

THREE ESSAYS ON THE SUMERIANS

by

Benno Landsberger
(1890-1968)

I. The Sumerians (1943)

The Sumerians were a people, few in numbers, which settled in the south of present-day Iraq before 3000 B.C. They never really took root in the northern part of the country. Not even a relative date for their immigration can be determined; that is, it cannot be identified with any point in the sequence of archaeological strata. Still less can it be fixed in absolute terms. For more than a thousand years the Sumerians lived in Iraq side by side with the Akkadians. But the Sumerians as a people had already become extinct before 2000 B.C., and their language found a refuge in the Babylonian schools. Sumerian was sung in Babylonian temples and taught in Babylonian schools until the beginning of our era. Apart from its longevity, the wide distribution of Sumerian as a dead language is also notable; in the middle of the second millennium Sumerian was cultivated in schools from the boundaries of Babylonia to those of Egypt and Anatolia, and from 1400 to 1200 B.C. in the capital of the Hittite Empire as well. These phenomena are only partially explained by the fact that knowledge of Sumerian is prerequisite for command of the Babylonian script. The profound influence of the Sumerian genius until late periods and into distant lands can only be explained by the exceptional cultural heights attained by the Sumerians compared to the rest of western Asia. We can give a preliminary impression of this by stressing the following achievements of the Sumerians: a civil bureaucracy so intensively organized that it encompassed the entire population and all resources; a pantheon with a vast number of divine personalities, not abstract and meaningless, but deeply rooted in cult and myth; a literature which is astonishing especially for the great number of strictly differentiated types of lyrical poetry and which through the centuries developed more and more refined forms.

An analysis of Sumerian culture has two aims. The first is the examination of the highest forms of that culture, which were attained ca. 2200-1800 B.C. The second aim is to distinguish the Sumerian elements within the Babylonian culture, in which the old inheritance persisted in a form usually simplified and sometimes also coarsened. It is therefore not sufficient for the requirements of an historical method of observation if, as has until now been done without exception, the Sumerian culture is taken as a unit and presented without consideration of time. It is true that in spite of all modifications the Sumerian aspects of this culture never lost their essential character, and to this extent a "timeless" consideration is not completely misleading. But it would be denying the progress made in the last decades in this study of Babylonia not to include the eventful course of three millennia in our presentation. In order to survey this I have differentiated a sequence of cultural periods as shown by the Table.*

*The original Turkish articles (though not the German versions) were each accompanied by a Table showing a list of cultural periods. Each of those periods was described by name and assigned a number. The Table for the first essay, The Sumerians, differed from the other two in that the Uruk (Uruk level IV) and Jemdet Nasr periods together were called period II.

TABLE

		Ubaid period
B. C.	3300	Uruk period (Uruk level IV)
	3100	Jemdet Nasr period
	2800	Early Dynastic period
	2450	Akkad Dynasty
	2250	Classical Sumerian period
	2050	Isin Dynasty
	1800	Old Babylonian period
	1600	Kassite Dynasty
	1200	Neo-Babylonian period
	500	Achaemenid and Hellenistic periods
A. D.	0	

These periods cover the time from the beginning of settlement in southern Mesopotamia until the final disappearance of Sumerian from the schools of the country, that is, until the beginning of our era. The Ubaid, Uruk, and Jemdet Nasr periods can be investigated only by means of archaeology. In the Ubaid period, and possibly also in the Uruk period, the Sumerians were probably not yet in the country. (In the second essay I will deal with the immigration of the Sumerians, their part in the civilizing achievements, and the creation of their culture; the third essay will have as its subject the intellectual contributions of the Sumerians, and the influences exerted by them.) The period from 2250-2050 B.C. is the classical Sumerian period. It is the time of the city-state with statist organization, for which the city ruler (Sumerian *ensí*) is characteristic. The ideal of "statism" is the cultivation of all fields under state control, the accumulation of produce in state storehouses, and the distribution of rations to the populace. Even if this ideal was never completely realized, the administration of such a state required countless officials and scribes.

The Istanbul Museum contains an estimated 80,000 clay tablets dealing with the administration of the city of Lagaš over a time span of only fifty years. From the same city there is archaeological, and, above all, literary evidence that presents us with the ideal figure of an *ensí*: the *ensí* Gudea of Lagaš. In the hymns he composed on the occasion of the renewal of the temple of his local deity we see expressed with religious fervor the degree to which the

In the other two essays, the two were numbered separately. This created a discrepancy in terminology between the three essays, which was aggravated by the fact that Landsberger throughout the essays referred to his cultural periods by the numbers he assigned them in the tables, rather than by their names. The Table reproduced here shows only Landsberger's divisions and descriptive terminology. For the sake of clarity the various periods are in this translation referred to by their names instead of by an arbitrary number.

temple represented the focal point of life in a Sumerian city. The great variety and the individuality of the Sumerian cities is a result of the peculiarities of these local cults, whether it is a question of the city of the "Father of the Gods" Enlil, the great mother goddess, the sun or moon god, etc.

The system of Sumerian city-states was held together, sometimes strongly centralized, sometimes weakly and loosely organized, by a regional king raised to divine rank. It collapsed, partly through inner disturbances, partly due to external enemies, shortly before 2000 B.C. The proud title *ensí* was downgraded to designate the possessor of a small fief. Divine kingship still existed, to be sure, but the ideal king was transformed into the exemplary ruler and just shepherd of people. The Sumerian language died out, but Sumerian literature was collected in the schools of the city of Nippur in central Babylonia. New literary genres, such as the didactic epic, were even established. Sumerian was transmitted to later schools in the form in which it occurred in this period, the time of the Isin Dynasty, ca. 2050-1800 B.C. In the schools of Nippur the basis for the scribal craft of all future periods was laid. The invention of contract formulae for the various forms of private economic transactions (sale, loan, tenure, sale-marriage, etc.) allowed for the transformation from state to private enterprise, and for the development of capitalistic economic patterns.

The succeeding Old Babylonian period is characterized by the destruction of the power of the temples: the creation of the syncretistic cult of Marduk; the composition of semi-philosophic epics such as the Epic of Creation, with its dualism of the old evil versus the young and good powers; the development of individual religion with the personal protective deity and the concept of sin; the development of the concepts of "justice and righteousness" and "the right way" as the substance of the ideal kingship; and by the substitution of the idea of obligations to commitments, written agreements, and legal promulgations in place of the old Sumerian concept of order.

After the collapse of the Old Babylonian empire, about 1600 B.C., all sources cease. Only after 150 years do we observe a renaissance which revived the literature of the previous two periods, and which everywhere exhibited the tendency to systematize this literature. Literary erudition and strong poetic talents are the distinguishing features of this period of renewal. The feudalism dominant in this Kassite period merged in Babylonia with the forms of Sumerian state administration which were not yet forgotten in spite of all cultural changes.

In the Neo-Babylonian age commentaries upon the literary canon established in the Kassite period were created, and the occult sciences and religious scepticism were formulated. Theological speculation identified the gods with each other, and also with the stars which were their symbols. This ultimately resulted in the loss of distinctions between gods and the disintegration of polytheism. The end product of this development is an astral religion. The heritage of the Sumerians entered the Hellenistic era in that guise.

Now that the diverse developmental stages of the Sumerian culture have been delineated, we should stress those characteristic features of Sumerian culture which did not change, and which were in fact unchangeable. A hypothesis today rightly forgotten is the so-called "Panbabylonianism" which more strictly should be called "Pansumerianism." According to this theory, the basic assumption of Sumerian culture was that the cosmic order parallels the earthly order, and all worldly occurrences are merely a reflection of heavenly events. This is an exaggeration, but the formula is basically correct: the Sumerian indeed saw earthly life as a participation in cosmic events. As the Sumerian spirit was more active, this synthesis between heavenly and worldly spheres was felt the more genuinely, and the effects of gods on men seemed less mechanical. The "mountain house," the temple of the "Father of the Gods and Lord of the Universe" in Nippur was simultaneously the cosmic world-mountain. Nippur was not only the center of the country, but also the pinnacle of the world. And the cultic order was symbolic of world-order. Babylonian religion preserved this interaction with the cosmos ("kosmisches Fluidum") even after the Sumerian temple lost its vitality.

As a second Sumerian characteristic we posit the ordered form and the ordering function of thought. This principle of order was implicit in all activity of the Sumerian mind. Its manifestations were the cadastral catalogues of municipal real estate with their field-plans; the lists of city populations separated into classes; the lists of gods and of everyday objects; the poems carefully divided into stanzas; and finally, the pictorial representations carefully divided into groups and scenes. Moreover, concepts of order were also explicitly conceived in concrete terms, and were basic to the Sumerian world view. (More details will be given in the third essay below.)

The Sumerians were destined to this classificatory way of thought by the form of their language. For example, the Sumerian organized a group of animal species in the following manner: ur.gi, 'domestic dog'; ur.barra 'dog of the steppe' = wolf; ur.maḥ 'largest dog' = lion; ur.gug 'dog of the reeds' = tiger; etc. Not only the Sumerian noun, but also the verb exhibits this transparent character. For example, all processes of speech are derived from the basic element "mouth," all nuances of sight from "eye." The writing system not only took advantage of this peculiarity of the Sumerian language, but indeed developed it in all directions. The world of objects was thoroughly classified by means of the so-called determinatives.

These classifying tendencies were substantially augmented by the wealth of the Akkadian verb, which with its profusion of possibilities for expression provided an instrument for the observation of all events of heaven and earth, of all phenomena which appear to the individual. The comprehensive study of omens was a combination of the Sumerian inclination for order with the Akkadian gift for observation. Ultimately, in the Kassite period, the lists of objects together with the handbooks for the study of omens represented a complete inventory of all existing objects and all possible events in the world.

Here, then, we see a peculiarity of the Sumerian language: its composite, mosaic-like character. Analysis into smaller elements does not render the Sumerian vocabulary imprecise, as in the case in the languages of the Caucasus. Rather clarity is intensified, as was shown above. Another peculiarity of Sumerian is its agglutinative sentence structure. The sentence must be carefully prepared in the mind of the speaker and articulated in all details, before it is delivered as a single unit. This stands in the sharpest contrast to the cursively produced Akkadian sentence, put together only in the course of speech. But Akkadian prose adapted itself to Sumerian sentence structure. The production of long chains of words, held together by an inflectional element placed at the end of the chain, is related to the agglutinative sentence structure. Sumerian is of a passive character; we must convert the sentence into the passive voice if we wish to understand the nominal and verbal inflection. The object of the transitive verb, like the subject of the intransitive verb, remains unexpressed. Similarly, there is an essential difference between transitive and intransitive verbs with regard to verbal prefixes and agreement. This distinction still exists in a few of the Caucasian languages, and has recently been observed in Hurrian as well. A sharp distinction is further made between objects and persons; the verbal inflection varies, depending on whether the subject of the sentence is a person or an object. This is a distinction made especially in the Dravidian languages. In great contrast to the transparency of the lexicon and the clarity of the sentence structure, the exceedingly nuance-rich verbal prefixes of Sumerian show vagueness and, at least according to the categories current with us, obscurity. The subject and object elements (with the exception of the direct object) were resumed in the form of verbal infixes. Besides these easily understandable verbal prefixes, other prefixes were also used to distinguish whether an event occurred in a direction toward or away from the speaker. But even with the differentiation the functions of Sumerian verbal prefixes are by no means fully explained.

Sumerian has been compared with nearly all the language groups in the world; none of these comparisons are convincing. Comparisons have been made on the basis both of language structure and of material components such as words and form-elements. In regard to the first, it has been impossible to advance beyond determining general similarities of structure.

As far as the alleged identifications of similarities in the lexical material are concerned, none of these are plausible, with the sole exception of a few comparisons of Sumerian and Turkish words proposed quite soon after Sumerian became known. The list of 350 such Sumerian-Turkish word-comparisons composed by F. Hommel, the chief proponent of a relationship between the two languages, is certainly in need of correction and supplementation on the basis of progress in Sumerian lexicography achieved since, and probably also in regard to its correctness from a Turkological point of view. But a comparison such as Sumerian *dingir* = Turkish *tnri* cannot be explained as accidental. Admittedly there is a point which must be considered here: as will be shown in the next essay, Sumerian acquired a considerable portion of its vocabulary from the substratum language spoken by the oldest inhabitants of southern Mesopotamia, who created the material culture of the country. It is possible that *dingir*, as is generally the case with other dissyllabic words of the same type, is not Sumerian in the strictest sense but belongs to that substratum language.

II. The Beginnings of Civilization in Mesopotamia (1944)

1. Sumerian legend explains human culture as a legacy from the most ancient times. According to the legend, the Seven Sages emerged from the sea and instructed the primeval kings, who ruled in several different cult cities of Sumer, in all technical skills, and brought them all knowledge and wisdom. The Deluge did destroy all civilization, but, either because the Sumerian Noah sheltered the artists and scholars in his ark, or because the tablets containing the knowledge were buried, the continuity of tradition was not interrupted by the catastrophe. Is there a nucleus of truth in this Sumerian myth? The following survey will confirm that the culture was interrupted by a catastrophe, and declined to a primitive state. Then, in uninterrupted sequence, it attained its highest level as a truly Sumerian achievement. It cannot yet be decided with certainty, however, where the higher forms of Sumerian civilization originated, and if the development of its intellectual achievements took place in Mesopotamia. The purpose of the following exposition is to illuminate these problems, particularly from a linguistic side. One method will be to examine certain so-called Kulturwörter.

2. Excavations at the sites of the Sumerian cult centers Uruk and Ur in southern Mesopotamia enable us to descend through the strata of superimposed cultural periods to the beginnings of civilization, even to the primitive mud-covered reed huts of the first settlers. This oldest civilization of Mesopotamia we call the Ubaid culture, since the pottery characteristic of it was found in large quantities in the small ruin-mound al-Ubaid near Ur. This culture was poor. The stones and metals necessary for making weapons and tools were lacking in the flood plains, and the inhabitants of the country did not yet have any medium of exchange with which to trade for them. It has been postulated that the higher civilization, as attested in the founding of cities, the invention of pottery, the refinement of stone-working, and finally, the utilization of metals for decorative and utilitarian purposes, originated not in the plains of the great rivers but on the edge of the mountains. This theory, though challenged at present, may be retained. The Halaf culture, named after a ruin-mound located near Ras-al-Ain in the vicinity of the modern border between Syria and Turkey, is more advanced than the Ubaid culture. It is also older, as is shown by the stratigraphic sequence of Halaf and Ubaid ware observed in many excavation sites, especially in Assyria. The Ubaid ware had an unusually wide area of distribution, from Beluchistan to the Mediterranean Sea.

The four lowest levels in Uruk are characterized exclusively by Ubaid ware. Thereafter we observe the so-called Uruk ware, very different from Ubaid ware, which lasts from the fourteenth to the fourth level. It appears at first only in small quantities, then mixed in equal proportions with the Ubaid ware, and is dominant only in the upper levels. From the sixth level, in which the Uruk ware predominates, we can observe the actual creation of a higher culture. It is characterized by a monumental and artistic architecture, by an advanced applied art which found expression especially in the engraving of cylinder seals, and finally, by the crucial achievement of the invention of writing. The Jemdet Nasr culture, named after a mound in the vicinity of the north Babylonian city of Kish, is represented by the third level. In spite of the intrusion of new ceramic ware, it is merely a manifestation of the preceding cultural period, distinguished, however, by great material wealth. This period is made tangible by a profusion of archaeological evidence even though not yet by intelligible written documents. It may be followed through a long golden age to its complete collapse and to a relapse into a primitive state. A new wave of population then created what we call the Sumerian culture, developed without interruption from barbarian origins, with only a few connections with the Jemdet Nasr culture. The Table (above p. 4) shows the sequence of cultural periods. The Sumerian pantheon, the essential characteristics of Sumerian art, and the configuration of the Sumerian

state as a system of city states are already completely represented at the end of the Early Dynastic period.

3. At what point in this early period, in terms of culture strata, did the Sumerians enter Mesopotamia? That they were neither the oldest settlers nor the creators of the urban civilization may be proved by analysis of the Sumerian language. None of the ancient cities had a Sumerian name. On the basis of old city names such as Urim, Uruk, Larsam, Adab, Lagaš, and Zimbar we may reconstruct a substrate language, which we call "Proto-Euphratic." Moreover, the correspondence of city name and cult symbol in such cases as Urim and Uruk makes it appear probable that the name of an ancient tribal totem was utilized for the designation of the city, and consequently, that the cities were founded by Proto-Euphratic settlers. In northern Babylonia, on the other hand, there is evidence, particularly from divine names such as Dagan, Zambamba, the sun god Amba, but also Ištar and Adad, that before the area was settled by the Semites there was another original population, different from the Proto-Euphratians. These people I hold to be identical with the original population of Assyria, northern Mesopotamia, and possibly also Syria, whom I call "Proto-Tigradians."

An attempt will be made here to isolate within the Sumerian language those words which originate in the Proto-Euphratic substratum. This attempt is not without difficulties, because the true Sumerian language, although it basically consists of monosyllabic roots, contains a limited number of dissyllabic roots as well. The juxtaposition of Proto-Euphratic names of professions and authentic Sumerian ones, which are always compounds, will establish the validity of such an approach. A word such as *nimgir* 'herald', is not truly Sumerian. It is of the same type as the place name Zimbar. (Note that the same word type is found in undoubtedly Turkish words such as *zincir*, *sungur*.) Further comparisons are listed in the fifth section of this essay.

4. Accepting the existence of this oldest population stratum of the southern Babylonian cities does not solve the problem of the date of the entry of the Sumerians. At the latest, the Sumerians were already in the country at the time of Uruk level IV, since writing must with the greatest probability be regarded as their contribution. To be sure, this oldest writing is purely pictographic and is not yet a representation of the Sumerian language. But if the writing had been invented by a people other than the Sumerians, traces of this invention would permeate the system, just as the Sumerian writing system adapted for the writing of Akkadian betrays its origin throughout. Even if we have obtained a *terminus ante quem* for the Sumerian immigration, it would be too easy a solution to assign the Ubaid ware to the Proto-Euphratians and the Uruk ware to the Sumerians. There remains in particular the riddle of what people created the Early Dynastic culture, which is considered to be so specifically Sumerian and which in its later manifestation indeed represented the Sumerian essence in its purest state. In all probability the Sumerians came from the east. Not only does the density of the settlement indicate a settling from south to north, but the absence of Sumerian elements in the mountain ranges north and east of Babylonia favors the thesis that the Sumerians came across the sea.

The island Tilmun (the modern Bahrain) in the south of the Persian Gulf, which is portrayed in Sumerian mythology as the island of paradise, possessed deities with authentic Sumerian names such as the chief god En-zak and his spouse Me-skil-ak. This circumstance supports an overseas origin for the Sumerians since it is improbable that the island was colonized from southern Mesopotamia. If this hypothesis concerning the immigration of the Sumerians is accepted, then the problem of the relationship between the ancient culture of the Indus Valley and that of the Sumerians gains a new aspect. The Sumerians maintained lively trade relations with these original inhabitants of India from the Jemdet Nasr period onward. It is probable that we must identify the country Meluhha, often mentioned in Sumerian inscriptions as the land where valuable woods and precious stones originated, with the Indus Valley. In particular Meluhha is held to be the land of carnelian, and such stones, decorated in a particular etching technique according to the opinion of archaeologists indigenous to the Indus Valley, were found in levels of Early Dynastic period in Mesopotamia.

Although a general parallelism may be observed between the cultural achievements of the Indus Valley and Sumerian civilization, no evidence has thus far appeared which would prove a genetic relationship between the two races or cultures. The sculpture of the Indus culture approaches that of the Greeks in its freedom and lacks the rigidity of Sumerian art, bound as the latter is to orderliness; on the other hand, it shows nothing of the wealth of imagination of the Sumerians. Between Indus and Sumerian writing also no likeness can be found. If the two races were related, each of the two peoples must have developed completely independently.

5. If we ask now how old Mesopotamian civilization is, and whether it was founded by Proto-Euphratians or Sumerians, the intensive utilization of the soil must be examined first as the most important of the culture's achievements. Around 2000 B.C. a fifty-fold yield was not a rare occurrence. This productivity was attained on the one hand by intensive plowing, on the other by the storing up of the floodwaters of both rivers, which reached Babylonia in May. Two different types of plow were characteristic: the heavy plow intended for turning up the earth, and the seed plow equipped with seed funnel, appropriate only for the cutting of furrows. The words for 'plow' and 'plowman', *apin* and *engar*, are clearly Proto-Euphratic. The word *apsin* 'seed-furrow made by plowing', which is doubtlessly related to *apin*, gives us a clue to the word structure of this language. The terms describing the officials responsible for dividing the land and keeping the land register, *šabra* and *šasuk*, are Proto-Euphratic; on the other hand, the name for the irrigation director, *gugal*, is probably Sumerian, and so is certainly the one for surveyor, *éš-gíd*. The seed plow appears to have been unknown, however, in the Uruk and Jemdet Nasr periods.

As in Egypt, about 80 per cent of the crop was barley and only 20 per cent wheat and emmer; the latter two were cultivated only since the end of the Jemdet Nasr period. The formation of the words used to designate the cereals does not give any indication of their origin. Professional milling already existed from the Early Dynastic period on, and a rigid distinction was made between coarse and fine flour. Around 2000 B.C., in the age of private economy, a relapse into primitive home milling occurred, while at the same time state-supervised professional millers are attested in Anatolia. After 2000 B.C. the art of fine-milling came from Mesopotamia via Anatolia to Greece and Italy, as we can prove philologically by the borrowing of the term for fine meal (Latin *simila*).

The second essential characteristic of the Mesopotamian economy is the great economical importance of beer, which was an indispensable factor in the nourishment of children as well as of adults. Already the oldest documents from Uruk level IV show us the presence of beer, with which Egyptian evidence again agrees. The terms for beer (*kaš*) and its ingredients malt (*bulug*) and wort (*bappir*) cannot be assigned to any particular language, but many of the numerous terms for types of beer such as *ulušin* 'emmer beer' betray a Proto-Euphratic origin. The designations for the occupations connected with beer production, such as tavernkeeper, maltster, and producer of beerwort, however, belong to the Sumerian speech stratum.

Sesame oil, the third factor essential to Mesopotamian diet is a Sumerian invention, as is shown by its name, *še.giš.ì* = 'grain of the oiltree'. It does not occur in the oldest tablets, and its widely distributed name (Hurrian *šum-šum*, Arabic *sim sim*, Greek *sesamos*, etc.) is derived from Akkadian *šaman šammi* 'oil of plants'.

The very specifically Mesopotamian culture of the date palm, which is of economic importance not only because of its fruit, but also because of its wood and its leaf fibers, is Proto-Euphratic according to the testimony of all terminology connected with it: 'date tree' = *nimbar*, 'date' = *sulumb*, 'fresh date' = *uhin*, 'gardener' = *nukarib*.

Occupational names, whose increasing numbers demonstrate the division of labor within the urban population, present a very instructive picture for the assignment of cultural achievements to Proto-Euphratians and Sumerians. Almost all terms dealing with agricultural occupations

and crafts are Proto-Euphratic; only the addition of a few specialized occupations was reserved for the Sumerians. On the other hand, all that is connected with higher artistic activity, with writing and scholarship, is Sumerian. The following names are Proto-Euphratic:

engar	plowman			
nukarib	gardener	}	kabar	different kinds of shepherds
sipad	shepherd		udul	
nuhaldim	cook		nagad	
šuhadak	fisherman			
simug	smith			
nangar	carpenter			
tibira	metal worker			
išbar	weaver			
ašgab	cobbler, leatherworker			
ašlag	launderer			
adgub	reed weaver			
pahar	potter			
šidim	mason			
kurušda	fattener of oxen			

In time these occupations were organized into guilds, and were each under a 'supervisor' or 'foreman', ugula and nubanda. Many of these occupational designations found their way into other languages, such as for example nangar (nağār) 'carpenter', which is still in use today.

The names of professions contributed by the Sumerians include among others:

malaḫ	skipper	<	má	ship	+ laḫ	to lead
àr.àr	mill worker	<	ar	to mill		
ka.zida	miller	<	(not clear)		+ zid	flour
šim.mú	perfumer	<	šim	perfume	+ mú	to produce
munu _u .mú	maltster	<	munu _u	malt	+ mú	to produce
ì.sur	oil presser	<	ì	oil	+ sur	to press
usan.dù	fowler	<	usan	bird	+ dù	to make

Among the professions dealing with technical skills, the art of writing, and scholarship are:

zá.dím	jeweler	<	zá	precious stone	+ dím	to fashion
kù.dím	silver- and goldsmith	<	kù	silver	+ dím	to fashion
bur.gul	stone cutter	<	bur	semi- precious stone	+ gul	to engrave

dub.sar	scribe	<	dub	tablet	+ sar	to write
a.zu	physician	<	a	beverage	+ zu	to know
di.kud	judge	<	di	judgment	+ kud	to cut, to decide
éš.gíd	surveyor	<	éš	rope	+ gíd	to stretch

This enumeration speaks for itself. To what extent neighboring peoples benefited from this urban division of labor and from all the techniques of artisans must be investigated separately in each case. The production of fine meal, the fattening of cattle, the production of perfume, fine weaving, and, in later times, mosaic and enamel techniques can be proved to have spread from Babylonia westward. The use of baked brick, so characteristic for Babylonia, became common there only after about 1500 B.C., in contrast to the Indus Valley culture. The derivation of Greek *plinthos* from Akkadian *libittu* 'brick', is uncertain. Trade developed in Babylonia already in Proto-Euphratic times, and was imitated in neighboring lands. The word *damgar* 'merchant', which still exists in the present-day *tāgir*, is probably Proto-Euphratic in origin, and not Semitic, as is generally assumed. Babylonian trade was concerned with the importing of metals, wood for building and precious woods, fragrant and medicinal plants, gems, and also wool. The famous textiles of Babylonia served as medium of exchange; but silver, accumulated by means of local trade, was usually used in payment for imported materials. Payment in grain was made only in periods poor in silver. Possibly more important in the history of world commerce than the international exchange which had its center in Babylonia, were the internal development of trade, the development of a money economy, the accumulation of capital, and the extensive practice of credit. All this was imitated in neighboring lands. The Babylonian system of weights spread through the entire Near East and then penetrated to Greece. The number sixty was the standard unit for this system. The sexagesimal system, however, also ruled the measurement of time; today we still retain this inheritance from the Sumerians.

6. The results of our investigations may be summarized as follows: the urban culture of Mesopotamia was already developed to a high degree before the immigration of the Sumerians; but it was the Sumerians who created the intellectual and artistic values of this culture. The date of the Sumerian immigration cannot yet be fixed. It can also not be determined whether they produced these intellectual accomplishments only in Mesopotamia itself, or whether they already brought the seeds of them from their eastern home. The legend of the Seven Sages who, emerging from the sea, imparted all technical skills and all knowledge to the Babylonians may quite possibly have some historical basis.

III. The Intellectual Achievements of the Sumerians (1945)

1. In "The Beginnings of Civilization in Mesopotamia" (the second essay of this group,) it was attempted to show that while the essential civilizing process on Mesopotamian soil must be ascribed to the pre-Sumerian population stratum, in the area of intellectual culture only the Sumerians possessed creative powers. In pursuing the conclusions of that essay we will bypass the recognizable developments of the earliest period in which Sumerians are attested, the Jemdet Nasr period. We will concentrate rather on the intellectual contributions which established the basis of the Sumerian culture, as it appears to us in the well-known historical periods, and as it survived until late Babylonian times. We will isolate only the most important of these achievements, which represent, as it were, the framework for the multiple configurations of the intellectual world of the Sumerians and their heirs.

We can specify exactly in which cultural era the foundation for Sumerian culture in the later sense was laid, but cannot presume either to state what the first developmental stages of this culture were like, or to comprehend the external events which gave rise to this evolution. By the end of the Early Dynastic period the basic traits of this culture had been formed, and its most striking achievement, the Sumerian pantheon, was already perfected. The cultural period which we call "Early Dynastic" follows the Jemdet Nasr period. Sumerians already inhabited the country at that time, but totally different cultural elements were then dominant. This can be best shown through a comparison of the totem-like "symbols" worshipped in the Jemdet Nasr period with the anthropomorphic gods of the Early Dynastic culture, which were already organized in a pantheon. Elements of the Jemdet Nasr period survived in the Early Dynastic period, and there was no interruption in the development of writing between these two periods. But it can nevertheless not be doubted that the Jemdet Nasr period, after a considerable time of decay, had to make way for a cultural world completely different in all respects: in architecture, pottery, dress, and in the motifs used in arts and crafts. From primitive origins and in slow development the Sumerian culture arose upon the ruins of the Jemdet Nasr culture. Judging from this evidence, a foreign people must have forced its way into Mesopotamia. These invaders could hardly have been Semites, the obvious choice, since the representatives of the Early Dynastic culture, which stretched from the Middle Euphrates and Tigris to the Persian Gulf, were truly Sumerians, at least in the southern portion of this area.

2. The human form of deities, the substitution of cosmic- and nature-gods for local numina, and their organization into a closed pantheon represent the most characteristic achievement of the Early Dynastic culture and gave Sumerian-Babylonian culture its characteristic form for all time.

Henceforth divine names were usually of the type "Lord of . . ." or "Lady of . . ."; the second element of the name refers to either the cosmic or worldly domain of that particular deity or indicates its function. Only four gods are designated by the object they represent, without the modifying "Lord": the Sky, the Sun, the Moon, and the Storm; but they, like the others, are also anthropomorphic. The prevailing anthropomorphism of the gods distinguishes Sumerian religion from that of the Western peoples, including the Egyptians. To be sure, lions, bulls, and snakes were also worshiped by the Sumerians, but they had only a subordinate importance in the pantheon. Mixed beings, half animal and half human, had their place in the world of Sumerian mythology, but did not belong to the pantheon itself. Rather, they represented the class of "demons" against which magic and incantations were employed.

An, the sky god, Enlil, the Lord of the Earth, and Enki, the god of the oceans, were partners

in the rule of the world. To this triad was added the mother goddess as a fourth of equal rank. In addition there was the "little triad": the sun-, moon-, and storm-gods. These gods were represented by only one divine person, and each possessed a large cult city. Only the sun god had a cult center in both North and South Babylonia. Besides these great gods with their strongly individualistic character there existed a class of gods of specific types, such as "youthful hero," "vizier," and "vegetation deity." These were worshiped in different cult cities under varying names, and were identified with each other after the first attempts at theology had been made. The "Lady of Heaven" was a goddess of special character. She had her cult places everywhere in the land, and, once a year, journeyed in a great holiday-procession from city to city.

The wonder and the riddle of Sumerian religion is the subsuming of local numina under one principle, the adaptation of the local cults to the cosmic character of the deities without the help of artificial speculation. We have only to compare the approximately fifteen large Sumerian cult cities with the Egyptian cult centers, to measure the magnitude of the achievement of the creation of the pantheon and the concept of the division of divine jurisdiction. For, although theology was practiced by the Egyptians ever since the beginning of the third millennium, the different local deities were never completely deprived of their local character, nor were they ever united in a true system. The subsequent extension of the Sumerian pantheon was also free of any speculative strain. Family-members and court officials were grouped at random about the great gods, and each of these subordinate deities had his assigned place in the temple-cult. Thus, according to the Sumerian world view the cosmic functions and the worldly ones—i. e., those practiced in the temple—were basically one and the same. The gods, however, also played an important part in everyday life, where, similarly, their functions were clearly separated. The god of the oceans, master of all artifices and magic, is at the same time the patron of the purification priests and the conjurors. The all-pervading sun god represents justice and is the god of both the diviner and the judge. The warlike Lady of Heaven, also inclined to love adventures, is the patron goddess of warriors and prostitutes.

Thus, basically, the divine personnel of the large temples had only to be listed together in order to create the basic mythological work, the great canonical list of gods, which finally grew to include almost 15,000 names. In classical Sumerian times mythology was for all practical purposes still free of theological speculation. The beginning of speculative thinking is seen when the so-called "type-gods," were identified with each other. An example is the identification of the type "young hero" with Ninurta, the most eminent representative of that type.

The identification Ningirsu = Ninurta was already implied in the inscriptions of Gudea, because the local deity of Girsu (Nin = Lord, Girsu = a south Babylonian city) was in his attributes and functions in no way distinguished from his prototype, the god Ninurta of Nippur. The equation of Ninlil, the spouse of the king of the gods Enlil, with Ninhursag, "Lady of the Mountains," the great mother goddess, shows a tendency to simplify the overcrowded pantheon. This equation was completed during the time of the Isin Dynasty and was substantiated by a myth. Ninurta conquered the demon who led a revolt of the stones. He then heaped the vanquished stones into a mountain which he gave to his mother Ninlil, and granted her the name "Lady of the Mountain." These tendencies toward simplification played a subordinate role in comparison with the creation by scholarly thought of new divine personalities. These arose through the combination of several gods into one god, a process we call syncretism. The most important syncretistic figure was Marduk, created about 1800 B.C. by the theologians. In him the functions of four gods were united: those of the wise magician Ea, of Enlil, lord of the universe and determiner of fates, of the mother goddess, who alone was equipped with the power of creation, and of Ninurta, the young warrior. At the same time Marduk's scribe, the god Nabu, was created through the combination of various old divine types. Nabu from time to time even surpassed his master in power and reputation. By raising its patron deity to such a high rank in a newly created pantheon, the scribal guild gave concrete expression to its own political power and to the importance which it claimed for its scholarship and administrative ability. Due to these new gods the old orders of gods faded and retained only a literary

existence. At the same time complex names were invented for the great gods, so that all aspects of their power might be expressed verbally. Truly syncretistic theology, however—the equation of gods with gods, of gods with stars, and of stars with each other—became an actuality only with the Neo-Babylonian period.

Here again Sumerian polytheism differed essentially from that of Egypt, which already showed speculation with a definitely monotheistic tendency at the beginning of the third millennium. There the king of the gods was equated, for example, with the heart and tongue of other gods, and thus it was expressed that he existed within all gods. Or a god might claim for himself the power of another when he robbed him of his eyes. As far as pure achievement of thought is concerned, Egyptian religion was far superior to contemporary Sumerian in intellectual depth. But Sumerian religion had the advantage of being quite free of abstruse mythological trivia and esoteric speculation. In simplicity and polymorphism Sumerian polytheism can be compared only with that of the Greeks, with which it also shared its productivity for literary productions of all types. In comparison with Greek polytheism, however, we might ascribe it to a certain superiority with regard to deeper religiosity, greater compactness, and deeper roots in all facets of the people's life.

3. In examining the question of how the gods exercised their authority over the people, and how they shared this authority with that of the secular powers, we must next discuss the hypothesis of a primeval theocracy. According to this hypothesis, in Sumerian cities sacred and secular authority were originally united in one hand. The designation of the city ruler, *ensí*, was accordingly translated as "priest-king," the total landed property was interpreted as being temple property, and the whole population as temple personnel. This hypothesis, which also caused the social structure of the Sumerian city in later times to be interpreted erroneously, is untenable. The landed property of the *ensí*, who governed the city in the name of the city god was always clearly distinguished from the possessions of the temples. But these, although they commanded an undoubted autonomy within the city, still had to subordinate themselves to the authority of the *ensí*, be it often under duress.

The authority of the gods over the people was at no time exercised through a direct relationship of ownership or command, and it was only a spiritual authority. Nevertheless, the gods took possession of the people in the most powerful and complete manner. Exercise of divine authority was not conceived directly or mechanically, but rather in a dynamic fashion. An analysis of the Sumerian concepts of *me* and *nam* can give us an idea of this dynamism. *Me* is at the same time both power and order. The *me* of the individual gods is differentiated according to their functions. It emanated from gods and temples in a mystic manner, was imagined as a substance, was symbolized by emblems, and could be transferred from one god to another. The *nam*, customarily translated "fate," was a formula pronounced by gods, humans, cities, and even stones and plants. In addition to the name or names defining the essence of a thing, it determined its life or future.

Admittedly, the Sumerian temple was only a simple building of unbaked bricks for which only very little stone was utilized. But the aura of the *me* immanent in the temple magically drew the pious into its spell. The rooms of the temple were differentiated and animated by their cosmic relations and mythological significance. In the temple built by the *ensí* Gudea for his god Ningirsu the cosmic fresh-water ocean was represented by an unpretentious water basin. The temple's kitchen, stables, even its brewery, were administered by divine cooks, shepherds, and brewmasters, each of whom exercised his *me*; no distinction was made between the cosmic and actual functions of the gods.

The rich, yet always self-controlled imagination of the Sumerians was also expressed in the liveliness and multiplicity of the cult forms. Depending on the nature of each city god, special priestly classes were assigned to him. Asceticism (nuns and monks), transvestitism (feminine men and masculine women), and cult prostitution only represented examples of the extremes of

this polymorphic world. Month and year were nearly filled by the cycle of monthly and annual celebrations. Nature myths and experiences of the gods were brought to life through mimed performances, and a flood of religious lyric poetry accompanied all cultic proceedings.

4. This superabundant wealth of temple cults left no time for the practice of private piety. Only in the late Sumerian and Babylonian cultural periods, when the temples had lost their prevailing importance in everyday life, did this aspect of piety develop to a world view crucial to the life of individuals. But the basis of individual piety, namely the idea that every man has his own protective god and goddess, may be traced to the classical Sumerian period. If man became impure or sinned, his guardian deities abandoned him. Then a magic constraint had to be exercised upon the guardian deities to make them return into the body of the man, either by "soothing the heart of the gods" with lamentations, or by magic combined with prayers.

5. In the wealth of the pantheon, of the myths, and of the cult forms we admire the imaginative genius and creative power of the Sumerians. The more the religion of the individual developed, the more also were mythological characters—mixed beings of terrible shape—invented for the evil powers that plotted the destruction of the individual. Sumero-Babylonian art, for its part, created a rich repertory of types for gods as well as demons. In its golden age, the time of the dynasty of Akkad, it also proceeded to compose lively and ingenious mythological scenes. But the Sumerians and their heirs were far more talented in literature than in the graphic arts. Motifs and forms of visual expression became rigid only too rapidly. The tremendum, the awfulness of gods and divine beings, which varied in literature with countless words and phrases and was forever illustrated by new poetic images, could not find adequate expression in the graphic arts, at least according to our feelings.

It is a widespread but erroneous assumption that all Sumerian schools were temple schools, and that Sumerian literature and scholarship were of a purely religious nature. The "tablet-house," which was both school and scholarly institution, was a thoroughly secular institution. In the years after 2000 B.C., Sumerian literature was for the first time gathered into a type of canon, and countless new literary works were created. The schools occupied themselves, in addition to philology (the art of writing, the study of language in all its refinements, and belles-lettres), chiefly with the so-called Listenwissenschaft (list literature). Not only the gods, but absolutely everything that constituted the empirical world, was arranged into lists. Practical wisdom was learned in the form of proverbs and didactic poetry, historical tradition was given poetical shape in the lyrical description of favorable and unfavorable times, and a great canonical list traced the historical tradition back to primeval times, in which semi-divine kings founded cities and created civilization. Although the richly differentiated sciences of divination and magic, as also medicine and jurisprudence, were in their systematic presentation products only of post-Sumerian times, their bases were Sumerian.

6. An examination of the question of how far the intellectual accomplishments of the Sumerians influenced neighboring peoples, especially in the west, has as prerequisite an extensive education in world history. Similarities of cultural forms in neighboring cultural spheres are not enough to demonstrate the fact of influence. Influence is exerted in the most varying ways, often only as a stimulus, but often also as a conflict which gives rise not to the borrowing of an idea, but rather to the intensification of native ideas. The world-historical question concerning the cultural influence exerted by the Sumerians is at present not yet ready for a solution. We must be content with indicating the conditions prerequisite for such borrowing, and the possibilities for the adaptation of Sumerian genius in other cultures.

In itself the intellectual world of the Sumerians, like that of the Egyptians, was closed and unintelligible to strangers. The Sumerian language could only be learned through the medium of Akkadian. But Akkadian, from about 1800 B.C. on spread over all of Western Asia as the language of commerce and scholarship. It was taught in schools and used in internal

commerce as far as Egypt and central Anatolia, and it took on the task of spreading Sumerian culture. The forms in which the Sumerian spirit thus became known certainly were simplifications, and usually also coarser manifestations. Nevertheless they were essential as the bases of Babylonian structure, which in its turn could be taken over by the neighboring peoples only in simplified and coarser form.

The schools, and with them the instruction imparted on the basis of Babylonian education, disappeared with the destruction first of the great Hurrian state, and then that of the Hittite Empire. But soon after that the Assyrians began their conquest of Western Asia, which they accomplished in several stages. The Assyrian Empire (740-620 B.C.) was continued by the Babylonian; the Babylonian by the Persian. The peoples of Western Asia came in contact with Babylonian culture in all these phases. In particular the Israelites and Judaeans, who for a time lived among the Babylonians, had to come to terms with their views.

The Babylonian civilization and its most important representative, the cuneiform script, finally died out. But it bequeathed as its inheritance to Hellenism the so-called "Chaldaeism," an astrological doctrine distilled from Sumero-Babylonian religion, as well as the science of omens and of magic.

Having sketched the external conditions for the assumption of Sumerian, or basically Sumerian, cultural values in the west, we may stress a few major problems which touch on the essential characteristics of every ancient civilization.

a. Was the overcoming of the "totemistic" stage of religion, of which we can observe traces not only in Mesopotamia but also in all of Western Asia, there and in Greece the direct or indirect result of Sumerian influence? The religions of the Hittites and Syrians became anthropomorphic only at a time when these peoples were already under the influence of the written culture of Mesopotamia. The possibility cannot be excluded that a similar evolution took place among the Greeks, after the example of the peoples neighboring them to the east.

b. Did the transformation of local numina into cosmic and nature deities and their combination into a system spread from the Sumerians to their western neighbors?

It was the Hurrians who first adapted for themselves the Sumerian pantheon in rough outline. They also took from the Sumerians the theory of the primeval gods and the generations of the gods, to which they apparently attached greater value than the Sumerians themselves. We can thus trace the Greeks' theory of the generations of the gods which at the same time represent eras of the world (the succession Uranos-Kronos-Zeus) back to its Sumerian origin. The path goes via the Phoenicians and Hurrians.

The Hittites were not so consistent in the systematization of their pantheon, and were not able to divest their gods so completely of their local character. Yet the more so they adopted the classification of local gods according to Sumerian stereotypes. The immense number of local numina was thus ordered according to the types sun god, moon god, storm god, hero god, and war- or mother-goddess. This raises the possibility that the Hittite pantheon, thus reduced to specific basic types, stimulated the transformation of Greek conceptions which finally led to the polytheistic Greek pantheon.

c. Did the mythological forms invented by the Sumerians and modified by the Babylonians enrich or influence the mythology of the neighboring peoples?

The story of the deluge and the creation of the "Noah" type are a clear example of such borrowing, but even among conceptions of primeval times this example is only one among many. A primeval paradise and the founding of all branches of civilization by gods or semi-divine beings were the characteristic motifs of Sumerian mythology, and wherever these motifs occur we must suspect Sumerian origin.

d. The concept of personal protective deities which lead humans in the fight against the personified evil, and which are estranged by sinning, is central in later religions. Was it basically Sumerian?

These conceptions of angels and devils who fought over the individual acquired decisive significance in all the new religions of the Achaemenid period, and it must be assumed that here again at least the basic pattern, even if not all the content of these ideas, was taken from Sumero-Babylonian religion.

e. The theory of the connection of gods with stars and of the dynamism of the heavenly bodies can only be understood as an intellectual inheritance from the Sumerians. Only by way of the Sumerian pantheon could order be brought into the world of the stars; only Sumerian mythology could invent forms sufficient to populate even the heavens. The Sumerians also devised the way of utilizing the stars for the purpose of foretelling the future. And speculation with numbers and with propitious and ill-fated days, sorcery, hepatoscopy, the interpretation of dreams, and the study of physiognomy also constitute an inheritance of doubtful value from the Sumero-Babylonian culture.

sources and monographs
monographs on the ancient near east
volume 1, fascicle 2

three essays on the sumerians

by
benno landsberger

introduction and translation by
maria dej. ellis

undena publications
los angeles 1974

© 1974 by Undena Publications, P.O. Box 97, Malibu, California 90265

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photo-copy, recording, or any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 74-75189

ISBN: 0-89003-002-2

sources and monographs
monographs on the ancient near east
volume 1, fascicle 2

three essays on the sumerians

by
benno landsberger

introduction and translation by
maria dej. ellis

undena publications
los angeles 1974

INTRODUCTION

The original researches of scholars dealing with ancient Mesopotamian civilizations have not been easily available to non-specialist students of history. Many studies are either too highly technical in content, or are inaccessible because of problems of language and out-of-the way places of publication. In order to permit students whose linguistic and library facilities are limited to investigate aspects of Mesopotamian history for themselves, translations such as the present one are necessary.

The essays translated here originally were published in 1943-45, as "Die Sumerer," "Die Anfänge der Zivilisation in Mesopotamien," and "Die geistigen Leistungen der Sumerer," in the Ankara Üniversitesi, Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi Dergisi, 1 (1943) 97-102, 2 (1944) 431-37, and 3 (1945) 150-58, respectively. They were even then only summaries of more extensive Turkish articles which preceded each of the German résumés in the journal issues.¹ The process of condensation from the Turkish originals resulted in a few discontinuities, which appear also in this translation. In spite of this drawback, these articles are of considerable importance, both as fairly lengthy statements made on the subject by one of its foremost scholars, and as portrayals of a stage in the development of interpretation of Mesopotamian culture. Landsberger's contributions to the study of Sumerian culture and civilization were many,² and his influence on other scholars has been pervasive. But he very seldom wrote for a more general audience. His contributions were rather studies in depth on some particular subject, and certainly were not intended for a lay public.

The present translation was completed in 1965. Landsberger reviewed the translation and suggested some material revisions which are incorporated here. These appear primarily in section V of the second essay, in the discussion of the designation of occupational names either as Sumerian or as belonging to the Proto-Euphratic substratum. In preparing the translation itself, the only editorial effort made in terms of updating or annotating the text has been to unsnarl a confusion caused by the use of slightly differing tables of cultural periods in the original publication of the three articles (see note to p. 3). It may be mentioned that accessibility has been a key factor in the choice of other studies cited below.

The provenience and cultural contributions of the Sumerians have long been a subject of discussion among cuneiform scholars. Tom B. Jones has recently published a selection of articles chosen to illustrate the development of interpretation in *The Sumerian Problem, Major Issues in History* (New York, Wiley and Sons, 1969). This book provides us with much of the historical context into which Landsberger's work must be fitted. Jones on p. 93 cites the "disturbing linguistic suggestions of Benno Landsberger" as one of the reasons necessitating revisions of the status of the Sumerian problem in 1950. These suggestions were published in the essays translated here.

¹1 (1943) 89-96; 2 (1944) 419-29; and 3 (1945) 137-49.

²On the occasion of his 60th birthday in 1950 a list of lexical and bibliographical contributions was published in *Journal of Cuneiform Studies*, 1 (1950), 1-62; a complete compilation is now in preparation.

The last statement on the "Sumerian Problem" before the appearance of Landsberger's essays was made by E. A. Speiser in "The Beginnings of Civilization in Mesopotamia," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 59 (1939), supplement IV, 17-31 (reprinted by Jones,³ *Sumerian Problem*, pp. 76-92); sections 2 and 3 are of particular interest in our context. Following the publication of Landsberger's essays, Speiser again discussed the situation in detail in "The Sumerian Problem Reviewed," *Hebrew Union College Annual*, 23/1 (1950-51), 339-55 (=Jones, *Sumerian Problem*, pp. 93-109). In part III of his study (=Sumerian Problem, pp. 102ff.) Speiser specifically discussed Landsberger's views. Of further interest to the problem are the other two essays reprinted by Jones. Of these, one, S. N. Kramer's "New Light on the Early History of the Ancient Near East," *American Journal of Archaeology*, 52 (1948), 156-64 (=Sumerian Problem, pp. 109-24), was also discussed by Speiser, *ibid.* The other, J. Oates' "Ur and Eridu: The Prehistory," *Iraq*, 22 (1960), 32-50, is partially reproduced by Jones under the title "Eridu and the Sumerian Problem," on pp. 126-34. We are indeed fortunate that the recent collection edited by Jones has made some of the more apposite works easily available. Jones concludes with an excerpt from G. Roux's *Ancient Iraq*, which he calls a "modern overview." In this category must certainly also be mentioned "The Prehistory and Protohistory of Western Asia," in *The Near East: The Early Civilizations*, ed. J. Bottéro, E. Cassin, and J. Vercoutter, tr. R. F. Tannenbaum (New York, Delacourte Press, 1967 [first published in German in 1965 as volume 2 of the Fischer *Weltgeschichte*]), pp. 1-51, a summary by the eminent German Sumerologist Adam Falkenstein.

All of the works just mentioned can lead the student to further, more detailed treatments of specific problems as they appeared during the development of the discussion. In contrast, Landsberger's is essentially an essay of personal opinion, since, as was pointed out by Speiser in 1950 (apud Jones, *Sumerian Problem*, p. 102), Landsberger did not publish at the time any detailed documentation of his views. He never has.

In these essays Landsberger was concerned primarily with the problem of the development of civilization in ancient Mesopotamia, and the vexing question of who were the initiators of the various stages of it, as well as that of the origins of the Sumerians, whom we find in firm possession of the country at the time that our sources become clear. He only touched in passing on the matter of the description of the Sumerian state, and of its putative origins and later development. A number of lengthy studies exist that deal with this aspect of Sumerian culture also. One of the basic attempts at interpretation, A. Falkenstein's "La Cité-Temple Sumérienne" (1954), was republished in an English translation in an earlier fascicle of this series (MANE 1/1). Students wishing to pursue the Sumerians and their contributions to the history of civilization are referred to it and the other sources cited there.

December 1973

Maria deJ. Ellis
University Museum
University of Pennsylvania

Editor's note — Numbers in square brackets at the top of the page refer to the numeration of the original German text; dashes on the left margin of each page indicate the approximate transition from one page to the next in the same original.

³ It is to be noted that the footnotes in all the articles reprinted by Jones have been renumbered to run consecutively within his presentation.