

HIGH TEMPLES IN THE NORTHERN MESOPOTAMIAN URBAN LANDSCAPE

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Constructing a temple on a raised position was a common practice in ancient Syro-Mesopotamia, at least from the 4th Millennium B.C. onward. A main temple located on top of a 5 to 10 m high mud brick platform often characterized the urban landscape of southern Mesopotamian cities (Uruk, Uquair, Susa, just to mention a few examples). However, free standing platforms were not common in northern Mesopotamia (few examples are Tell Brak, Tell Halawa B, Mari). Instead of constructing huge platforms, temples were erected on top of artificial mounds often enclosed by temenos walls in the center of the settlement, thus in a prominent position (Tell Chuera, Tell es-Sweyhat, Jebel Aruda, Tell Mozan, Tell Arbid).

On the base of comparative study, a consistent definition of 'platform', 'terrace', and 'temple foundation' will be advanced and a typological classification of 'High Temples' will be presented in this paper. The analysis of Tell Mozan Temple Terrace will be integrated in this framework. Finally the perception of 'High Temples' will be analyzed within the urban and surrounding landscape.