

Tablets from Sippar — The team of the Department of Archaeology of the College of Art of the University of Baghdad was able, during the past eight years, to study the topography of Sippar and to discover many types of dwellings dating from Old Babylonian times and back to the Sumerian period.

In the temple area situated in the south western part of the town, we recently found remains of a large temple which could be the well known temple of Shamash. There were many courts in this temple. Most of them were paved with baked bricks coated with alternating horizontal and vertical white and black bands. We also discovered a main courtyard : 16/16 meters, opened to the sky, with walls decorated and strenghtened with buttresses and recesses executed at equal intervals. The walls were coated with white plaster. In the north western side of the courtyard a number of clay tablets were discovered (Room No. 335). We also found cylinder seals, grave goods, and large quantities of Sumerian Akkadian and Babylonian pottery. This place appeared to be an ancient archive room in which there were 56 shelves built with sun-dried mud bricks gypsum and reed. The shelves were oblong in shape, but with the aid of mud and reeds the upper parts of the shelf corners were made rounded. The height of each shelf is 25 cms, the width is 35 cms, the depth is 70 cms.

The tablets were arranged vertically. In the same cases they were pulled up due to the collapse of the roof and the upper parts of the walls. Among those are the tablets of the well-arranged archive of King Ashurbanipal at Nineveh. The tablets that were discovered recently by the Department were more than one hundred. They were found only on two shelves and they concern different subjects ; they are written accurately or in unfamiliar styles in freeze, and on the edges of the tablets sometimes in zigzag shaped lines similar to those in Arabic and Islamic manuscripts.

Some of the tablets were found in the corners or at the entrance of the room. They are usually large in size, they could be indexes like those formerly found at Nippur. Some of them were written in more than one language. Some tablets bear clear dates such as those dated in the reign of the Babylonian monarch Adad-apla-iddina who ruled from 1067-1046 B.C., or Manushtusu, son of Sargon

and third king of the Akkad Dynasty ; this tablet begins with : *a-na-ku man-uš-tu-us-su mar šarru-kin* and mentions some title of Manushtusu who had loaded a boat with two thrones or crowns made of gold and silver which sailed to Sippar. Some clay tablets are inscribed with the prologue of the Hammurabi's Laws ; that encourages us to say that we may find the whole paragraphs of the Code. Another tablet which is bilingual concerns the wall of Sippar : Hammurabi made its height looks like the top of a mountain. Also among these tablets which were found on two shelves, we must notice the tablets No. 1 and 2 of Atra-ḫasis Epic with these opening words : *e-nu-ma i-lu a-wi-lu ...*

It seems, from preliminary study of the tablets, that these include various genres such as linguistic, grammatical, religious and lexical texts and other sciences as well, such as grammatical and astronomical texts.

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