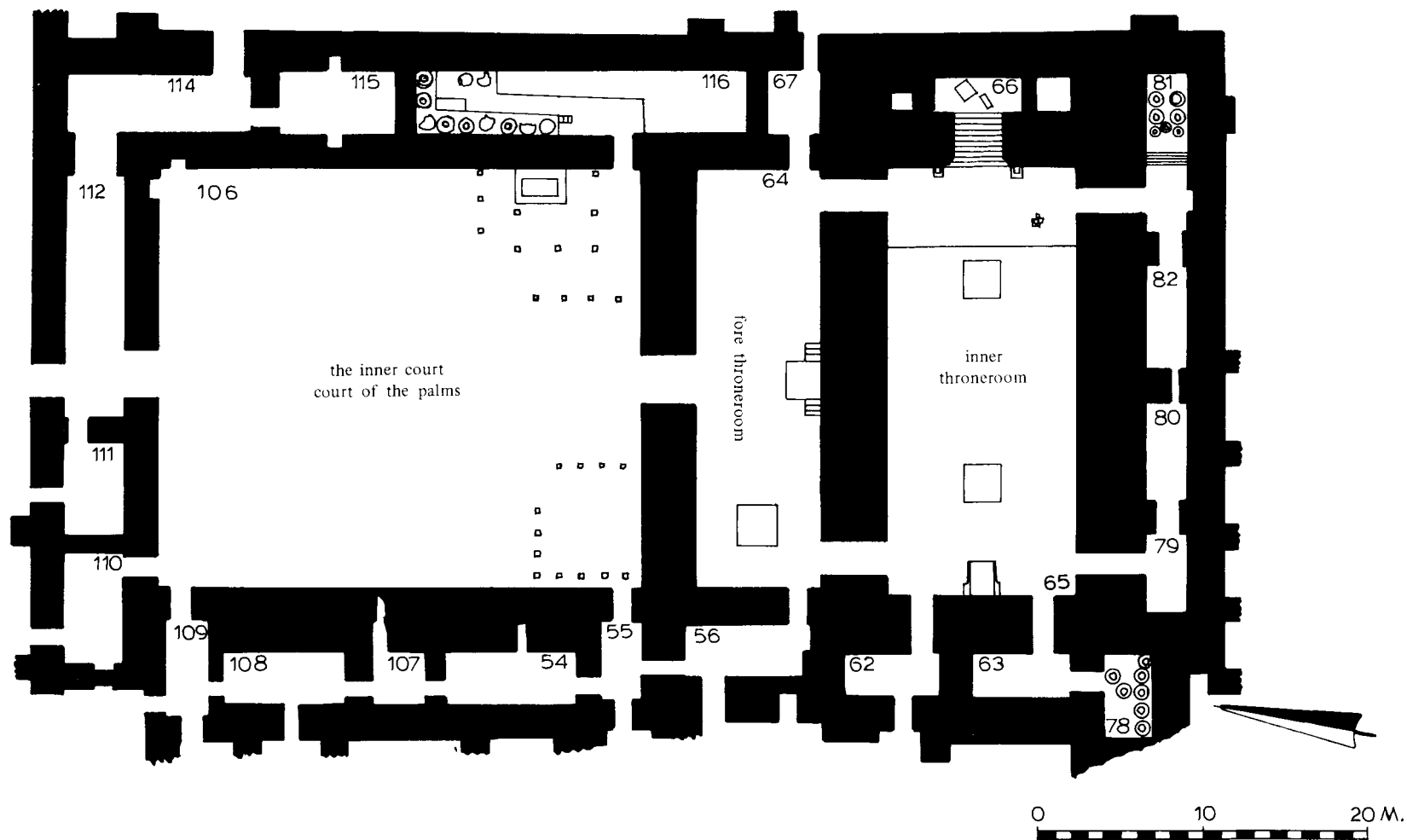


Plate II. The Inner Court Block of the Mari Palace and its Throneroom Suite 64/65.

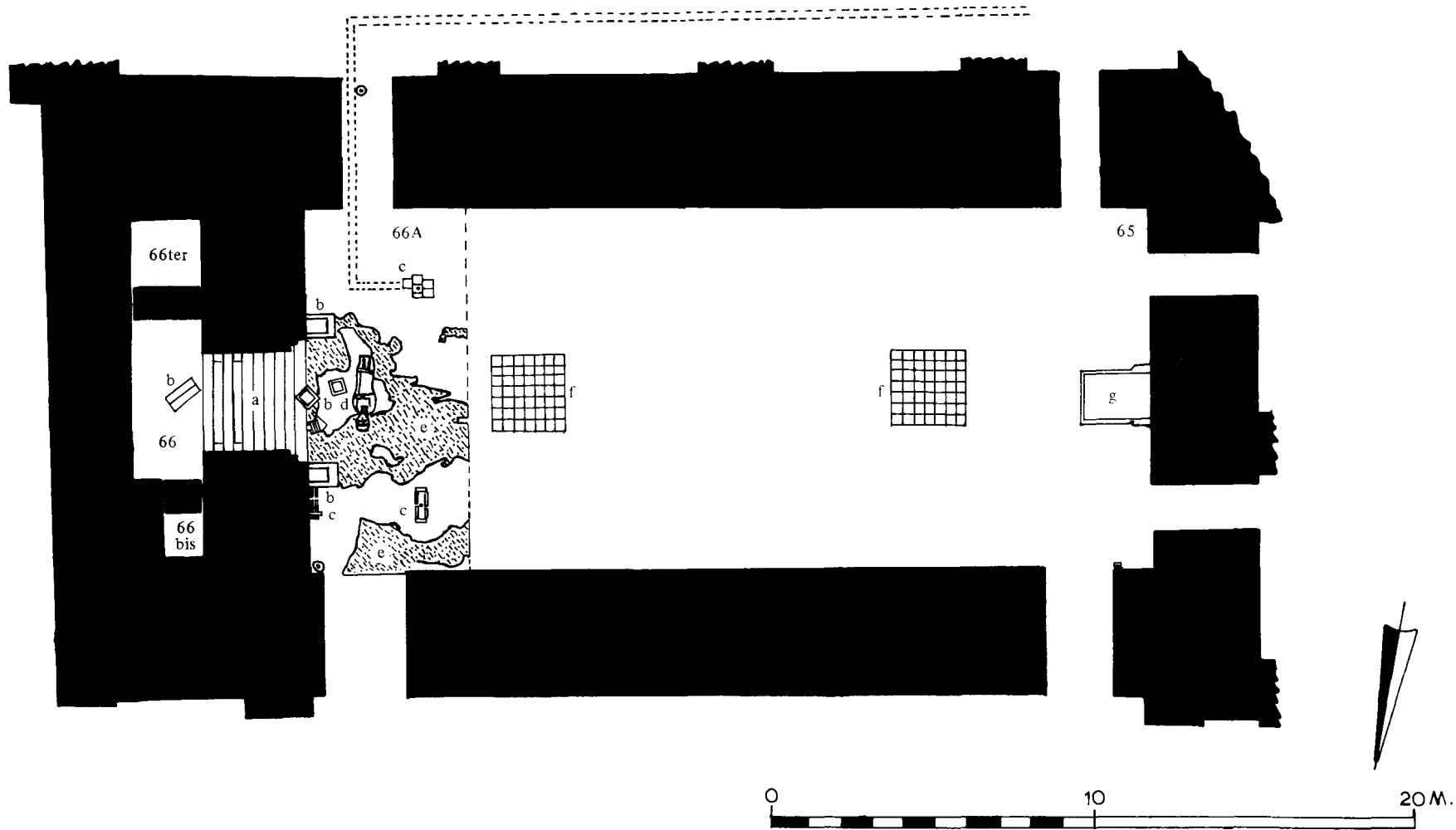


Plate III. The Inner Throneroom (65) and Sanctuary 66 of the palace at Mari.

- |                        |                           |  |
|------------------------|---------------------------|--|
| 65: Throneroom         | 66A: Ante-Cella           | d: Statue of Ishtub-ilum               |
| 66: Tribune-Cella      | a: Stairway               | e: Bitumen pavement                    |
| 66ter: Storage Cubicle | b: Statue basis           | f: Brick pavements for heating brazier |
| 66bis: Storage Cubicle | c: Drainage installations | g: Throne dais                         |

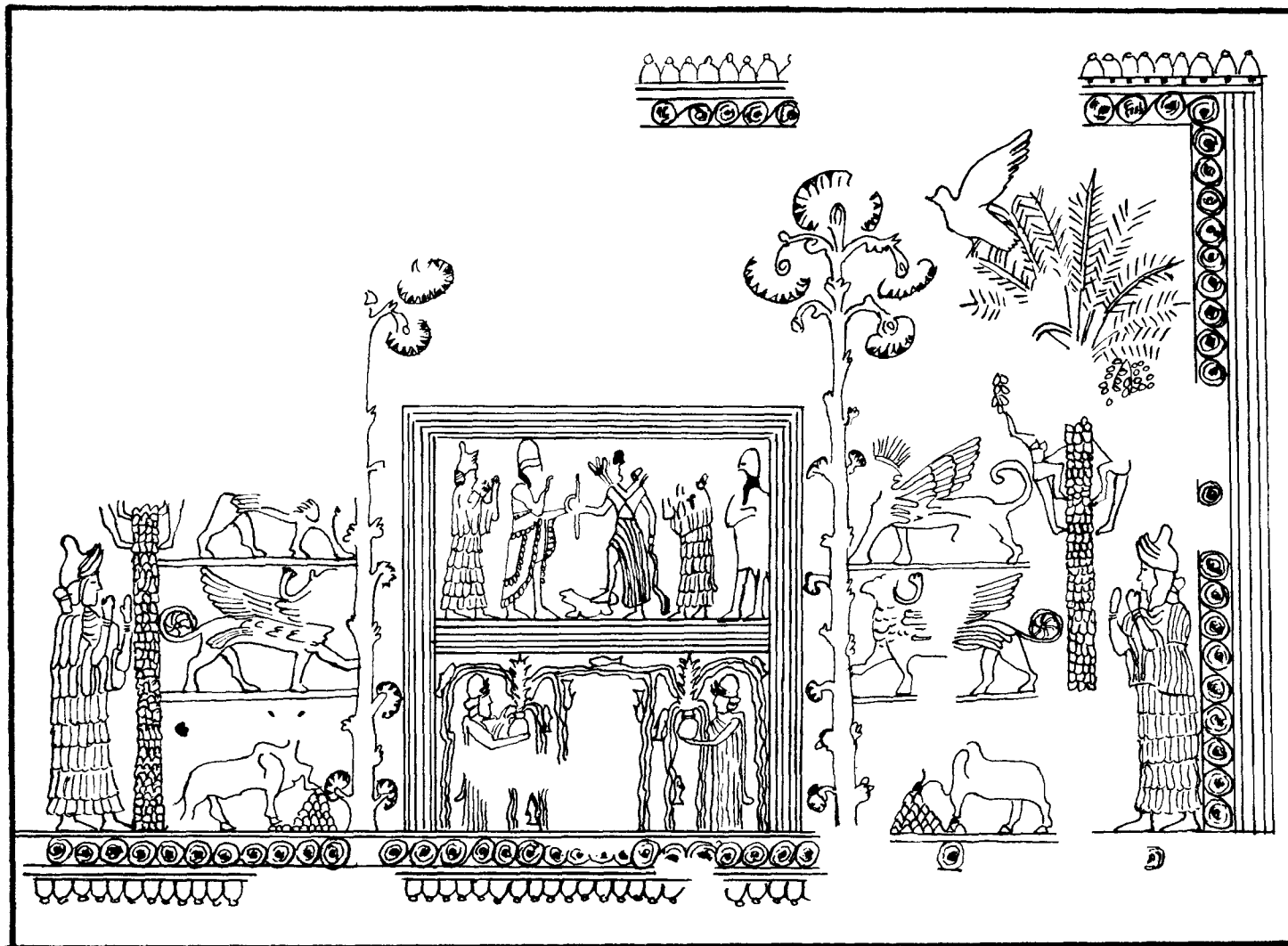


Plate IV. The "Investiture" painting from the palace at Mari.



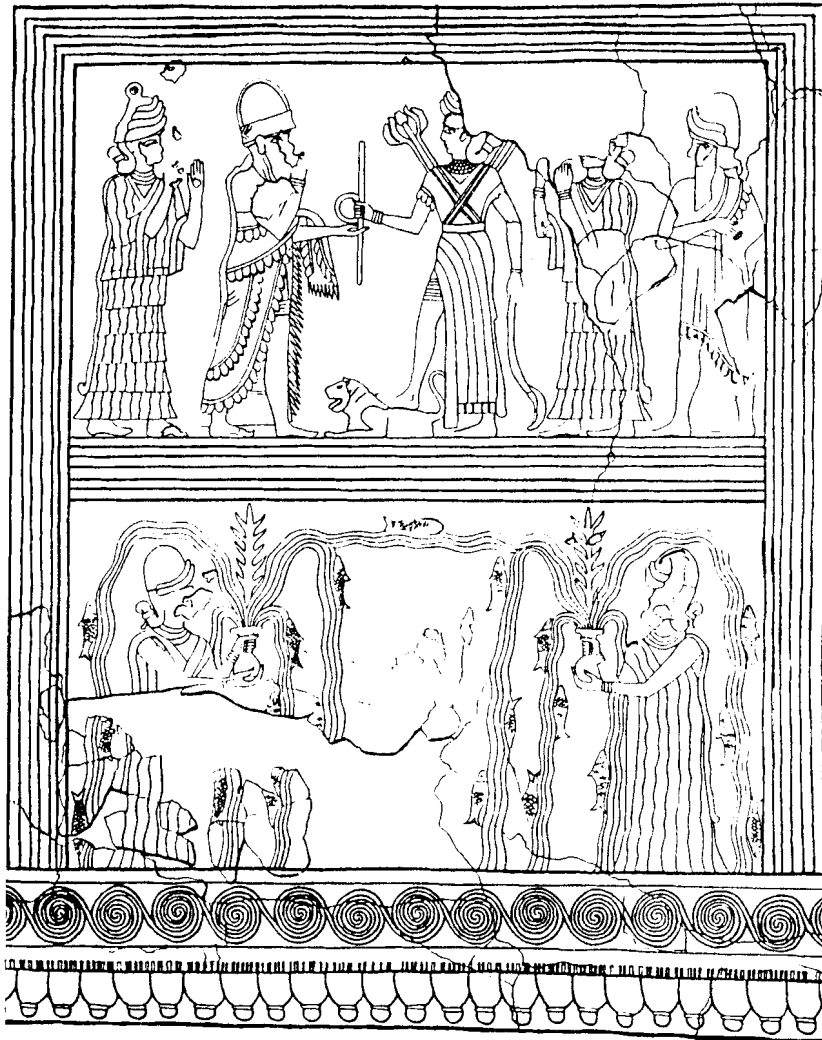
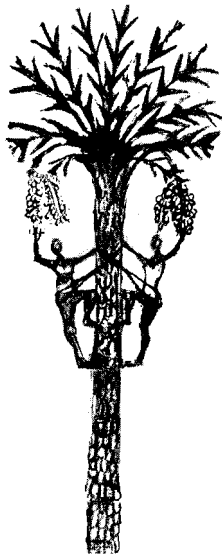
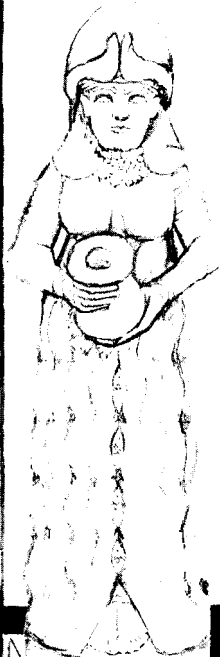


Plate V. The Central Scene of the "Investiture" painting.



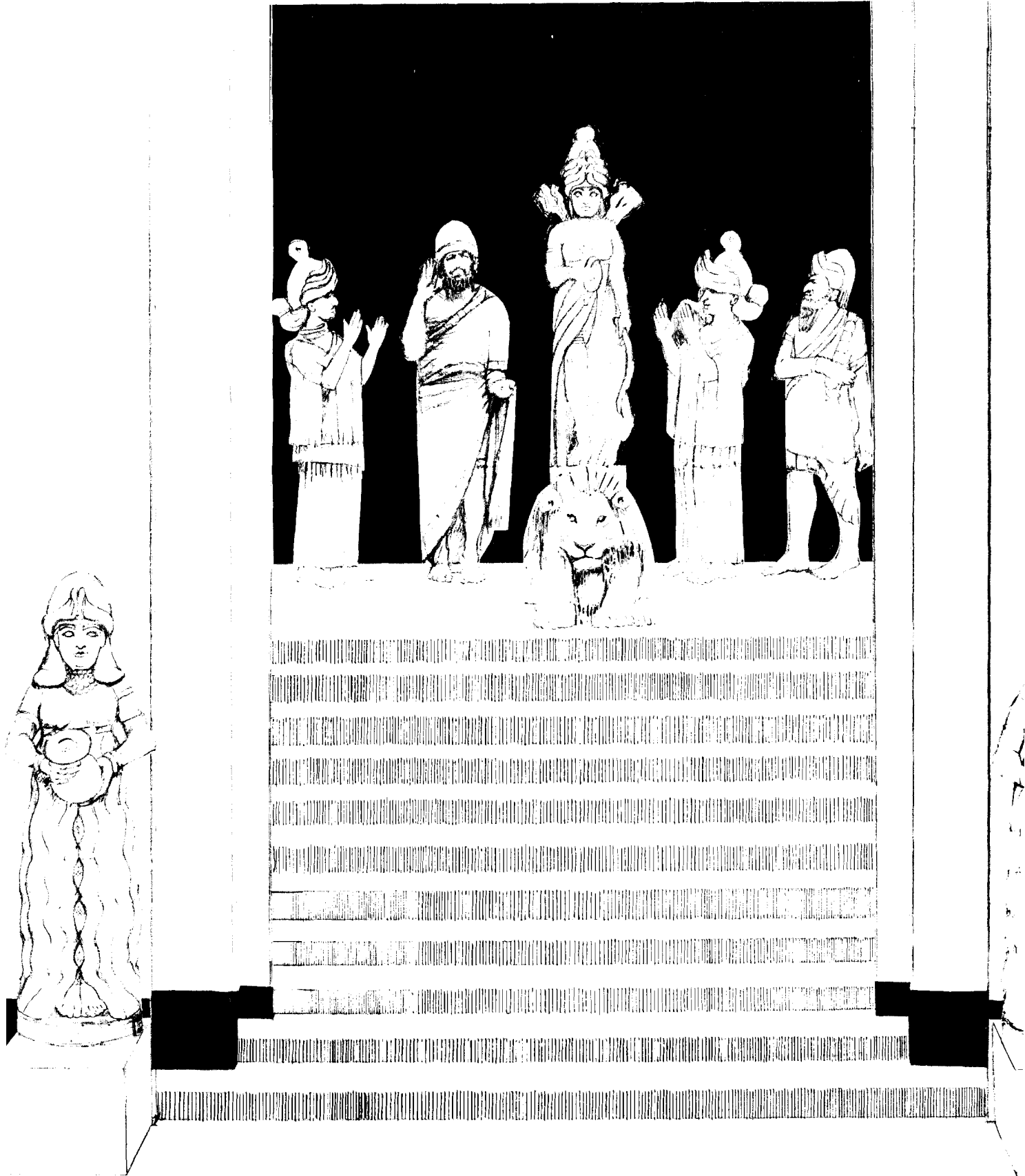


Plate VI. The Reconstruction of Sanctuary 66 of the Court of the Palms.

