



The Nippur Library

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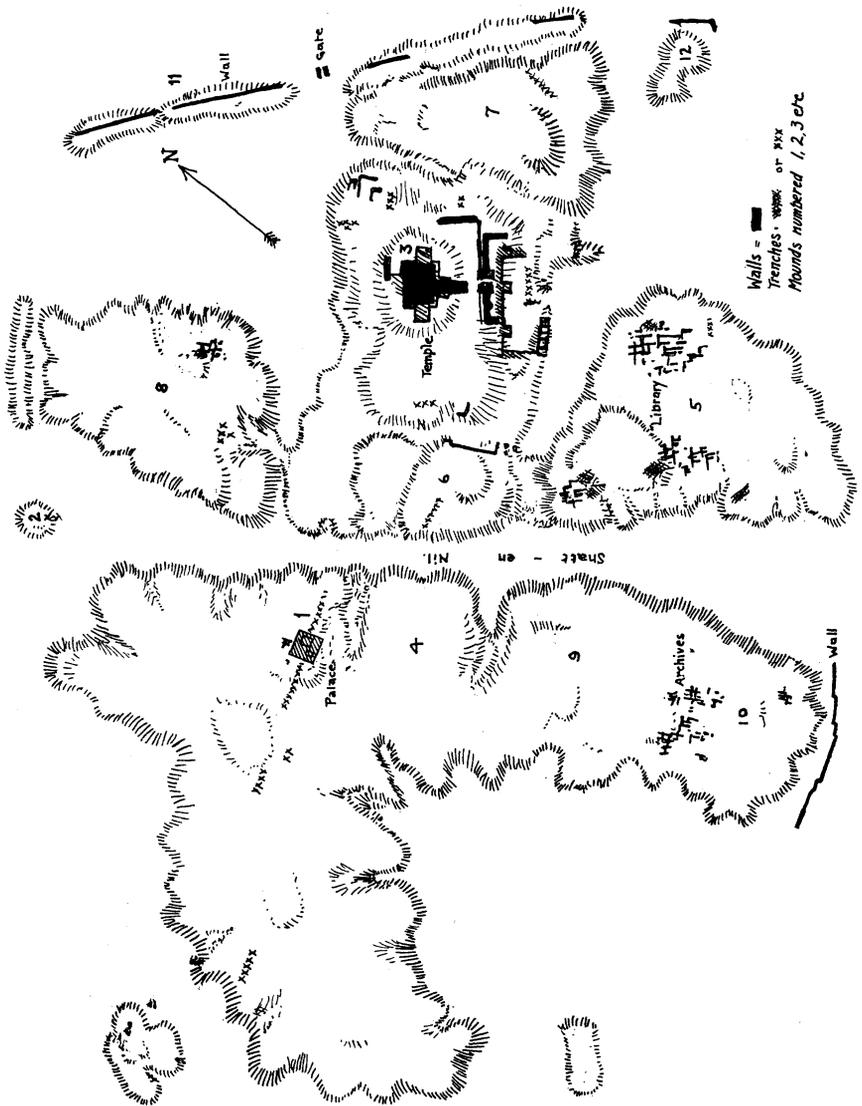
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The Nippur Library.—By Dr. JOHN P. PETERS, New York City.

At the southeastern extremity of the Nippur mounds lies an isolated hill of triangular shape, estimated to cover an area of about thirteen acres. At its highest point, at the northwestern extremity, this hill rises about forty-five feet above plain level, having an average height of from twenty to twenty-five feet. It is on the eastern side of the depression of the Shatt-en-Nil, which divides the mounds of Nippur into two parts, the same side on which the temple lies. It is separated from the temple—the next hill to the north (3)—by a depression which seems to be an arm of the Shatt-en-Nil, and bears locally the same designation. This hill is designated as V. in my reports and in my *Nippur* (5 on the accompanying plan¹), the numbers indicating the order in which excavations were commenced, and designated IV. in Hilprecht's latest publications, although in his earlier publications he followed my numbering. It is also called "Tablet Hill." In this hill we found the greater part of the tablets discovered in the first campaign (1888–89). These tablets were found exclusively in the northwestern nose of this hill, at all depths. The description of a few of the finds will show the conditions under which they were discovered :

Close to the surface in the second trench which we ran, in February, 1889, we found sixteen tablets, ranging in date over a period of not less than 2000 years, from an archaic period, antedating 2500 B.C., to the time of Cambyses, at the close of the sixth century B.C. In another place some tablets were found in a tomb of unbaked brick, by the side of a tub-shaped Babylonian clay coffin. A little over thirty feet beneath the surface (thirty-four feet beneath the highest point of the mound) and a little more than nine feet above the plain level, three tablets of the Hammurabi period were found in a jar, the only discovery of tablets in a jar made in that mound in the first

¹ For the accompanying plan I am indebted to Mr. Clarence S. Fisher, who accompanied the last expedition as architect.



Drawn by Clarence S. Fisher.

PLAN OF NIPPUR TO SHOW ESPECIALLY THE SITE OF THE "LIBRARY"
 ON TABLET HILL.

two campaigns. In a room plastered with tinted stucco, apparently belonging to a house of the better class, were a quantity of jars containing fish bones, grape seeds, grain and the like, such as were ordinarily found in connection with burials, and among these a number of tablets of different periods. In an excavation around the corner of this northwestern nose, bordering on the Shatt-en-Nil canal, we found a number of rather large, well baked, very light-colored tablets of the Hammurabi period, looking as though they had just been made and never used or handled.¹

In the second campaign, 1889-90, we excavated a considerable portion of the face of this hill along the edge of the Shatt-en-Nil canal. These larger excavations enabled us to identify the strata and especially the buildings of the Hammurabi period, which were the most important and best preserved in that part of the mounds. These buildings had been destroyed by fire. Their date was determined by the number of tablets of the Hammurabi period found in them. This Hammurabi stratum lay about twenty-two to twenty-eight or nine feet below the surface of that part of the mound. In general the tablets excavated on this hill were found lying loose in the earth or confused among buildings to which they did not belong, along with burial remains, coffins, jars and the like, so that I concluded that they had been buried by their owners beneath the floors of the rooms in which those owners lived. Some, however, as in the case of the buildings of the Hammurabi period above referred to, seemed to belong in the rooms where they were found. There were no large deposits of tablets at any one place. They were found singly or in little nests, not placed on wooden shelves or lying in numbers on clay shelves or benches.

Writing in 1897, as a result of my own investigation and the investigations of Prof. Hilprecht made up to that date, I reported in *Nippur*² that in general the tablets found in the excavations conducted in that hill "were of the ordinary so-called contract variety, transactions of barter, sale and the like." Besides the excavations along the Shatt-en-Nil, on the southwestern face of this hill, trial trenches were also run, in the

¹ For further details see *Nippur*, vol. ii., pp. 197 ff.

² Vol. ii., p. 202.

second campaign, at various points all over this hill. One of these trenches was designed to cut the hill through from one side to the other, thus giving us a complete section. This trench, however, was never completed. Almost nothing in the way of construction was found, and only the trenches at the northwestern nose and along the edge of the canal in the upper part of the southwestern face yielded tablets or other objects in appreciable numbers. In March, 1890, work on this hill was stopped and no further work was undertaken there until the winter of 1899-1900, almost ten years later.¹ At that time the conditions in the trenches on Temple Hill were such that it was necessary temporarily to abandon work there. The men were accordingly carried across the arm of the Shatt-en-Nil and set to work in one of my old trenches toward the northeast corner of Tablet Hill. No finds of any importance were made until about the middle of January, 1900, and then Haynes began to discover tablets in large numbers. According to his account this deposit of tablets was by far the largest discovered at any place on this hill or any other hill in the Nippur complex of ruin mounds. Under date of January 16th, he reports "thirty sound tablets," and "many large fine fragments;" January 17th, "twenty-eight sound tablets" and "very many large fine fragments;" January 13th, "thirty-three sound tablets" and "a multitude of imperfect tablets;" January 19th, "forty-nine sound tablets" and "many fine fragments of tablets."² Mrs. Haynes in her diary records that on January 14th, Sunday, twenty-three boxes of tablets were packed; on the 21st, twenty-five boxes; on the 28th, twenty-seven boxes; February 4th, twenty-six boxes. After this the number of tablets found was relatively small, and before the close of February this deposit of tablets was exhausted, and the men removed to another mound because no more tablets were forthcoming. The great bulk of the tablets found during these excavations were found eighteen to twenty-four feet below the surface of the mound (at that point) in a series of rooms toward the northeast center of Tablet Hill, marked Library on the accompanying plan. In these rooms such a large number of tablets were found together,

¹ Cf. Hilprecht, *Excavations in Assyria and Babylonia*, pp. 511 ff.

² Hilprecht, *Excavations*, pp. 509 f.

evidently having originally rested on shelves (they were unburned, but a fair proportion was whole and there were many large fragments) that Haynes believed himself to have found a library, and wrote to Hilprecht, then in quarantine at Bosrah, suggesting this possibility. Before Dr. Hilprecht's arrival, March 1st, 1900, all the tablets discovered in this supposed library had been already boxed, with the exception of about twenty specimens retained for his examination. After his arrival a small gang of men was employed on Tablet Hill for a brief period of time, but practically no more tablets were discovered. Such, I believe, is a correct statement of the excavations conducted in the southeastern triangular mound at Nippur, which has leaped into fame as the site of the "Temple Library."

Before the close of March, 1900, Prof. Hilprecht had formally adopted the theory that Haynes had discovered a Temple Library. He writes: "We have *definitely* found the Temple Library, and in the very mound which in 1889 I designated as the most probable place As I looked at the matter more closely, I was struck with the characteristic absence of contracts and I could very soon determine that the great mass (grosse Masse) of this unique find (17,200 tablets) was of a lexicographical and linguistic character, and that it contained astronomical, mathematical and religious texts, (hymns, prayers, etc.), letters, temple accounts, in large numbers (grosse Menge), whereby the character of a Temple Library is fixed and assured."¹

In 1903 Prof. Hilprecht published his *Explorations in Bible Lands during the 19th Century*, the greater part of which consisted of his contribution, "The Excavations in Assyria and Babylonia." This portion of the work was republished in 1904 as an official publication of the Department of Archaeology of the University of Pennsylvania, under the title *The Babylonian Expedition of the University of Pennsylvania, Series D., Researches and Treatises*. Part of the same ground was covered by a lecture entitled *Die Ausgrabungen der Universität*

¹ *Litterarisches Centralblatt*, 1900, No. 19, 20. *Sunday School Times*, May 5, 1900. In his later publications he gives the number of tablets as 23,000 and then as 24,000 from the literary and scientific part of the library, and 28,000 from the remaining part or parts.

von *Pennsylvania im Bel-Tempel zu Nippur*, also published in 1903, which, with a few slight changes, appeared in English in 1904 as an official publication of the Department of Archaeology of the University of Pennsylvania, volume i., part II. of *The Transactions of the Department of Archaeology*, with the title *In the Temple of Bel at Nippur; A lecture delivered before German Court and University Circles*. These four publications, two longer, and two shorter, are in reality, therefore, but two publications. In all of them we have substantially the same description of the Temple Library, its discovery and its contents, with some slight variations in the figures illustrating the text.

According to his statements in these publications, on his first visit to Nippur in 1889 as a member of the first University of Pennsylvania Expedition to Babylonia, Hilprecht reached the conclusion, from an examination of the surface of the ground, that it was "extremely probable that the houses of the priests, their offices, school and library, must be looked for in the large triangular southeast mound, separated by a branch of the Shatt-en-Nil from the temple proper."¹ From a statement made a few pages further on, it would seem that he presented this theory to the director, requesting him to excavate the southeast mound, without result. About ten days later the director, failing to obtain satisfactory results and growing "uneasy as to the tangible results of the expedition I seized this opportunity to submit once more for his consideration my views, given above, concerning the topography of the northeast half of the ruins, pointing out that in all probability tablets would be found in that large isolated hill, which I believed to contain the residences of the priests and the temple library, and requested him to let me have about twenty men for a few days to furnish the inscribed material so eagerly sought after" (p. 309). It is a fact that at the date mentioned by Prof. Hilprecht, Feb. 11th, excavations were commenced in the northwestern nose of that mound, but he never submitted to the director any such theory as he here states, nor were the excavations commenced at his request or in any way under his control. No member of the expedition with whom I have been

¹ Hilprecht, *Excavations*, p. 307.

able to communicate has any recollection of a presentation by Dr. Hilprecht at that time of any such theory, and if in fact he had any such idea he kept it very carefully to himself both then and later.

He regarded the first expedition as a failure and a mistake. Nothing was found and nothing ever would be found at Nippur. Writing to me some months after the conclusion of our first campaign, October, 1889, he says: "The only good things [discovered by us in the first campaign] are the text of Naram Sin (three lines) and the astronomical tablet," neither of which, so far as we know, was found in Tablet Hill. This is in striking contrast with the declarations regarding the results of the first expedition contained in the work above referred to (p. 310), where he speaks of the "seemingly inexhaustible mines" of tablets, "the large mass" of which was "written in old Babylonian characters not later than the first dynasty of Babylon, about 2000 B.C." In this description he states that three Ashur-etil-ilani tablets "of unusual historical interest" were discovered in Tablet Hill in the first year. They were in fact discovered in quite another part of the Nippur mounds (hill 8 on the plan). This is worthy of note as illustrating how in his imagination, since 1900, everything has gravitated towards Tablet Hill and the "Library."

During Haynes' first expedition, 1893-96, I was "scientific director," in the sense that I prepared and transmitted the directions under which Dr. Haynes worked, and he reported directly to me, until 1895. During that period Dr. Hilprecht at the home end was also reporting to me the results of his examinations of tablets and other objects found, especially so far as anything occurred which might guide us in the work in the field. Some time in 1895 Dr. Hilprecht succeeded me in the direction of the excavations. Up to that time Dr. Hilprecht seems to have discovered no literary remains from Tablet Hill or from any other part of Nippur, and no instructions were given to Haynes to excavate in Tablet Hill, which accordingly, at the close of the third expedition, remained as I had left it in March, 1890. Dr. Hilprecht was the "scientific director" of the excavations in the last campaign, Dr. Haynes, as before, having the immediate direction of the work in the field. Dr. Hilprecht asserts in his volume (pages 430, 431)

that, having concluded that the hill contained the library, he directed Haynes to concentrate his efforts principally on this mound, "which he had not touched at all during the third campaign," and another mound in which lay the Court of Columns (hill 1 in the plan). As already stated, Haynes did, in fact, commence to excavate in the southeastern mound toward the close of 1899, taking the occasion of unfavorable weather and general conditions in the temple excavations to remove his men and put them on the nearest convenient point.

At the risk of tediousness I have related these things, because they have a distinct bearing on the genesis of the temple library idea. It would seem that the idea of the library had not been developed before the close of the third expedition, even supposing it to have been developed between that and the fourth expedition. I have stated that in a letter to Dr. Hilprecht at Bosrah, Haynes suggested the possibility that the great mass of tablets found by him in January and February, 1900, might be the Temple Library. Hilprecht says in his narrative (p. 445) that, after reaching the mound, March 1st, 1900, he "ascertained through a study of representative tablets, an inspection of the rooms in which they had been discovered, and a brief continuation of the work in the trenches, that the 'Tablet Hill' actually represented the site of the temple library, as I had maintained for so many years," and that he then suspended the excavations at that place. He says (pp. 512-513), with regard to the excavations conducted by Haynes in Tablet Hill, that "two large sections were excavated in the eastern and western parts of the mound respectively. Both yielded large quantities of exclusively ancient tablets at practically the same low level, and only single tablets or small nests of old-Babylonian and neo-Babylonian documents mixed in the upper strata. From this general result it became evident that the library doubtless continued to exist in some form or another at the old site through the last two thousand years of Babylonian history, but it also followed that the large mass of tablets was already covered under rubbish at the close of the third millennium. The period in which the older library fell into disuse could be fixed even more accurately;" and then he proceeds to give his evidence that "the tablet-filled rooms and corridors" of the older library "were in ruins before Hammurabi ascended the

throne of Babylon." The "older library" is, according to him, that which Haynes discovered at a depth of from twenty to twenty-four feet below the surface, in the northeastern center of the mound, and, as he also asserts here, at the same level on the western side of the mound. A plan of the rooms of the northeastern portion of this older library is given in the text (p. 523) with an account of the way in which the books were deposited and found, how they were preserved from damp, the nature of the shelves used, sometimes of wood, sometimes of clay, etc. This northeast portion of the Temple Library was, according to Hilprecht (p. 524), "a combined library and school" as "was determined immediately after an examination of the contents of the unearthed tablets and fragments." It was this portion of the library that included the "more scientific works, the tablets for religious edification and books of reference," as well as "the many mathematical, astronomical, medical, historical, and linguistic tablets recovered;" besides "hymns and prayers, omens and incantations, mythological and astrological texts" (p. 529). The description of the contents of this "library" is not in all places absolutely clear. There are passages which refer positively to Haynes' discovery of what Hilprecht calls the "older library." There are other passages which might possibly be interpreted as referring to later strata, but at least all refer to the excavations in Tablet Hill, and in the northeastern portion of that hill. From this is carefully differentiated "the business and administrative department established in the 'library'" (p. 532), which occupied "the southwest rooms of the mound" (p. 524), "the school and the technical library" being "in the rooms nearest to the temple," that is, "within a comparatively small radius in and around the central rooms of the northeast portion."

The description contained in *Die Ausgrabungen im Bel-Tempel zu Nippur*, and its English translation, *In the Temple of Bel at Nippur*, are substantially the same.

There are, accompanying the text in these three publications, in all eight half-tone or photographic reproductions of the objects found in that part of the library described as the literary, scientific and school section of the library. These are (1) "an astronomical tablet from the temple library" (not contained in the German publication); (2 and 3) multiplication tables, to

illustrate the way in which the scholars were taught mathematics in the school section of the library (one of these occurs only in the German publication, the other in all three publications); (4) a drawing by a temple scholar (in the German publication only); (5) a bas-relief, "Beltis leading a worshipper" (*Excavations in Assyria and Babylonia*); (6) clay bas-relief, "Lutanist surrounded by animals" (in all publications); (7) "a hexagonal clay prism" (not in *The Excavations in Babylonia and Assyria*); (8) "a round practice tablet" (in the German publication only). There are also some descriptions and cuts of copies of tablets which do not profess to be facsimiles. These are very few in number and not readily identifiable, and may therefore be omitted.

1. The astronomical tablet, as shown by museum marks and admitted by Dr. Hilprecht, was not dug up by us in Nippur at all. It was purchased from an antiquity dealer, Khabaza, in Baghdad, by Prof. Robert Francis Harper, for the expedition, in January 1889, eleven years before Haynes made his discovery or any tablets had been found in that portion of Tablet Hill, and a month before the mounds of Nippur had been touched at all. There is every reason for supposing that this tablet came from one of the northern ruins, Babylon, Abu Habba or Borsippa. There is absolutely nothing in the tablet itself to determine its *provenance*, the few characters there are being quite illegible, and the astronomical figure, a seven-rayed star in a circle, not absolutely identifying the locality, although it might be supposed to suggest an origin from Abu Habba, ancient Sippara.¹

2-3. One of the multiplication tables, which appears in all the publications, was dug up, as the museum mark shows, by me in the second expedition, in April 1890, that is, a month after we had abandoned work on Tablet Hill. We were at that time conducting excavations on the further or western side of the western mounds, across the Shatt-en-Nil (hill 10) from Tablet Hill.

The other, which appears only in the German publication, is shown by the museum mark (it was catalogued in 1899) to have

¹ An examination of the Khabaza tablets by Dr. Hermann Ranke shows that most of those the *provenance* of which can be certainly determined from the text, came from Abu Habba (Sippara).

been purchased by Noorian in 1889. It is part of a collection with regard to which we have as positive proof as can be obtained in the case of bought collections, that it came from Abu Habba, where Scheil, in his excavations, later discovered a considerable number of multiplication tablets of the same general character.

4. The "Drawing of a Temple Scholar" is described in Dr. Hilprecht's German lecture (p. 59) as one of a series of tablets in these words: "Zeichnenunterricht wurde ebenfalls erteilt. Ich kenne eine Reihe von Tafeln, auf denen sich gerade und schiefe Linien, Zickzacks, Karos, Lattenmuster und ähnliche Figuren finden. Dann schritt man zum freien Handzeichnen nach Vorlagen und der Natur, wobei unbegabte Schüler sich bisweilen ganz Schreckliches leisteten (Abb. 41)."

This passage, without the illustration, appears in the Transactions of the Department of Archaeology, *In the Temple of Bel at Nippur* (p. 112), in these words: "Instruction in drawing was likewise given. We have a whole series of tablets on which there are straight and oblique lines, zigzags, lattice-work, and similar forms. Then they advanced to free-hand drawing from patterns or from nature, with sometimes rather amusing results on the part of untalented pupils. Some of these drawings may represent caricatures." Evidently the same tablet is referred to again without any illustration in *Excavations in Assyria and Babylonia* (p. 527), as follows: "The course in art led gradually up to free-hand drawing from nature, and probably included also lessons in clay modelling and in glyptics and sculpture (seal cylinders, bas-reliefs and statues). Several fragments of unbaked tablets exhibited portions of animals and trees more or less skilfully incised in clay. One bird was executed very poorly." In reality, as even a cursory examination of the cut in the German publication will show, the object is a fragment of an archaic stone vase, and the work is not practice or school work. The original is said to be in the Museum of Constantinople. The University of Pennsylvania has a photograph of this object, with a note by Haynes recording the fact that it is the photograph of a fragment of a stone vase. Furthermore, although dug up at Nippur by the fourth expedition, it was not found in Tablet Hill, as is plain from the date of its discovery, before October 1899.

5 and 6. Both of these clay bas-reliefs were dug up at Nippur during the fourth expedition; but, like the preceding, both of them were dug up before work had been begun on Tablet Hill. They were in the hands of the architect of the expedition as early as October 1899, before any work had commenced on Tablet Hill. They could not, therefore, have come from the temple library at that place.¹

7. The hexagonal clay prism was discovered in the third expedition, conducted by Dr. Haynes, and in this expedition, as stated above, in Dr. Hilprecht's own words, no excavations were conducted on Tablet Hill. At what part of the mounds it was discovered is not clear, but this much is certain: that it was not found in the northeast section of the so-called library nor on Tablet Hill at all.

8. The same is true of the round practice tablet.

In other words, of the eight illustrations which, from the text, would appear to be illustrations of the "older temple library" in the northeast section of the hill, that is, that portion of the library which was destroyed before the time of Hammurabi and the remains of which were discovered some twenty to twenty-four feet beneath the surface of the ground by Haynes, not a single one represents an object found in that group of rooms or even on Tablet Hill, and two did not come from Nippur at all.

That with which I have so far dealt is the 'literary and scientific library and the school,' according to Prof. Hilprecht's statements. It is also called by him the "older library" or the "ancient library," that which belonged to the period antedating the Elamite conquest. So, for instance, on page 515 he says: "As nearly the whole of the excavated material from the ancient library is literary and scientific in its character, the tablets, with but few exceptions, are unbaked. They consequently have suffered not only from the hands of the Elamites, but also from the humidity of the soil to which they were exposed for more than four thousand years." On page 520 he says that: "the whole area occupied by the large triangular

¹ Two other art objects referred to by Hilprecht in connection with these bas-reliefs, a hog and a buffalo (*Excavations*, p. 523), could not have come from the "library," as is clear from the date and place of discovery.

mound was included in the temple library and school of the city. The real Babylonian buildings, as far as excavated, may naturally be divided into a northeast and a southwest section. An enormous barrier of unexplored débris, 'pierced only by one large tunnel and a few branch tunnels,' lies at present between the two quarters. The ground plan of the entire complex can therefore not yet be determined. Both wings consist of a number of chambers, corridors, fragmentary walls, streets, etc., found at the same low level as stated above." On page 521 he says that: "The excavated part of the southwest wing of the large complex comprises forty-four rooms and galleries, more or less connected with each other; the northeast section about forty." On page 524 he says: "Though literary tablets in small numbers occurred almost everywhere in the hill, the large mass of them was found within a comparatively small radius in and around the central rooms of the northeast portion. On the other hand, there was not a single business document unearthed in that general neighborhood, while more than one thousand dated contracts, account lists, and letters came from the southwest rooms of the mound. It would therefore seem natural to conclude that in view of the doubtless large traffic carried on by boats on the Chebar, the business and administrative department of the temple was established on the bank of 'the great canal,' and the educational department—the school and the technical library—in the rooms nearest to the temple." No map of the excavations on this hill is given in his publications, by which it is possible to locate precisely the position of these two sections; but this description shows conclusively that what he means by the southwest section was that part along the bank of the Shatt-en-Nil canal, which he assumes to be identical with the canal Chebar of the Book of Ezekiel. He gives but one specimen of the contents of this "business and administrative department established in the 'library', where contracts were executed, orders given out, income and expense lists kept, etc.", namely, the Lushtamar tablet. In *The Excavations in Assyria and Babylonia* (p. 532), he describes this tablet as follows: "A number of letters were found intact. The envelopes, sealed and addressed more than four thousand years ago, immediately before the city was conquered and looted, were still unbroken. While writing these

lines one of those ancient epistles of the time of Amraphel (Gen. 14) lies unopened before me. It is $3\frac{1}{4}$ inches long, $2\frac{1}{4}$ inches wide, and $1\frac{3}{4}$ inches thick. One and the same seal cylinder had been rolled eleven times over the six sides of the clay envelope before it was baked with the document within. It bears the simple address, 'To Lushtamar.' Though sometimes curious to know the contents of the letter, I do not care to break the fine envelope and to intrude upon Mr. Lushtamar's personal affairs and secrets, as long as the thousands of mutilated literary tablets from the library require all my attention." In *Die Ausgrabungen im Bel-Tempel zu Nippur* (p. 62) he gives a cut of the Lushtamar tablet with the title: "Abb. 47. Brief im adressierten und gesiegelten Toncouvert (ca. 2300 v. Chr.)." This cut appears also in *The Temple of Bel at Nippur* (p. 116, cut 49), entitled "Letter in Clay Envelope. To Lushtamar." The letter print accompanying this illustration (p. 114) is as follows: "Of the numerous letters from the time of the first Babylonian and Cassite dynasties, taken partly from the library, partly from the business houses on the west bank of the Chebar, one dating from about 2300 B.C. may be briefly referred to (figure 49). It is at present still inside of its original clay envelope, which is sealed on each of the six sides twice with the same seal, containing name and profession of the sender, and is addressed on the front side 'to Lushtamar.' A new catastrophe befell Nippur before the letter could be sent off. Fully occupied at present by my laborious work on the temple library, I have, in spite of a very pardonable curiosity, not yet found time to open the envelope and acquaint myself with the private correspondence of Mr. Lushtamar." According to the museum marks put on this tablet by Prof. Hilprecht himself, it was purchased by him in the year 1889, with a sum of money given by Prof. Prince, and is part of the Prince collection now in the Museum in Philadelphia. It was, therefore, not dug out in the fourth expedition, in 1899-1900, and in all human probability never came from Nippur at all.¹ It is possible that the letter itself,

¹ There seems to be serious question whether this tablet does in fact belong to the Prince collection. It answers exactly to the description of a tablet in the Noorian collection, of the existence of which otherwise I can obtain no information. The Noorian collection came from Abu Habba, the Prince collection presumably from Babylon.

if it were opened, would show its *provenance*. For some reason Prof. Hilprecht and the authorities of the Philadelphia Museum have refused to have the envelope opened and the letter examined. But not only does this tablet not come from excavations conducted in 1899-1900 in the Tablet Hill at Nippur, it would appear from such reports as are available that no excavations were conducted on Tablet Hill along the banks of the Chebar canal in that campaign; that that section of the mound has in fact never been touched since it was abandoned in March, 1890, the trenches lying to-day as they were left at that date. In that case any evidence of the existence of this "administrative and business section of the library" must come from the excavations of the expedition of 1889-1890. As already stated, we found no considerable deposit of tablets at any place in the rooms on this part of the hills.

As already stated, the tablets found by us in Tablet Hill in the first and second expeditions were, in point of fact, tablets of a business character. They did not, however, constitute a library or even an archive. Among these tablets Dr. Hilprecht now asserts (p. 511 of *The Excavations in Assyria and Babylonia*) that there were "several hundred contract tablets and temple lists written at the time of the Assyrian, Chaldean, and Persian rulers (about 700-400 B.C.), a few fragments of neo-Babylonian hymns, letters and syllabaries, a considerable number of business documents, dated in the reigns of the kings of the first dynasty of Babylon (about 2300-2100 B.C.), and more than twenty-five hundred literary fragments of the third pre-Christian millennium generally half effaced or otherwise damaged." As according to his statement on the same page the total number of tablets found on that hill during the excavations of 1889-1890 was only about 4,000, it would appear that the greater portion were of a literary character. This is so contrary to the reports of Dr. Harper and Dr. Hilprecht with regard to the tablets found in that hill in the first year and my own recollections of the character of the tablets found there in the second year, and further so little agrees with Dr. Hilprecht's present assertion that that part of the hill constituted the business and administrative section, that I venture to think the whole statement is erroneous. We may with confidence dismiss the "administrative and business section of the library," along the edge of the Chebar canal on Tablet Hill, as non-existent.

Besides the "ancient library" or the "old library," existing before the Elamite conquest, the remains of which Dr. Hilprecht supposes to have been found in Haynes' excavations, there were also, according to him, discoveries made on Tablet Hill which proved the existence at the same place of a library after the time of Hammurabi. This he calls the "later library" (p. 516). A considerable number of earlier tablets were "found in the rooms and rubbish of the upper strata," which formed part of this "later library," since "after the expulsion of the Elamites, when normal conditions began to prevail again in Shumer and Akkad, the priests of Nippur returned to their former quarters and rebuilt their schools and libraries at the place previously occupied. In levelling the ground they necessarily came upon many of the texts of the ruined library. Other earlier tablets, however, must have been added at a much later period as the result of regular excavations, as is shown by the following instance." The "following instance" to which reference is here made is one of the most interesting and fascinating records in Prof. Hilprecht's account of the "library": "Soon after my arrival at Nuffar in 1900, an important jar in terra-cotta was unearthed in the upper strata of the southwestern wing of the library. It contained about twenty inscribed objects, mostly clay tablets, which constituted a veritable small Babylonian museum, the earliest of its kind known to us. These antiquities, already more or less fragmentary when deposited in the jar, are equally remarkable for the long period which they cover and the great variety of the contents of their inscriptions. They had apparently been collected by a neo-Babylonian priest or some other person connected with the temple library" (p. 516). He goes on to say (pp. 517-518) that: "the owner, or curator, of the little museum of Babylonian originals must have obtained his specimens by purchase or through personal excavations carried on in the ruined buildings of Bel's city. He doubtless lived in the sixth century, about the time of King Nabonidos, and was a man well versed in the ancient literature of his nation and deeply interested in the past history of Nippur." . . . "Every object contained in this vase is a choice specimen, and evidently was appreciated as such by the collector himself, who had spared no pains to secure as many representative pieces as possible. The first antiquity of

my Babylonian colleague which I examined was the fragment of a large tablet with the plan of houses, canals, roads, gardens, etc. I could well realize the delight he must have felt in acquiring this specimen. For even before having cleaned it, I recognized that it represented a section of the ground plan of the environments of Nippur,—a subjective view soon afterwards confirmed by discovering that the ideogram of “the city of Bêl,” *En-lil-ki*, *i. e.*, Nippur, was written in the middle of the fragment.” This description is accompanied by a half-tone reproduction of this plan (p. 513) entitled “Large fragment of a Clay Tablet containing the Plan of Nippur and its Environments.”

According to the statements of Mrs. Haynes, who kept a diary during the last expedition, which is practically the only record available of the place, method, etc., of the discovery of objects, this plan—it is a sufficiently striking object to secure identification—was actually discovered about, or a little more than five months prior to Dr. Hilprecht’s arrival at Nippur. It was not found in any jar. In fact it was too large to have been inserted into the ordinary jars in which tablets were discovered. It was not discovered on Tablet Hill, but in another part of the ruin mounds of Nippur, excavations on Tablet Hill not having been commenced at that time. This statement is corroborated by the architect of the expedition, Mr. C. S. Fisher, who states that shortly after his arrival at Nippur, somewhere in October, 1899, this plan was handed to him by Dr. Haynes to be cleaned and drawn; that the work was so delicate that he scarcely dared undertake it, and that it remained for a considerable time in his possession in his tent. Both these persons, Mrs. Haynes and Mr. Fisher, assert that they saw no such jar as that to which Dr. Hilprecht refers, and that to the best of their knowledge and belief no such jar was found at that time. It is difficult to see how such a jar could have been discovered without their knowledge. According to their statements, two jars were actually found. One of these, a sealed jar, was opened on a Sunday morning, a little after Dr. Hilprecht’s arrival on the grounds, in the presence of the members of the expedition, and proved to contain nine tablets and one small vase. The other jar, apparently referred to on page 512 of Prof. Hilprecht’s *The Excavations in Assyria and Baby-*

lonia ("a small jar of baked case tablets dated in the reigns of members of the first dynasty of Babylon, was unearthed at a higher level than the body of those ancient 'clay books'"), was found in the morning of the day on the afternoon of which Prof. Hilprecht arrived at Nippur, by or in the Shatt-en-Nil. It lay on its side, and very little earth had silted in. There were in it seven small baked case tablets. In his notes Dr. Haynes recounts this discovery, and then adds, apparently after Dr. Hilprecht had examined the tablets, that the tablets in this jar were of various dates.

In view of the unreliable statements with regard to this discovery of a jar in the "later library," the fact that no evidence is given of the discovery in the so-called "later library" anywhere of deposits of tablets on shelves or in rooms in any considerable number, and in view of the fact that in the excavations conducted at various points all over this mound in 1889 and 1890 occasional tablets or small nests of tablets from a period antedating Hammurabi onward were discovered, but in no case any considerable deposits or collections of tablets, I think we may confidently affirm that there is no evidence of the existence on this hill of a "later library," and that we rather have negative evidence to the contrary.

I may add that Dr. Hilprecht now affirms that at the Cassite period the temple library lay on the west side of the Shatt-en-Nil, at the southern end of the hills on that side. In point of fact considerable deposits of tablets of the Cassite period were found during the second, third and fourth expeditions at various points on the mounds west of the canal, from the neighborhood of the Court of Columns (hill 1), directly opposite the temple, southward. The distance from the farthest north of these deposits to the farthest south must be at least a quarter of a mile in a straight line. There were further found on that side of the canal, at different places, deposits of tablets of other periods, for instance the Murashu tablets of the Persian period (on hill 1), a considerable deposit of neo-Babylonian tablets (hill 10), another deposit of tablets of the time of the Ur dynasty (hill 10), etc. The relation to one another of the buildings in which these tablets were found and the nature of these buildings have not been made clear. The Cassite collection, found by me in the neighborhood of the Court of Columns, consisted of temple archives; the

Murashu tablets, on the other hand, were private documents. None of these collections in themselves nor all together constitute a library, nor are of the nature of a library, as that term has been commonly understood, and as it is in fact applied by Dr. Hilprecht in the publications to which I refer.

Now in conclusion, what was the nature of the tablets discovered by Dr. Haynes in the very large deposit found by him some twenty to twenty-four feet beneath the surface, in the northeast corner of the triangular mound at the southeastern end of the ruins, called Tablet Hill? Dr. Hilprecht declares that 17,200 or 23,000 or 24,000 (his statement is different in different publications) tablets were taken out of that "library" and "hurriedly examined" by him (p. 524). He had, in fact, about twenty specimen tablets to examine, the rest being boxed up. In all four or five hundred selected objects, for the most part tablets, were kept out from the various trenches opened in the expedition of 1899-1900, packed by themselves and sent out of the country. These were all or almost all in hand before Dr. Hilprecht's arrival. The other tablets were packed as they came, without labels or other marks by which their exact *provenance* could be determined. Tablets from quite different parts of the mound might be packed in the same box, if they were discovered at or about the same time. The condition of Dr. Haynes' notes with regard to the discovery of tablets is stated by Prof. Hilprecht on page 500 of his *Excavations*. He says: "Consequently our knowledge as to how and precisely where the tablets were found is extremely limited. As I must depend almost exclusively on Haynes' official entries and records for this important question, I deem it necessary to submit a specimen of my only written source of information for the time prior to my arrival, when most of the tablets were taken out of the ground. I quote literally from his diary:

'Jan. 16, 1900: 30 sound tablets of promise from a low level in "Tablet Hill." Many large fine fragments of tablets, 1 pentagonal prism, 7-3/4 inches long; its five sides from 1 to 2-1/6 inches wide. An hour after dark last evening one of our workmen's huts burned down so quickly that nothing was saved and the occupants barely escaped with their lives. By vigorous efforts the neighboring houses were saved.'

Prof. Hilprecht did not cause any of the boxes to be opened. The tablets were not re-examined and repacked at that time

but left in the boxes without labels, as Dr. Haynes had packed them. It is stated by Prof. Hilprecht that a considerable part of the boxes supposed to contain the tablets found by Dr. Haynes in the temple library came to Philadelphia unopened. They were deposited in the cellar of the library of the Museum and it is only within the last few weeks that they have begun to be opened and examined.

Under these circumstances I think it safe to add to what I have already said about the "temple library," that our information as to the contents of Dr. Haynes' discovery are so imperfect that it is absolutely impossible for anyone, Dr. Hilprecht included, to make at the present moment an assertion that the deposit of tablets found by him did or did not constitute a temple library. We must await their examination. Unfortunately the method in which this discovery has been handled is such that it appears to be impossible to rely upon any statement made by Dr. Hilprecht, unless supported by such manifest and palpable proof that his statements can be checked and verified by others, or by the contents of the inscriptions themselves. This is doubtless a strong statement to make, but I venture to think that the evidence which I have presented justifies it, and this evidence might be fortified by similar evidence from other parts of his recent publications.¹

¹ For example, on p. 539 of his *Excavations*, in his account of his trip to Fâra, he describes the head of a "Markhur goat in copper" figured on p. 540, as "excavated at Fâra," in such a way as to lead the reader to suppose that he excavated it, whereas in fact it was bought at Nippur, before that trip, from natives who claimed to have found it at Abû-Hatab or Fâra. Facing page 538 is a beautiful photograph entitled "Our First Expedition to the Ruins of Abû Hatab and Fâra," which was really a photograph taken on another occasion. The whole work is full of similar inaccuracies and misleading representations.

I wish to express my indebtedness to Mrs. J. H. Haynes, who has placed the field notes from her diary at my disposal; to Mr. Clarence S. Fisher, who furnished the plan which accompanies this paper; to Dr. Hermann Ranke, whose notes on the tablets have been of the greatest service in the preparation of this paper; and to Prof. J. D. Prince, who, with Dr. Lau, very kindly went to Philadelphia and examined two of the tablets.