Ziggurats in Mesopotamia

The passage mainly talks about the construction, History, and some expectation of Ziggurats.

The first paragraph mainly talks about the appearance of Ziggurats, which is way smaller than the Egyptian pyramids. The paragraph also mentions that the new platforms of ziggurats were built above the old platforms, thus covering the older ones.

The second paragraph mainly focuses on the material of construction materials of Ziggurats, which are mud bricks. However, because of the limitation of size and amount of braked bricks, Mesopotamian Ziggurats are not able to compare with the Egyptian pyramids both in size and quality, as they need to be reconstructed for every century and maintained in every decade as when water drops into the inner bricks, which were mainly made by sun-dried bricks rather than baked ones, will expand and thus crumble the whole structure.

The third paragraph discussed mainly the reason why ziggurats were not built entirely out of baked bricks, which is due to the lack of trees in Mesopotamia. Due to this lack in raw material, there was not enough fuel to bake such numerous bricks, which leads to a lack of baked bricks. The second reason is the reuse of bricks. The passage mentions that mud bricks are lighter and smaller compared to those stones that constructed the pyramids, so the peasants of the Mesopotamian people are able to reuse those buried bricks for further construction.

The fourth and fifth paragraphs mainly discussed explanations and assumptions about the use of Ziggurats. One early assumption assumes that these buildings were built for people to escape mosquitos, while another hypothesis assumes that these platforms were made to shield crops from being wet, as there are always annual floods around Mesopotamian areas. A more astronomical explanation for the construction claims that these ziggurats were built for astronomers to observe stars and the night sky. However, the passage also gives disagreement with this hypothesis, pointing out that the additional height of the Ziggurat will not be a significant help for these astronomers. The passage also gives the most accepted hypothesis nowadays, that these Ziggurats were built for ritual use. These steps were believed to be a path for priests to be elevated closer to the realm of the gods.