

The Spatial Organization of Mesopotamian Cities

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One of the most intriguing clues to the spatial configuration of southern Mesopotamian cities is the Kassite map of Nippur, discovered during the 19th century excavations conducted by the University of Pennsylvania¹. Recently, the debate over whether this map represented all or part of Nippur was settled as Miguel Civil gave the weight of his authority to the Gordon/Kramer² hypothesis – that this map represented all of that ancient city – and McGuire Gibson initiated a field program designed to show that this interpretation of the map could be used to determine the location of the city walls. Between them, the work of Civil, Kramer, Gordon and Gibson³ has demonstrated that this map represents the only preserved view of a Mesopotamian city as seen by its inhabitants.

This is not to say that this map is free from idiosyncracies. Nippur itself cannot be considered a typical southern Mesopotamian city. It relied on its religious importance and not on the political or military might which helped support the other urban centers. This means that Nippur lacked a palace – one of the key institutions typical of other Mesopotamian cities. In addition, the map dates to the late Kassite period – a time of major rebuilding at Nippur. This site – which together with the other southern and central Babylonian cities had been partially or completely abandoned during the latter part of the Old Babylonian and the early Kassite periods⁴ – grew to great size under the late Kassite kings⁵. What is less clear is whether this growth represented an attempt to reconstruct the earlier city or to develop something

1. Hermann V. Hilprecht. *Explorations in Bible Lands during the Nineteenth Century*. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1903:518-519.
2. Samuel N. Kramer. *From the Tablets of Sumer*. Indiana Hills, Colorado: The Falcon's Wing Press, 1956:271-275.
3. McGuire Gibson. "Nippur, 1975, A Summary Report", *Sumer* 34 (1978):118-119.
4. Elizabeth C. Stone. "Economic Crisis and Social Upheaval in Old Babylonian Nippur", in T. Cuyler Young and Louis D. Levine eds., *Mountains and Lowlands*. Malibu: Undena Press, 1977:267-289.
5. McGuire Gibson. "Patterns of Occupation at Nippur", in Maria de Jong Ellis, ed., *Nippur at the Centennial*. Occasional Publications of the Samuel Noah Kramer Fund 14. Philadelphia: University Museum, in press.

new. The Enlil temple was certainly rebuilt largely along the earlier lines⁶, but this may not have been the case with other parts of the city. But even if those features familiar from the Old Babylonian and earlier periods were reconstructed, this map of Nippur – like all maps – was quite selective in what was included and what omitted. It does provide a clear picture of the fortifications and the main watercourses both outside and within the city. The main temple to Enlil is also clearly indicated – together with a presumably minor Eshmah temple, located beyond the city walls – but the temple to Ninurta – almost certainly the main city god⁷ – is not. McGuire Gibson is now arguing that the Kassite period Gula temple uncovered at Nippur in the last few seasons might also have incorporated the temple of Ninurta⁸. Whether or not Ninurta was worshipped there, this temple is not shown on the map. Thus, although this map provides a unique perspective on the Mesopotamians' view of the city, it cannot be used as a key to understanding all aspects of urban life.

But the question that the map poses is important since it can be argued that the physical distribution of people and institutions within the urban landscape is as useful a measure of urban life as are settlement patterns of intersite relations⁹ and domestic architecture of the size, structure and ideology of the family¹⁰. Archaeological data derived from surveys and excavations indicate similarities between cities in the patterns of arrangement of such features as canals, walls, streets, bureaucratic focal points, workshop areas, etc., suggesting a common view of what constituted a Mesopotamian city¹¹. Such similarities are strengthened when some geographical and temporal limitations are imposed. For the purpose of this essay, only cities located within the southern flood plain – where irrigation agriculture formed the basis of agrarian life – will be examined, and within this group only those sites dating before the upheavals of the mid second millennium B.C. This was a time when the Mesopotamian polity fluctuated between a loose amalgam of independent city states to a situation where one of these cities was able to gain the upper hand and dominate the others. In periods of disunification all the cities were equal, and even during times of political domination, each city had an equal opportunity to become the next nexus of unification.

The structures and institutions whose activities and physical location played a defining role in the organization of these cities fall into a number of different categories, some of which are more easily recovered through archaeology than others. Most important were the temples and palaces which are clear examples of the authority of the state – whether of the city state itself or of some larger political entity. But such large institutions were not necessarily all embracing. The degree of independence of elite families, merchants and artisans plays a critical role in the structuring of the city. Where such groups are dependent on the large institutions, they tend to be physically clustered around them, but where the basis of urban life is a negotiation between these large institutions and more independent social and economic groups, then the residences of the latter – located away from the large institutions – will reflect this independence. Most important here is the role played by the elites. If they are members of an aristocracy which depends on the large institutions for its authority then they will occupy elite quarters whose separateness from those of the commoners symbolizes their difference. On the other hand, when elites derive their authority from their ties with the population at large and only secondarily from the dependence of the large institutions on their controlling influence, they will reside near the common people who make up their political base. These distinctions should be reflected in the physical layout of the institutions, residences, workshops, canals, harbors, and walls of the city¹².

6. Donald E. McCown and Richard C. Haines, *Nippur I: Temple of Enlil, Scribal Quarter and Soundings*. Oriental Institute Publications 78. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967:12.

7. Dominique Charpin, "Review of Piotr Steinkeller, *Sale Documents of the Ur III Period*", *RA* 84 (1990):93.

8. McGuire Gibson, personal communication.

9. P. Haggett, *Locational Analysis in Human Geography*. London: Edward Arnold, 1965.

10. Susan Kent, ed., *Domestic Architecture and the Use of Space*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990; Amos Rapoport, *House Form and Culture*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1969.

11. Elizabeth C. Stone, "The Tell Abu Duwari Project", 1987, *Journal of Field Archaeology* 17 (1990):141-162.

12. Stone, "Abu Duwari," 141-143.

The location of the main shrine and ziggurat of the city is of first importance. Whether or not represented by a true ziggurat, the main temple was always the highest part of these settlements and served as a visual focus. At Nippur this is not centrally placed but on an extension of the east mound, a pattern which is repeated elsewhere. The ziggurats – or the high mounds thought to be ziggurats – of Isin¹³, Sippar¹⁴, Kish (especially Uhaimir)¹⁵ and perhaps Shuruppak¹⁶ are located close to the edge of the site, while those at Babylon¹⁷, Larsa¹⁸, Ur¹⁹ and Uruk²⁰, were asymmetrically placed if not completely peripheral. In sites without ziggurats, most of the major temples identified to date have been found at the edges of the sites. This is the case for the Temples Oval at Khafajah²¹ and 'Ubaid²² as well as the temples at Uqair²³, Tell Agrab²⁴, Ischali²⁵ and Mashkan-shapir²⁶. The remains excavated at Tell Uqair and 'Ubaid suggest that this non-centric position of temples was established as far back as late 'Ubaid or early Uruk times. It seems likely that such a physical separation between the realm of the gods and that of humans served as a metaphor for that most basic division – that between the sacred and the profane. Under these circumstances, although temples undoubtedly played key defining economic roles in Mesopotamian cities, their physical separation may reflect a deeper symbolic gulf which may have limited the political actions of this institution.

As discussed above, the Kassite map is of no help when it comes to the other major urban institution of Mesopotamia – the palace. The archaeological data is also more enigmatic. Palaces are not raised up like temples, so they are more difficult to locate, and the distinction between a palace and other administrative structures is not always easy to determine. Some buildings – such as the “Palace of Ur-Nammu and Shulgi”²⁷ at Ur and the “Northern Palace” at Tell Asmar²⁸ have had their palatial status questioned, while elsewhere – as in the “administrative area” at Mashkan-shapir – administrative activities may have taken place in non-palatial structures. Where it is possible to identify the location of both the primary temple and a true palace at any one site, the palaces are either located in an area to one side of the temple – as at Larsa²⁹, or at a significant distance from the religious center, as at Eridu³⁰ and Uruk³¹. At Tell Harmal – a

13. Barthel Hrouda et al., *Isin-Isān Bahriyat II*. Munich: Verlag der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1981: Plan 1.

14. Walid al-Jadir and Zahir R. Abdullah, 1983 “Preliminary Report on Baghdad University Excavations at Sippar (Abu Habba)”, *Sumer* 39 (1983):102.

15. Roger Moorey, *Kish Excavations 1923-1933*. Oxford: Ashmolean Museum, 1978: facing 14; Ernest Mackay, *A Sumerian Palace and the "A" Cemetery at Kish, Mesopotamia*. Field Museum of Natural History Anthropological Memoires 1-2. Chicago: Field Museum of Natural History, 1929: frontispiece.

16. Hanriet P. Martin, *Fara: A Reconstruction of the Ancient Mesopotamian City of Shuruppak*. Birmingham: Chris Martin and Associates, 1988:125.

17. Robert Koldewey, *Excavations at Babylon*. London: McMillan and Co., Ltd., 1914: Fig 1.

18. Jean-Louis Huot, *Larsa: Travaux de 1985*. Éditions Recherche sur les Civilisations 83. Paris: CNRS, 1989: Fig. 9a.

19. Sir Leonard Woolley, *Ur Excavations VI: The Buildings of the Third Dynasty*. London: British Museum Publications, 1974: Plate 61.

20. Michael Roaf, *Cultural Atlas of Mesopotamia and the Ancient Near East*. New York: Facts on File, 1990:60.

21. Pinhas Delougaz, *The Temple Oval at Khafajah*. Oriental Institute Publications 53. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1940: Plate II.

22. Pinhas Delougaz, “A Short Investigation of the Temple at al-'Ubaid”, *Iraq* 5 (1938): Fig. 3.

23. Seton Lloyd and Fuad Safar, “Tell Uqair: Excavations by the Iraq Department Directorate of Antiquities in 1940 and 1941”, *JNES* 2 (1943): Plate III.

24. Pinhas Delougaz and Seton Lloyd, *Pre-Sargonid Temples in the Diyala Region*. Oriental Institute Publications 58. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1942: Plate 25.

25. Harold D. Hill, Thorkild Jacobsen and Pinhas Delougaz, *Old Babylonian Public Buildings in the Diyala Region*. Oriental Institute Publications 98. Chicago: Oriental Institute Press, 1990:4.

26. Stone, “Abu Duwari”, 146.

27. Woolley, *Ur Excavations VI*, 39.

28. Pinhas Delougaz, Harold D. Hill and Seton Lloyd, *Private Houses and Graves in the Diyala Region*. Oriental Institute Publications 88. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967:196-198.

29. Huot, *Larsa 1985*: Fig.9a.

30. Fuad Safar, Mohammed Ali Mustafa and Seton Lloyd, *Eridu*. Baghdad: Ministry of Culture and Information, 1981:31.

31. Roaf, *Atlas*, 60.

small center which can hardly be considered truly urban – the temple and administrative center are located opposite each other³², one on each side of the main street. In general, the locations of temples and administrative centers in Mesopotamian sites suggest a pattern of opposition, where the parallel but conflicting functions of the two main institutions of the city are emphasized.

This pattern of oppositions is made clearer when those features which served to divide these ancient cities are examined – streets, walls and especially canals. The drafter of the Kassite map of Nippur took some pains to indicate the location of the major watercourses which circumnavigated and divided the city. Nippur – like other southern Mesopotamian cities – is made up of not one but a number of mounds. The Kassite map demonstrates that the major division between the West Mound and the rest of the site was due to presence of a large watercourse there.

Although it is difficult to demonstrate that depressions within Mesopotamian sites represent similar internal canals, surface indications at Larsa³³, Mashkan-shapir and Eridu Survey site 34³⁴ demonstrate the presence of multiple channels within each site. In general, for as many mounds as are identified at any one southern Mesopotamian site, so should we expect there to have been watercourses separating one from the other. And even when only distinct saddles are identified – such as those reflected in the contour maps of Ur³⁵ and Tell ed-Der³⁶ – it seems probable that these represent the locations of canals.

These watercourses served to divide these cities into their component parts. In the course of the Mashkan-shapir survey different functional classes of artifacts were recovered from the surface of the different mounds, and at Larsa the canals delimit the administrative/religious and habitation zones³⁷. At Nippur such functional differences are reflected in the names given to different parts of the site – the “religious quarter” as distinguished from the “scribal quarter”, etc. Major watercourses also divided such sites as Kish³⁸, Babylon³⁹ and Abu Salabikh⁴⁰, to name but a few clear examples.

These canals served not only to divide the city and – doubtless – as sources of water for the habitants, but as they extended out from the city itself they became major routes of communication and trade. The cuneiform literature refers to the presence of harbors – the major loci of international and intercity trade – in nearly all of the southern Mesopotamian cities. These features have been identified at both Ur and Mashkan-shapir, while at least one such area may be identifiable at Larsa⁴¹. At both

32. Taha Baqir, *Tell Harmal*. Baghdad: Directorate General of Antiquities, 1959: Fig. 1.

33. Huot, *Larsa 1985*, 19-52. On page 34 he interprets the depressed linear features that he has identified as R1 and R6 as “rues” [his quotation marks], while noting that they could also have been canals. From our experience at Mashkan-shapir – where the low elevation of the site has minimized the erosional problems which confuse the picture elsewhere – Huot’s description of these features is more consistent with watercourses. At Mashkan-shapir, the old canals – whose identifications was demonstrated by coring – were depressions filled with sand and very small sherds. In contrast, streets – identified through excavation – were characterized by a raised band of dense surface potsherds. The stratigraphic evidence from Mashkan-shapir indicates that – there at least – streets and open areas tended to build up rapidly due to the accumulation of trash, so that the floor levels of neighboring buildings were at a lower level. In addition, streets at other sites – such as Tell Asmar (Delougaz, Hill and Lloyd, *Private Houses*: Plate 23) and Ur (Sir Leonard Woolley and Sir Max Mallowan, *Ur Excavations VII: The Old Babylonian Period*. London: British Museum Publications, 1976: Plates 116 and 129) are not characterized by depressions in the site. Under all these circumstances, it seems best to interpret the large features at Larsa (R1 and R6) as canals.

34. Henry T. Wright, “The Southern Margins of Sumer: Archaeological Survey of the Area of Eridu and Ur”, in Robert McC. Adams, *Heartland of Cities*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981:330.

35. Woolley and Mallowan, *Ur Excavations VII*: Plate 129.

36. Léon de Meyer, Hermann Gasche and Roland Paepe, *Tell ed-Der I*. Leuven: Éditions Peeters, 1971: Plan 2.

37. Huot, *Larsa 1985*: Fig. 9a.

38. Moorey, *Kish*.

39. Koldewey, *Babylon*.

40. T. J. Wilkinson, “Early Channels and Landscape Development around Abu Salabikh, A Preliminary Report”, *Iraq* 52 (1990):79.

41. If the interpretation presented here that R1 at Larsa (Huot, *Larsa 1985*, 47) was actually a canal is accepted, then the area Z24 – and possibly even Z13 (see Huot, *Larsa 1985*, 22-23) – should be interpreted as harbors.

Mashkan-shapir and Ur two harbors have been located – in both cases at opposite sides of the settlement but within the city walls. The sample is too small to say that each site had two harbors, but it does indicate that multiple harbors were not uncommon. The cuneiform sources suggest that trading activities were carried out in the vicinity of such harbors at all southern Mesopotamian cities – including Nippur.

The decisive role played by these watercourses in the structuring of Mesopotamian cities cannot be overemphasized. They would have served both to connect the city with the outside world and to divide it internally. No matter how many ferries or even bridges there may have been⁴², these watercourses would have served to limit communication. Thus Mesopotamian cities were physically divided into different sectors – religious, administrative (or religious/administrative in the case of Larsa), and residential/artisanal. That such a physical division was so consistently incorporated into the planning of these cities is surely an indication that the underlying social, political and economic structure was similarly divided.

Other features which could serve both to divide and unify Mesopotamian cities were walls and streets. The Kassite map well illustrates the system of fortifications that protected Nippur. The city wall at Nippur has been tested through excavation and has been found to correspond roughly with the location as shown on the map⁴³, and similar walls have been identified at other southern Mesopotamian sites. An interesting feature of the Kassite map, though, is that it indicates the presence of open space – labelled “the orchard within the city” – within the city walls. This area – and an enclosure – are located beyond the main mound of Nippur, and although some architectural remains have been uncovered there⁴⁴, must have been largely unoccupied for much of Nippur’s history. This pattern of having the city walls enclose an area greater than the densely settled urban space is replicated at other Mesopotamian sites. The pattern adopted seems to have been to construct the fortifications at the edge of the settlement mound in most locations, but to extend it to include non-settled areas at some points. Even at Ur⁴⁵ and Tell ed-Der⁴⁶ where the ramparts follow the contours most closely, some low-lying areas were included within their circumference. The purpose to which these areas were put is still not known, although the Kassite map indicates that at least some portions of them may have been used for growing fruit and vegetables. If this were so, though, some source of water must have been provided to irrigate these crops. At Mashkan-shapir where the lack of later overburden allows a clearer view of such uninhabited intramural areas, such irrigation canals are only visible in one small area, while elsewhere large, scattered buildings have been noted.

There may also have been walls built to separate areas within the cities. Woolley⁴⁷ argues that the religious quarter at Ur was fenestrated from the end of the third millennium onwards, and traces of similar internal walls have been identified from aerial photographs at Mashkan-shapir. The evidence for internal divisions of this kind remains somewhat weak, but it may be that those major functional areas not separated one from the other by canals may have had walls forming their boundaries.

The last feature which can both unify and divide a city is its system of roads and streets. Textual references to streets are found largely in real estate transactions which concern plots abutting roads. These data suggest that the cities contained both major thoroughfares which were named, and more minor streets and alleyways which were called after the principle resident. Such a pattern corresponds with the street system as recovered through excavation at sites like Ur, where larger streets are found to run through residential areas, with small alleyways and culs-de-sac providing access to many of the houses⁴⁸.

42. Two baked brick features have been identified at Mashkan-shapir which may have been quays or bridge supports (Stone, “Abu Duwari”, 148). If Herodotus’ statement that Babylon had only recently replaced its ferry with a bridge is to be taken literally, then it seems likely that ferries were the primary means of crossing Mesopotamian watercourses.

43. Gibson, “Patterns of Occupation”.

44. McGuire Gibson, Richard L. Zettler and James Armstrong, “The Southern Corner of Nippur: Excavations during the 14th and 15th Seasons”, *Sumer* 35 (1983):170-190.

45. Woolley, *Ur Excavations VI*, 61-74.

46. De Mayer, Gasche and Paepe, *Tell ed Der I*, 46-50.

47. Woolley, *Ur Excavations VI*, 55.

48. Woolley and Mallowan, *Ur Excavations VII*.

At Tell Asmar, the excavators were able to reconstruct the location of many of the larger roads, which seem to form a pattern of odd-shaped blocks⁴⁹. At Mashkan-shapir, aerial photographs show major streets either paralleling the canals, or running more or less at right angles to them. A similar situation seems to pertain at Larsa, where small gates are located immediately next to the large bastions which – I would suggest – marked the exit of the canals, from the city⁵⁰. This dual gate system suggests that there, as at Mashkan-shapir, the streets paralleled the main canals, while two other streets running roughly at right angles to the main canal have also been identified. At Tell Asmar and at Mashkan-shapir – which have provided more complete information – the blocks defined by these main thoroughfares were around one hectare in size – about the size of residential neighborhoods in later Islamic cities⁵¹. Whether these streets served to unite or separate such residential areas in antiquity remains unknown.

It is within these residential areas that evidence for workshops is to be found. Although the results of manufacturing activities are found throughout Mesopotamian sites in the form of pottery, metalwork and lapidarywork, the organization of production remains largely unknown. Individuals are often listed in various texts with their professions serving as means of identification, but beyond this the textual record is largely mute. Woolley⁵², in his description of the domestic areas at Ur, identified a number of the smaller structures as shops. These identifications, though, are based more on the architectural plan of the structures than on any internal features which might speak to the functions of the buildings. Structures similar in plan to these have been found at other sites with extensive domestic architecture, and have been interpreted as private residences that are on a smaller scale than those with rooms built around a central court⁵³.

Another approach to understanding the distribution of manufacturing within southern Mesopotamian cities is to look at those sites where extensive surface surveys have been carried out which have identified concentrations of manufacturing debris. These have been conducted at al-Hiba⁵⁴, Larsa⁵⁵, Abu Salabikh⁵⁶ and Mashkan-shapir. The last site shows a dual pattern. On the one hand, there is evidence for some concentration of ceramic production – in the form of kilns and wasters – around the edges of the site, of copper/bronze production – in the form of cuprous slag deposits – in the center of the site, and of lapidary working – in the form of small grinders and numerous worked and unworked stones – in the southeastern portion of the site. On the other hand, small deposits of kiln wasters, cuprous slag and small grinders were found throughout the residential portions of this ancient city. At Abu Salabikh ceramic production seems to have been concentrated in the northern portion of the site⁵⁷. The data from al-Hiba and Larsa are a little less clear – due partly to questions of contemporaneity which do not affect the surface remains from Mashkan-shapir. At al-Hiba, copious traces of ceramic manufacture – some datable to the Early Dynastic period – the time of the main occupation of the site – and some later – were found all over, while some possible indications of shell and lapidary working were more concentrated⁵⁸. At Larsa kilns were clustered in the southern portion of the site – but these seem to date to the Parthian/Hellenistic period, long after the time-period under consideration here. But some kilns, copper working debris and evidence of lapidary work which probably date to the early second millennium B.C. were

49. Delougaz, Hill and Lloyd, *Private Houses and Graves*: Plate 23.

50. Huot, *Larsa 1985*: Fig. 9a.

51. Ira Lapidus, *Muslim Cities in the Later Middle Ages*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984:85.

52. Woolley and Mallowan, *Ur Excavations VII*.

53. Elizabeth C. Stone, "Texts, Architecture and Ethnographic Analogy: Patterns of Residence in Old Babylonian Nippur", *Iraq* 43 (1981):19-33.

54. Elizabeth Carter, "A Surface Survey of Lagash, al-Hiba, 1984", submitted for publication in *Sumer*.

55. Huot, *Larsa 1985*, 19-52.

56. J. N. Postgate, "Excavations at Abu Salabikh, 1988-89", *Iraq* 52 (1990): 95-106.

57. Postgate, "Abu Salabikh, 1988-9", 103-4.

58. Carter, "Al-Hiba Survey".

found in the residential and intermediate areas. Together these data – and especially those from Mashkan-shapir – suggest a pattern whereby manufacturing was embedded in the residential neighborhoods with some areas specializing in certain crafts. But it also seems probable that each residential district had its own potter, smith and lapidary worker who would have catered to local needs. To this we should also add small scale workshops located within temple and palace precincts – as seen in the palace at Mari⁵⁹ – which fulfilled the needs of these institutions.

If all residential districts housed workshops, and if these workshops were associated with the houses of the artisans, then it would appear that artisans must have been found in all parts of the city and were not concentrated in any one particular area. Less easy to determine is the residential distribution of the other classes of urban residents – priests, soldiers, farmers, etc. Textual sources indicate the importance that neighborhoods played in the administration of justice⁶⁰ and both textual and archaeological sources suggest that each neighborhood contained representatives of all walks of life, elites and commoners. Where neighbors are mentioned in texts, we often find a fisherman living next to a priest, a carpenter beside a high military official⁶¹. In addition, at sites such as Ur, where several residential areas have been excavated – one near the religious quarter, one in the midst of the mound, and one by the city wall – tablets indicative of elite status have been found in all three areas, as have both well appointed and humble dwellings⁶². This is not to say that there were no differences between these areas. I have argued for differences in character between two neighborhoods at Nippur⁶³, while Charpin⁶⁴ has argued that area EM at Ur was devoted to the residences of the clergy. But these differences are based on broad-scale affiliation, not on status. Luby⁶⁵, in a study of burial patterns at Ur, has shown that each excavated area at Ur had similar patterns of large and small houses, and of rich and poor graves – a further indication that each residential area had a similar mix of wealth and status groups – even if some areas may have had a more religious orientation than others.

Another way of assessing the distribution of elites in southern Mesopotamian cities is through survey data. At Mashkan-shapir two types of artifacts recovered from the surface are taken as more likely to have belonged to wealthy elites than to poor commoners. These are any items made of copper, and cylinder seals. Both of these artifact categories are found quite evenly distributed throughout the residential districts of the city, with no clear concentrations, suggesting that the elites themselves were equally distributed. In sum, the archaeological and textual data suggest that residential neighborhoods – bounded perhaps by major streets and watercourses – represented another class of institution which played a major role in the structuring of southern Mesopotamian cities. Dominated, doubtless, by the elites residing within them, decisions made within and between neighborhoods could not have been ignored by the denizens of the palace or temple complexes.

One last feature of these cities needs to be addressed: the disposal of garbage and of the dead. The former seems to have had little organized means of disposal. Trash deposits are encountered in streets and empty lots, usually associated with layers of ash – perhaps indicating a pattern of incineration. Judging by the faunal evidence from Mesopotamian sites – and the recovery of milk teeth in the streets of Abu

59. André Parrot, *Mission Archéologique de Mari II: Le Palais, Architecture*. Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1958:221-244.

60. A. Leo Oppenheim, "Mesopotamia – Land of Many Cities", in Ira Lapidus ed., *Middle Eastern Cities*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969:9.

61. I would like to thank Piotr Steinkeller for bringing this text to my attention. The tablet in question has been published in YOS 4:300, but we are all looking forward to Steinkeller's forthcoming analysis.

62. Woolley and Mallowan, *Ur Excavations VII*.

63. Stone, *Nippur Neighborhoods*.

64. Dominique Charpin, *Le Clergé d'Ur au siècle d'Hammurabi*. Paris: Librairie Droz, 1986.

65. Edward M. Luby, *Social Variation in Ancient Mesopotamia: An Architectural and Mortuary Analysis of Ur in the Early Second Millennium B.C.* SUNY, Stony Brook: Unpublished PhD. Dissertation, 1990.

Salabikh⁶⁶ – pigs would have been kept in all parts of the city and – together with dogs – would doubtless have played a role in waste disposal.

Burials are found both within cemeteries and beneath houses and palaces. It has been suggested⁶⁷ that such a dual system reflects the horizontal divisions in society suggested by Diakonoff⁶⁸ and others, whereby those tied to the temple and palace were more likely to be buried in cemeteries, while the more independent merchants, farmers and artisans would be buried beneath their houses. However at Ur in the Old Babylonian period burials were found beneath houses which, according to Charpin⁶⁹, were occupied by the clergy, whereas in contemporary levels at Nippur no such intramural burials were encountered in areas occupied by small landowners⁷⁰. Thus it is possible that the two patterns of burial may have varied in popularity over time and space. At Mashkan-shapir there is tentative evidence for the existence of a cemetery contemporary with a broader pattern of intramural burial, and the same pattern may have existed at Larsa⁷¹. In addition to these remains, it is possible – even likely – that some garbage disposal and burial may have occurred outside the cities, in areas which have yet to be recovered archaeologically.

The Kassite map and the available archaeological data therefore indicate that cities in southern Mesopotamia were divided into a number of different areas by canals and streets. Some of these sectors fulfilled special roles – such as those of religion and administration – and were generally located near the edges of the site, while the rest of the city was composed of domestic areas containing the residences of both elites and commoners and the workshops of artisans. Trash disposal also took place within these areas, as did the burial of many of the dead, although some may have been placed in special areas set aside as cemeteries. The whole was enclosed by a city wall studded with numerous gates which regulated the flow of traffic along the canals and streets. The area within the city wall included open areas – perhaps used as gardens – and the harbors – centers of intercity and international trade, while local exchange would have taken place outside the city gates⁷². This pattern of organization is one which suggests that a number of different groups vied for authority within Mesopotamian society. Not only was there a degree of competition between the palace and temple, but the many local groups resident in the neighborhoods also possessed a degree of self-determination, and probably played a significant role in the processes of decision-making.

66. J. N. Postgate, personal communication.

67. Susan Pollock, "Of Priestesses, Princes and Poor Relations: The Dead in the Royal Cemetery of Ur", *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 1/2 (1981):171-190.

68. Igor M. Diakonoff, "On the Structure of Old Babylonian Society", in H. Klengel ed., *Beiträge zur sozialen Struktur des alten Vorderasien*. Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1971: 15-31.

69. Charpin, *Le Clergé d'Ur*.

70. Stone, *Nippur Neighborhoods*.

71. André Parrot, "Les fouilles de Tello et de Senkereh-Larsa, campagne 1932-1933," *RA* 30 (1933):178. Huot, *Larsa 1985*, 50, describes his zone 13 as covered with small mounds and semi-circles made up largely of fragments of the large jars which were used for burial in the early second millennium B.C. Not only is this description very similar to that observed in the "cemetery area" at Mashkan-shapir (Stone, "Abu Duwari", 148), but its location, across the canal(?) from the temple is also similar. At Mashkan-shapir a sounding excavated in the cemetery area in 1990 failed to uncover any burials, but it did reveal that the topmost deposit in this area dated to the mid-nineteenth century B.C., approximately a century earlier than the surface deposits uncovered elsewhere in the area. Under these circumstances, it is still reasonable to interpret these two, similar, areas at Larsa and Mashkan-shapir as early second millennium B.C. cemeteries. Parrot's excavations in the remains of domestic quarters of the same date provided evidence for the practice of intramural burial contemporary with the suggested cemetery.

72. Oppenheim, "Mesopotamian Cities", 12.