

## TEMPLES IN MESOPOTAMIA

We have seen that the kings were in the earlier period often designated as divine beings: they regarded themselves as either directly descended from gods or as “named” by them, i.e., created by them for the office of king. To the latest days they could perform sacrifices—the distinct prerogative of the priests— and among their titles both in ancient and in later days, “priest” is frequently included.

With the differentiation of functions consequent upon political growth and religious advance the service of the god was committed to a special class of persons. Priests

from being the attendants of the kings, became part of the religious household of the god. The two households, the civil and the religious, supplemented each other. Over the one presided the ruler, surrounded by a large and constantly growing retinue for whom quarters and provisions had to be found in the palace; at the head of the temple organization stood the god or goddess, whose sanctuary grew in equal proportion, to accommodate those who were chosen to be servitors. Even the little shrines scattered throughout the Islamic Orient of today—commonly fitted up as tombs of saints, but often replacing the site of the dwelling-place of some ancient deity—have a place set aside for the servitor of the god, "the guardian of the sanctuary", just as a private household has its quarters for the servants.