

Reallexikon der Assyriologie und Vorderasiatischen Archäologie

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Farber, RGTC II (1975) 108–110; B. Groneberg, RGTC III (1980) 149. — V. E. Crawford, Iraq 36 (1974) 29–35.

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Lagaš. B. Archäologisch.

§ 1. Excavation. — § 2. Site. Ancient Name. — § 3. Temple Oval (Ibgal). — § 4. Area C. — § 5. Area G. — § 6. Area B (including Bagara).

§ 1. Excavation. An expedition of the Königlich Preußische Museen under the direction of Robert Koldewey excavated at al-Hibā from March 29 to May 11, 1887, an undertaking of just over six weeks.

A preliminary description of the expedition by Koldewey appeared the same year, "Die altbabylonischen Gräber in Surghul und El Hibba," ZA 2 (1887) 403–4. Professor K. Bittel has kindly made available an unpublished ms. of A. Haller with a contribution by B. Kienast describing Koldewey's excavations with a catalog of the finds, "Nina und Urukug (Surghul und El-Hiba). Die Ausgrabung Robert Koldeweys 1886/87."

Koldewey concentrated his efforts on the high west central portion of the mound which can be identified as the Isin/Larsa-Old Bab. platform (see below § 6, p. 426) on the western side of Area B (Fig. 1). The exact location of the other two areas he investigated (the "so-called North Hill" and the "dwelling houses") cannot be identified with any accuracy.

In the fall of 1968, The Metropolitan Museum of Art and The Institute of Fine Arts of New York University jointly initiated an expedition and so far have conducted five seasons of excavations.

R. D. Biggs, Pre-Sargonic Riddles from Lagash, JNES 32 (1973) 26–33; id., Inscriptions from Al-Hiba-Lagash, The First and Second Seasons, BiMes. 3 (1976); id., Enannatum of Lagash and Ur-Lumma of Umma—A New Text, AOAT 25 (1976) 33–40. — V. E. Crawford, Excavations in the Swamps of Sumer, Expedition 14/2 (1972) 12–20; id., Lagash,

Iraq 36 (1974) 29–35; id., Inscriptions from Lagash, Season Four, 1975–1976, JCS 29 (1977) 189–222. — D. P. Hansen, Al-Hiba, 1968–1969, A Preliminary Report, ArtAs. 32/4 (1970) 243–250; id., Al-Hiba, 1970–1971, . . . ArtAs. 35/1–2 (1973) 62–70; id., Al-Hiba, Four Seasons of Excavations, Sumer 34 (1978) 72–85. — E. L. Ochsenschlager, Ancient and Modern Sun-Dried Mud Objects from al-Hiba, Archaeology 27 (1974) 162–174; id., Modern Potters at al-Hiba, with Some Reflections on the Excavated Early Dynastic Pottery, Ethnoarchaeology Monograph IV, Inst. of Arch., Univ. of Calif. (1974) 149–157; id., The Mendes-al-Hiba System of Pottery Classification, Studien zur ägypt. Keramik (1977).

§ 2. Site. Ancient Name. Al-Hibā is located in southern Iraq, within the province of Nāširija, and approximately 15 miles (24 km) east of the modern town of Šaṭra. The mound, which is approximately 3600 m in length and 1900 m in width at its largest extent, is undoubtedly the largest in southern Mesopotamia. It is not, however, a high mound. The highest point, which stands just over six meters above plain level, is located in the central western portion of the mound, where occupation lasted into the Old Bab. period. Elsewhere, the mound is relatively low and the surface remains can, for the most part, be dated to the end of the third Early Dynastic period. A major contour survey of the mound has been completed (Fig. 1). On this map, the mound has been divided into a series of "Areas" labeled alphabetically according to the letters used for the polygons in the contour survey. Thus far, the excavations have concentrated in Areas A, B, C, and G. Area A is located at the south western portion of the mound. Area B constitutes the higher part of the mound in the central western section. Area C is situated between Areas A and B but further to the east. Area G, also located between Areas A and B, lies on the western side of the mound.

The theory that the site of al-Hibā is the ancient city of L. was first proposed by Th. Jacobsen and A. Falkenstein on the basis of textual materials. Their conclusions have now been corroborated by archaeologically excavated material from al-Hibā. Two of the major temples of that city, the Ibgal* of Inanna and the

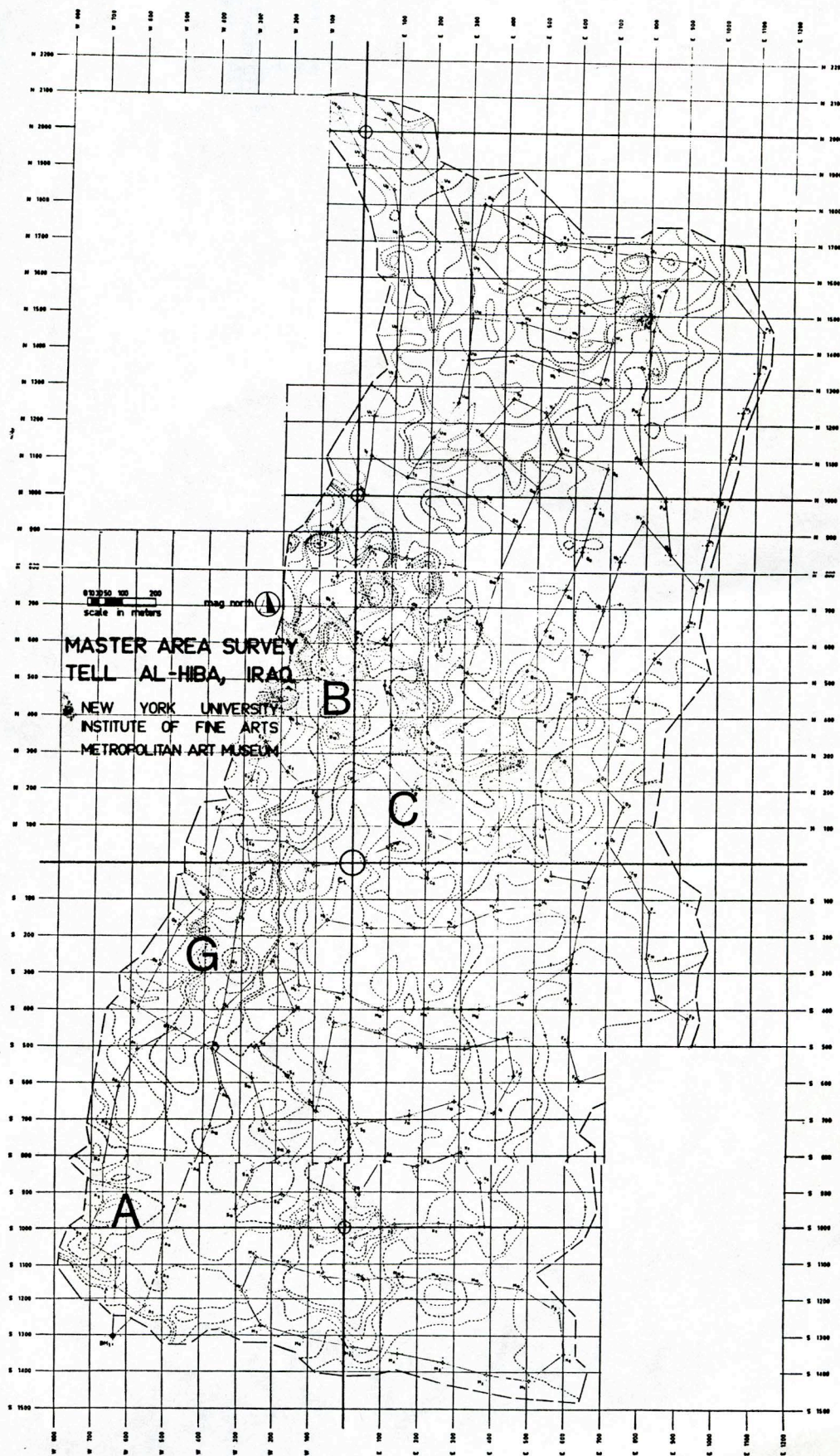


Fig. 1

Bagara of Ningirsu, known from textual material to have existed in L., have now been located in Areas A and B respectively.

§ 3. Temple Oval (Ibgal, Bagara). During the first two seasons of excavation, the Ibgal of Inanna in the Eanna was investigated (*Fig. 2*). The remains of Level

to gain some understanding of the actual construction. In most areas, the earlier Level II building had been cleared of all debris within the walls of the rooms. The floors, and in many cases even the plaster on the walls, had been removed. The rooms were then filled with densely packed earth and clay forming a sub-foundation upon

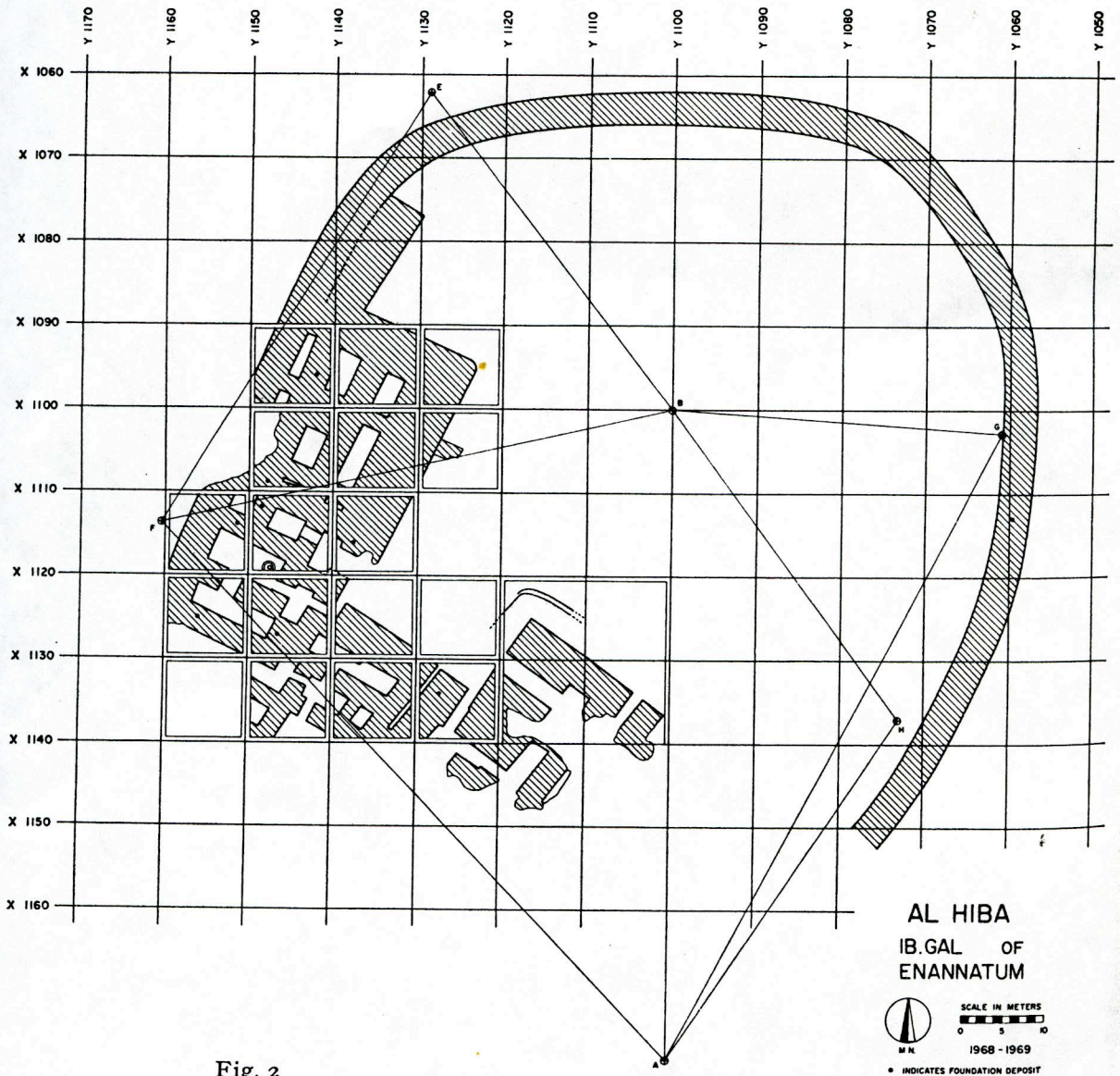


Fig. 2

proved to be the foundation system of a temple oval dedicated to the goddess and constructed by Enannatum I of L. Enough of the foundations were preserved to a considerable height so that it was possible

which was constructed an upper foundation built of mud brick. These two phases were separated by a thin layer of sand.

The upper foundation was not solid but contained rectangular areas of different

sizes resembling rooms, some so small as to be nothing more than slits. The spaces were filled with broken pieces of mud and some layers of sand. Toward the top of this upper foundation, the spaces were capped with *libn* (mud brick) so that when complete, the foundation appeared as a large solid platform. Though these spaces were no longer visible, one can only surmise that they reflect something of the plan or distribution of the rooms in the living part of the temple. It may well be that the elaborate method of constructing a foundation was associated with the complex rituals of temple building known from later texts.

The temple was built into the southern and western sides of a precinct defined by a large oval wall over four meters thick. Unfortunately, the southern part of the building was completely eroded away. It is nevertheless evident that the temple oval at al-Hibā is of a different plan than those at Ḥafāḡi and 'Ubaid; both had a temple placed on a freestanding platform in a courtyard. We can therefore expect that various plan types will be found in future temple ovals.

In the course of removing the remains of Level I so that the temple of Level II could be investigated, fourteen foundation deposits were discovered. Ten of these deposits contained a copper figurine and an inscribed stone; four deposits consisted simply of the inscribed stone.

Each stone had the same inscription which indicated that the temple was the Ibgal dedicated to Inanna in the Eanna, that it was constructed by Enannatum I of Lagaš, and that the copper figurine represented the god Šulutula, the personal god of Enannatum. (For a translation of the inscription, v. *ArtAs.* 32/4 [1970] 247f.) There was a consistency in the manner in which the deposits were placed in the foundation. The figurines stood erect with their peg-shaped bases touching the ground. Gradually, they were covered by flat courses of mud brick. On top of the third course, the inscribed stones were placed behind the heads of the figurines, all of which faced roughly toward the east. Most of the deposits have been indicated

as black dots on the plan of *Fig. 2*. Unfortunately, the temple superstructure has been so badly eroded as to prevent us from determining whether or not any order existed in the placement of the deposits. They do not seem to be placed at major corners or on either side of doorways as was done in later periods.

Levels II and III of the temple oval were also excavated in part. They are both less well preserved than the foundations of Level I. Level I cut away a good portion of Level II and Level II did the same for Level III. These earlier temples are both smaller versions of Enannatum's building. Indeed, the curved outer wall of Level III is only 1,50 meters wide, in contrast to the over four meter wall of Level I. The preserved part of these earlier levels lies under the western side of Level I. They probably also date to the late Early Dynastic III period.

In a small sounding beneath Level III, eight earlier architectural levels were encountered, with a ninth level under the present water table. All nine levels date to the Early Dynastic period. From the lowest level came two large spouted jars and three cups which may be dated to the Early Dynastic I period on the basis of comparable finds in the Dijāla region and at Nippur.

§ 4. Area C. Area C was excavated during the second season. The expedition was attracted to this region because of the existence of baked plano-convex bricks showing on the surface. Although it was thought initially that these walls might belong to tombs, it soon became evident that we were dealing with a building which had perished in such a hot conflagration that many of the mud brick walls had been turned into red baked brick. Two levels were excavated (Levels IA and IB) and where fire was hottest, the buried lower level had turned charcoal black.

The building is large and covers some 1000 square meters. One would have suspected a plan based on a series of well-defined courts surrounded by small rooms on all sides, but this was rarely the case.

The plan is by no means well-ordered and consists mainly of a series of rooms added to other rooms in agglutinative fashion. Indeed, the northeast section consists of a warren of tiny rooms. Tiny miniature vessels lay on the floor of one room. Since the plan of Level IB is so very awkward, it is difficult to understand why, during the rebuilding in Level IA, the later plan should so closely follow the earlier.

Because the building was heavily burned, several architectural details originally constructed in mud brick were well preserved. One detail is a niche made in the form of an arch. As this is a very early example of the arch, it is unfortunate that we do not know how it was capped.

On the basis of textual evidence found within, the building may be dated to specific kings of the Lagaš Dynasty. In Level IB were found a royal sealing and several tablets bearing the names of Eannatum and Enannatum I, thus dating the level, or at least part of it, to the time of those famous monarchs. Level IA, then, should date to the time of the later kings of the Lagaš Dynasty.

Beneath the floor of one room was found a hoard of copper objects originally wrapped with reeds. It is difficult to understand the reason for the burial, which consisted of a bucket with a handle over which had been placed a large flaring vessel. Attached to the outside of the group were an ax, an adze, and two perforated, circular pieces of copper. The latter may well have been balance pans. Inside the bucket were a variety of miniature vessels and tools including an ax, "sauce boats", and strainers. Such copper vessels and utensils are known from other sites in Mesopotamia and Elam (ArtAs. 35/1-2 [1973] 69 n. 12).

Other interesting finds include an early example of a die, imported painted ware of Susa D, and a necklace with an etched carnelian bead, all of which have relationships with lands to the east of Sumer.

§ 5. Area G. Area G was briefly investigated during the third and fourth seasons. The finds in preliminary trenches showed that the area was severely dis-

turbed by many late cuts and pits. However, a major north-south wall was excavated and it was clear that it was curving toward the west. This was possibly part of another oval building. Pottery undisturbed by the cuts suggested that the upper strata actually date to the Early Dynastic I period and not to the Early Dynastic III period as one would have suspected. During the fourth season, it was decided to sound this portion of the mound in order to determine what early periods have survived above the present day water table. Seven meters of Early Dynastic I remains were encountered before water was reached. Although the transition from Early Dynastic I to what we now call Ġamdat Našr was not forthcoming, the sounding does show that the period of Early Dynastic I, at least at al-Hibā, was a relatively long and important period.

Bagara

§ 6. Area B. Area B, representing that high portion of the mound where occupation clearly continued after the Early Dynastic period, was excavated in the first, third, and fourth seasons. One assumed that the sanctuaries in this region were well maintained after others belonging to L. had been abandoned.

During the first season, a small excavation was conducted in the eastern part of Area B. Four levels with a very complex stratigraphy were uncovered, the most important being Level III. A portion of a deeply niched and rabbited façade obviously signified a temple, although to the rear of the facade the remains were very poorly preserved. In the foundations were found several burials, including one of particular interest to which an infant belonged. The child was placed in a shallow bowl and given another bowl as a burial gift. Inside the burial gift bowl were three tablets detailing contracts, including one with the date formula for king Sin-iddinam of Larsa (1849-43 B.C.). Since it appeared as if the shallow bowl burial was partially cut by the foundations of the Level III temple, the Level III building must postdate this king of Larsa. The

presumably administrative bldg

pottery accompanying these levels was of the general Isin/Larsa - Old Babylonian type.

The western side of Area B was the focus of work during the third and fourth seasons. A preliminary scraping of the surface dirt composed of earth and disintegrated mud brick revealed the eroded remains of the foundations of a large mud brick platform or terrace. It is doubtful that this was once a true ziggurat. We encountered some evidence of previous excavation, perhaps that of R. Koldewey who briefly investigated this portion of Area B in 1887. Some of these excavations consisted of shallow trenches cutting through the mud brick, while others were larger in scale. It is, of course, difficult to relate this earlier excavation to the plans executed at the time.

The manner in which the rectangular bricks of the platform were laid out was not always consistent. In some places, the bricks were laid flat in alternating courses of headers and stretchers. In other parts, two or three courses of brick were placed on edge either as headers or stretchers and alternated with one or more courses laid flat. It is now impossible to know the extent of this massive structure or even to determine its original shape. The present eroded extremities on the west would suggest that the platform was either curved or oval. Indeed, Koldewey reconstructed it as circular.

At the very highest part of the mound were preserved parts of rooms and the bottoms of wall foundations, all belonging to a building which originally surmounted the terrace. The walls were constructed of both mud brick and baked brick. Where the latter was found, only one or two courses remained. The rest of the wall had been removed and many of the bricks had been stacked in one area as if ready to be carted away. These remains of what must have been once a temple were so fragmentary that it was impossible to reconstruct a truly accurate plan.

In our discussion of the Ibgal of Inanna dating to the Early Dynastic period, we noted that the foundation system for the tem-

ple at this period could be decidedly complex (p. 424 f.). This was also true for the mass of mud brick which constituted the foundations and platform of this later temple. First of all, the area was excavated and many of the earlier constructions were razed and removed. At the bottom of this excavation, and immediately below the first course of brick of the foundation of the platform, bits of semi-precious stones and other materials were scattered over the surface, including worked and unworked pieces of gold foil, lapis lazuli, carnelian, turquoise, agate, copper, gypsum, flint, mother of pearl, and shells. The strewing of the newly excavated soil with these objects must have been part of a ritual prior to the building of a new temple, perhaps part of a ritual of purification. It is interesting that at Nippur during the Third Dynasty of Ur similar materials were scattered in the foundation boxes of Ur-Nammu found in the Ekur.

Secondly, the platform was not initially solid, but relieved in many places by long or short rectangular open chambers let into the fabric of the platform. These chambers were filled with earth, sand, and—for the most part—hunks or broken pieces of pure mud. There is evidence to suggest that they were then capped by mud brick. Again, as during the Early Dynastic period, the final form of the foundation and platform would have appeared completely solid. The reason for such a construction technique is not easy to discern. Considering the size of the platform and the enormous number of bricks which went into its construction, the idea of economizing on the number of mud bricks hardly seems plausible. It is equally difficult to understand the use of such chambers in purely architectural terms.

While most of the chambers were probably built in one phase of construction, one particularly large chamber showed two such phases. First, the chamber was filled to a height of almost two meters with densely packed earth, mud brick, and broken mud. The wall on the west side then stepped back approximately 20 cm to form a footing on which the remainder of the

wall stood. A niched doorway was built into the wall. At this point, a mud plaster floor was laid which covered the entire chamber, and a single course of mud brick placed in the doorway. The room, however, was never occupied and the doorway never used. Instead, the chamber and door were filled with the same foundation filling of earth, mud brick and broken pieces of mud for another 70 cm before the "living" floor was laid and the wall plastered.

Although there were no small finds or inscriptions from the platform which allowed for a precise dating, a general date can be ascertained. The mud bricks, measuring approximately 25 cm by 18 cm by 8 cm, are identical in size and appearance to the mud bricks used in the badly destroyed temple in the eastern part of Area B which, as we have noted, most postdate Sinsiddinam of Larsa. A date, then, in the Isin/Larsa-Old Babylonian period seems reasonable.

The Isin/Larsa-Old Babylonian platform was built directly on top of the walls and rooms of an earlier building. The latter was constructed of plano-convex bricks and hence must date to the Early Dynastic period (*Fig. 3*). The building, excavated during the third season, proved to be over twenty meters wide and over thirty meters long. Three almost identical levels were excavated. A curtain wall, probably very low and formed mostly by many layers of mud plaster, surrounded the building leaving a narrow corridor on all sides. On the north, this curtain wall was provided with two entrances which were partially blocked by rectangular and rounded forms made of a few bricks heavily plastered with mud. In front of the northern buttressed facade of the building was a raised apron higher than the level of the curtain wall entrances. This apron was constructed of a few courses of brick laid flat, but most of its height was due to a myriad of successive replasterings.

There were two entrances into the building. The one on the west led into a rectangular room from which there was no access to the rest of the building. This had a large altar filling up a good part of the

room. The eastern door was the main entrance, with a drain below the floor to carry liquids from the interior to the exterior. An entrance vestibule contained a bench of mud brick and a door on the west which led to a rectangular room with an altar, a bench, and several mud brick tables. The doorway on the south side of the vestibule opened onto the first of three courts in the building. A long narrow fireplace was situated to the east of the door and a portion of a baked brick paving in the western end of the court. A drain led from this paving through the western wall out into the exterior corridor. In the southern part of the building were two courts or open rooms, the one on the west paved with flat baked bricks and edged in part with large, flat baked tiles. Flat baked bricks were commonly used in the late part of Early Dynastic III in pavings and in wall repairs. The court had been repaired several times after the baked brick paving was no longer used, these later pavings consisting of a course of mud brick covered by a heavy layer of mud plaster. Mud brick pavings were also found in other parts of the building. One can assume that the long room in the southeast corner of the building was also unroofed since it contained two ovens. One of these ovens, large and circular in form, completely filled the space between the west and east walls. As nothing was found within it, it is difficult to determine its precise function. To the north of this oven was found a tank constructed of baked brick and covered on the inside and top with bitumen. Undoubtedly, it was a receptacle for some kind of liquid. Opposite this tank was another long fireplace or oven with an ash bin at its southern end.

Between the two courts, a staircase to the roof and to what was perhaps the most important room of the complex was found. The room was quite small and completely devoid of furnishings. A great many fish bones were strewn on the floors and some of the finest objects were retrieved from the floors and the fill immediately above them.

Inscribed objects provided information concerning the name of the sanctuary to

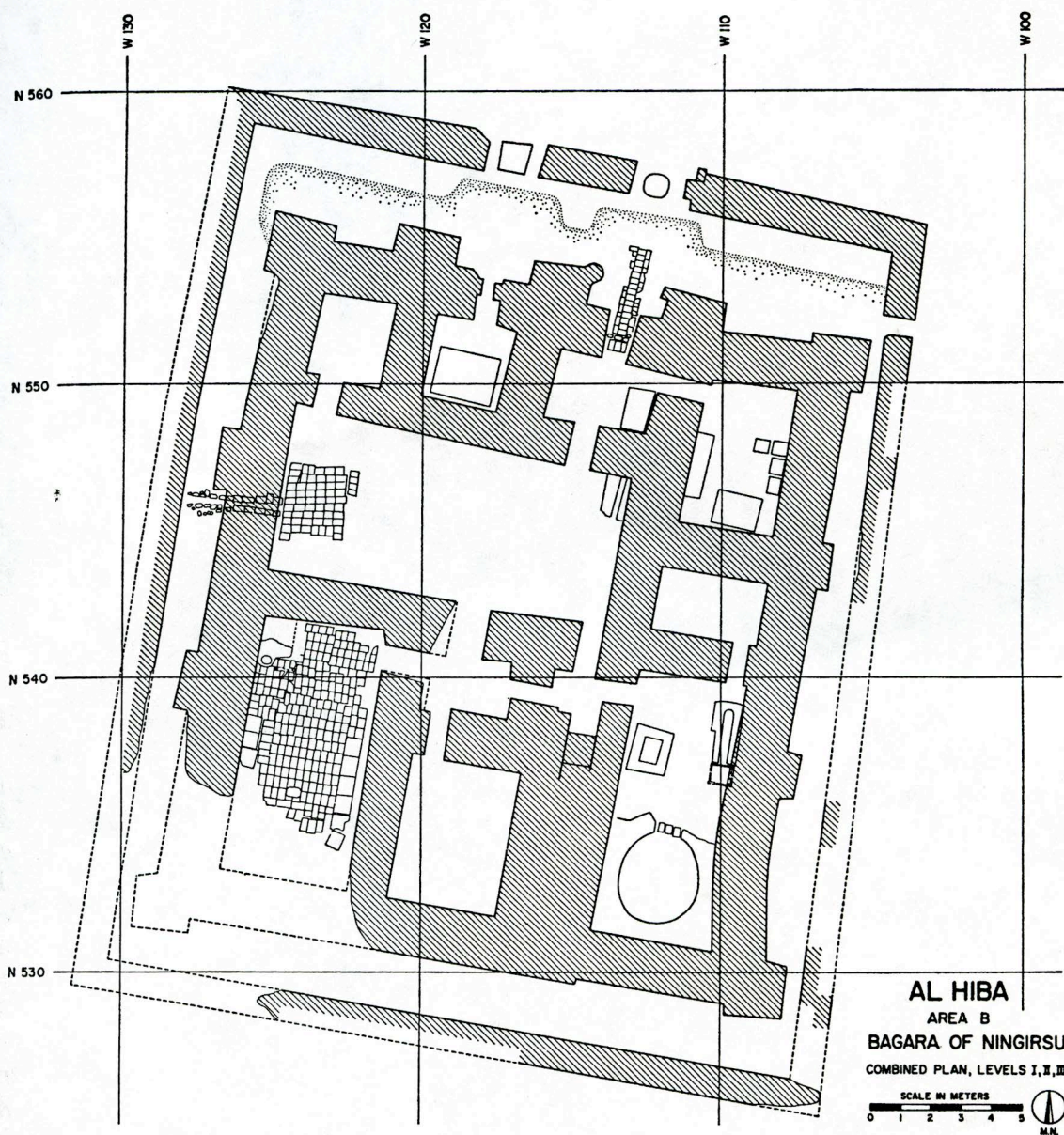


Fig. 3

which this building belonged, the name of the god for whom the sanctuary was built, and a secure date for Level III of this building. This information is contained on an inscribed copper dagger blade found in Level III of the room located to the north of the first courtyard on the west end. It indicates that the building was called the Bagara of Ningirsu, the chief god of L., and that the blade was dedicated in the time of the ruler Eannatum (Iraq 36 [1974] 35 n. 17). Although the Bagara was one of the prime sanctuaries of L., it is obvious from the description of the building given above,

that it was not the main temple of the Bagara precinct. It could only have been a subsidiary building, for it lacks a primary focus or an obvious cella.

Unfortunately, since no complete sanctuary in a primary capital of Sumer has been excavated, no direct comparison can be made. We do know, however, on the basis of Cylinder A of Gudea, that a major sanctuary in the time of Gudea consisted of a central temple and a series of outlying buildings or temples designed for specific purposes. It is not unreasonable to assume that the same held true for the late Early

Dynastic III period. The appurtenances of our building are not particularly distinctive, yet it is still possible that we are dealing with a temple dedicated to the supplying of the god's needs. If so, our building may well be a forerunner of the "kitchen temple" known from later periods.

During the fourth season, work continued in the Bagara of Ningirsu. Immediately to the east of the temple described above, and separated from it by a narrow street or corridor, was found a building of distinctly different type. Three Early Dynastic levels were distinguished. The main entrance, located on the western side of the building, was accessible from the corridor between the two buildings. A doorway led into an open court, which contained a large baked storage tank(?) on the west side and a circular oven with the bottom parts of two vats alongside. In the earliest phase, the oven was so large as to practically block the door leading into the room east of the courtyard. Vats were used elsewhere. Three of these were found in a row, within a narrow room to the north of the court. Only the bottoms remained; that their diameters ranged from 70 to 97 cm indicates that the original vessels must have been extremely large.

The most important feature of the building was apparently another oven which entirely filled a room to the north of the courtyard. Its form was that of a dome constructed of corbelled mud bricks. Undoubtedly, it is the earliest known large scale dome, as its diameter measures approximately five meters. At each rebuilding, a new oven was constructed.

Two other rooms are located to the east of the main courtyard. In the most northern one was found another vat with stacks of conical bowls in the bottom. In the southwest corner of this same room was found a door socket of Gudea which had sunk down from far above. Below that, in the fill of the earliest Early Dynastic level, was a fragment of an inscribed, irregularly shaped stone ("galet"). Although this stone is only a portion of the original and the inscription is partly abraded, it was clearly dedicated by Eannatum. As such, it can

be considered a duplicate of a "galet" from Tello. One wonders whether or not such stones were inscribed votive grinding stones. Another inscribed object of Eannatum was found in the same level, but in the courtyard. It was part of a stone vase recording Eannatum's building of a lapis lazuli temple for Ningirsu.

Also worthy of note is a stela fragment of Ur-Nanše. It was not found *in situ* and had later been used as a door socket. Made of gypsum, it is inscribed on both sides, part of seven columns preserved on the obverse and part of six columns on the reverse. The obverse enumerates various buildings constructed by Ur-Nanše and the canals dug by him, as well as a list of statues he had sculpted. On the reverse, he mentions the various governors and overseers whom he had captured and buried. This side of the al-Hibā stela offers some completely new information to the corpus of Ur-Nanše inscriptions.

A single tablet found in a room to the east of the courtyard perhaps throws light on the function of this building. It refers to the é-bappir (the brewery) and to the brewer. It therefore seems likely that it was here, in the major oven of the temple, that the bappir for the god was prepared. The large vats were accordingly used for both mixing and storage.

The Ibgal* of Inanna, the administrative building, and the two temples of the Bagara of Ningirsu have provided us with distinctly different types of architecture of the latter part of the Third Early Dynastic period. For the first time in the history of Sumer during the third millennium B.C., buildings have been excavated which may be securely linked to known historical figures.

D. P. Hansen

Laguda (normally written ^d*La-gu-da*, once, Šurpu VIII 37 v.l. BM 76211, ^d*La-gù-dé*). A god, a name of Marduk according to An — Anum II 224 restored from Anšar = Anum (unpub.), in both cases with note "Dilmun" (NI+TUK^{ki}). However, he is distinct from Marduk and "exalts him in the lower sea" (*šá ina*