

REMARKABLE TABLETS THROW NEW LIGHT ON BIBLE

Notable Discoveries Already Made from Nippur Tablets at University of Pennsylvania, Though Few Have Been Examined Out of a Total of 17,000—Information Expected on Moot Historical Questions.

WHAT world secrets lie hidden in the vaults of the University of Pennsylvania museum? What matters of great importance to history are concealed in the characters marked on clay tablets, probably written about 2500 B. C., excavated from the resting place of centuries and now in the possession of the museum?

These questions are agitating the scientific world of America and Europe since the announcement of Dr. Stephen Langdon, professor of Assyriology at Jesus college, Oxford, England, that he has succeeded in deciphering one of these rare tablets and that he finds it gives a totally different version of the fall of man than that related in Genesis, which has it that Adam was tempted and fell. The tablet whose characters have been translated by Dr. Langdon sets forth that it was Noah, the patriarch, who first sinned by eating of the Tree of Knowledge and whose sin led to the shortening of the days of man and to his condemnation to a life of labor.

If, ask students, this revolutionary story which upsets all accepted theories is to be found in one small fragment of the Babylonian tablets, what might not all those many others reveal when they are deciphered? And if the messages they bear from the dead ages are to be accepted as truth and the Biblical versions disregarded, will it be necessary to rewrite the Bible in accordance with the stories told by the tablets, or are these translations to be regarded merely as myths and folklore, entertaining tales handed down from generation to generation, and finally embalmed in clay by a chronicler of facts embellished with imagination?

The scientific world, with the exception of a few radical dissenters, inclines to the latter theory, but that has not abated the great interests with which it awaits announcement of translations of other tablets in the university museum by Dr. Langdon and by Dr. Arno Poebel of Johns Hopkins university, two of the few men in the world who can translate Sumerian, the language used on the tablet and the oldest tongue of the non-Semitic race. The translation, however, agrees with other tablet translations made from the Semitic Babylonian language by Dr. Poebel. This one fact, say dissenters, proves that if the tale is a myth, it is a myth which spread over many races and nations away back to the very beginnings of history.

There are more than 17,000 Babylonian tablets in the university museum's collection, and it is the expectation that some of these will reveal information about matters which are now moot questions among historians and Biblical students.

Dr. Langdon's discovery has been given to the world. But the story of the labors of Dr. Poebel, who arrived at a similar result while at work in Baltimore, while Dr. Langdon pursued his labors at Oxford, have not heretofore been told. Dr. Poebel has written for the university museum some of the most interesting results of his work.

"During the summer of 1912," he states, "I examined the collections of cuneiform inscriptions in the university museum. I was especially interested in historical and grammatical texts, and of both I found quite remarkable specimens.

"One of the tablets or historical contents takes us, at least in the belief of the Babylonians, back to the very beginnings of history, namely, to the time of the deluge, and even further back, to the time of the creation of mankind. Only the lower part of this tablet has been found; what has been recovered is, however, a priceless possession to the museum.

Three Creators Mentioned

The preserved portion of the first column begins with instructions concerning the building of cities, which, it seems, were given by the gods to the first men, whose creation must have been related in the now missing preceding lines. Still, we are fortunate to read at the end of the first column at least the following reference to their creation: 'After Enlil, Enki, and Ninharasga had created the black-headed' (thus the Babylonians designated humankind) 'they called into being in a fine fashion the animals, as four-legged of the field.'

As to the present time there has been among Assyriologists as well as among Biblical students considerable speculation as to whom the Babylonians, in the older times, credited with having created the first of the human race. Here we are told that it was the two gods, Enlil and Enki, and the goddess Ninharasga. From Greek writers we know of a very queer late Babylonian account of the creation of man, which was transmitted to them by the Babylonian priest Berosus, a younger contemporary of Alexander the Great. According to him, the god Bel, meaning Marduk of Babylon, cut off his head, and the other gods mixed the blood that flowed from his head with the earth, and fashioned man, who thus became a rational being.

"This story has not come to us di-

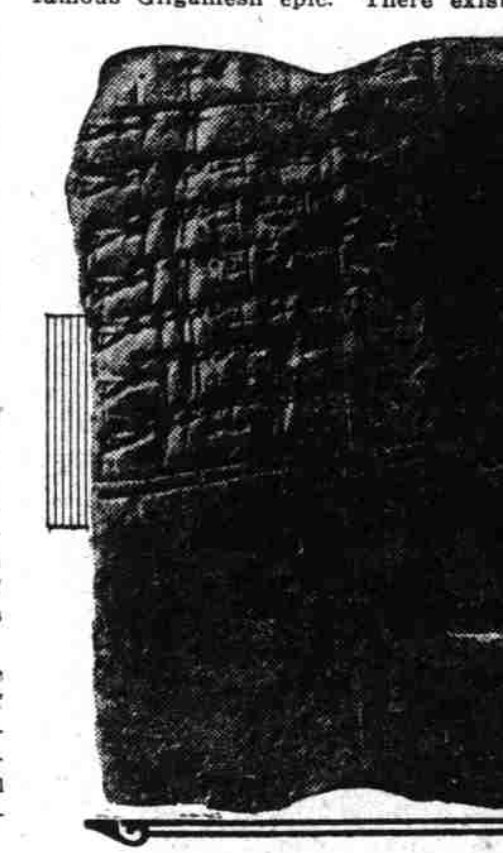
rectly from Berosus; it first passed into a book by the Greek scholar, Alexander Polyhistor, and from there has been quoted by Eusebius, the writer of the history of the Christian church, and it may therefore have reached us somewhat disfigured. But, assuming its general correctness and considering it in the light of our new text, as well as what we know from other cuneiform sources, we may perhaps reconstruct the older Babylonian story of the creation of man in this way:

"When Enlil, the creator of heaven and earth, wished to peopple the earth with living beings, the god Enki, the god of wisdom and knowledge, devised the image of man after the image of the gods, and the goddess Ninharasga molded it in clay, while the blood of Enlil gave it life and intellect. From the Old Testament we know that the blood was considered to be the seat of life, but whether or not the idea that Enlil cut off his head to obtain this life-giving blood will be corroborated from cuneiform sources we cannot tell at the present time.

Story of the Deluge

"The third, fourth, fifth and sixth columns then contain the story of the Deluge. 'At that time,' we read in column 3, 'Ziugiddu was king, a pashish-priest of Enki; daily and constantly he was in the service of his god.' In order to requite him for his piety, Enki, in column 4, the first of the reverse, informs him that at the request of Enlil it has been resolved 'in the council of the gods, to destroy the seed of mankind,' whereupon Ziugiddu—this part of the story, however, is broken away—builds a big boat and loads it with all kinds of animals. For seven days and seven nights a rain-storm, as we read in column 5, rages through the land, and the flood of waters carries the boat away, but then the sun appears again, and when its light shines into the boat Ziugiddu sacrifices an ox and a sheep. Lastly, in column 6, we find Ziugiddu worshipping before Enlil, who thus angers against men now has abated, for he says: 'Life like that of a god I give to him' and 'an eternal soul like that of a god I create for him,' which means that Ziugiddu, the hero of the deluge story, shall become a god.

"A Babylonian story of the deluge has been known to us for a long time from a poem that is imbedded in the famous Gilgamesh epic. There exist,



Oldest Schoolbook in the World.

also, several fragments of other versions of the story, and the museum possesses a small fragment of 13 partially preserved lines, which was published by Professor Hilprecht some years ago. Our new text, however, is an entirely different account, as will be seen from the fact that the hero bears a name different from that found in the other deluge stories.

"But what makes the new account especially important is that it is not, like the other versions, written in Semitic Babylonian language, but in Sumerian—that is, the old tongue of the non-Semitic race which, in the earliest days of history, held sway over Babylon. As will be seen from some of the quotations, the text is a kind of poetical composition, and as such was originally not intended to be merely a historical record, but served some practical, ritualistic, or other purpose. For various reasons, it seems to be that our tablet was written about the time of King Hammurabi (2112-2075), thus being the oldest Babylonian record we have at the present time of the creation as well as of the deluge. The text, however, may go back to even a much earlier time.

"Judging by the color of the clay, the shape of the tablet, and the script, our text belongs with another tablet that contains a list of kings. It even seems to me that there were three tablets of about equal size, measuring about 5 1/2 by 7 inches, on which a historically interested scribe wrote the world's history, or at least its outlines. The first of these tablets, I believe, contained the Babylonian theogony, and then related the famous fight between the younger generation of the gods and the deity of the primeval chaos, which ultimately resulted in the creation of heaven and earth out of the two parts of chaos.

"Here the tablet I have just de-



Tablet Telling of the Creation and Deluge.

the time of the deluge to the king under whom the tablets were written. A portion of this third tablet, or, to be more accurate, the reverse of this portion, which contains about an eighth of the whole text, was published six years ago by Professor Hilprecht. It contained two of the last dynasties of this list of kings. I succeeded in copying also the much-effaced obverse, which contains the names of kings of the period immediately after the deluge, and in addition to this I also found larger and smaller fragments of three other and older lists of kings. I need hardly emphasize the great historical and chronological value of these new lists, since they give us not only the names of the kings, but the length of their respective reigns, and in some few instances even add some short historical references relating to these kings.

Long-Lived Kings

"The first part of these lists leads us, it is true, into quite legendary times. We find there kings who are familiar to us from myths and legends and heroic epics, as Gilgamesh, the

husband, the Ocean, then, after a long time, the primeval gods, Lakkmu and Lakkamu, were born, and after similar long intervals Anshar, the upper world, and Kishar, the lower world, came into existence. This primeval period came into an end when the younger generation of gods vanquished Chaos and created heaven and earth. Then follows, from the Creation to the Deluge, the period of the ten primeval kings, which lasted 432,000 years. After that the present still lasting period begins, for which, till about 2400 B. C., the Babylonians counted 22,234 years.

"From the Creation to the time of Berosus (300 B. C.) we would therefore have to count about 454,500 years, but in the introduction to his book on Babylon he states that the written records of the Babylonians reached back to about 2,150,000 years before this time, i. e., long before the creation of the earth, to the time when Chaos still reigned over the universe.

"Some of the earlier kings we meet again in a number of fragments of chronicles and poetical compositions, which I have copied. I mention here only the epics referring to King Lugalbanda and King Dumuzi. If we combine all the facts that we are able to

answer is given: 'Go on, O Ishtar, such are the laws of the nether world.' She passes through the second gate, and the rings on her fingers are taken from her. Again she asks, 'Why do you take these away from me?' and again the answer: 'Go on, O Ishtar, such are the laws of the nether world.'

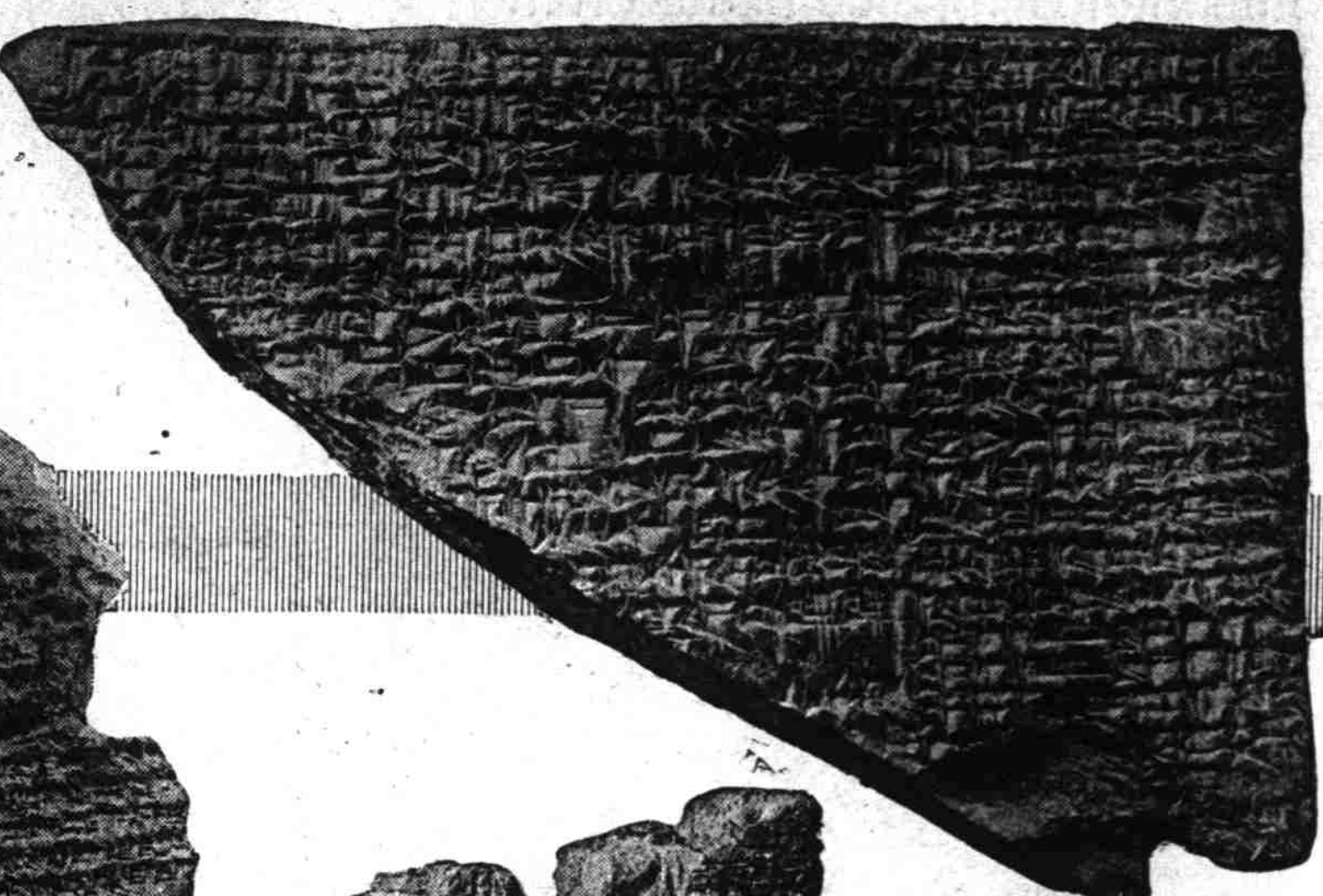
Strange Legends

"Lugalbanda began his career as a shepherd; at this time the bird-god Zu stole from Enlil, the king of the gods, the tablets of fate, which gave to their owner supreme power over the whole world, over men and gods alike. Enlil used to wear them on his breast, but one day while he was sitting on his throne, the bird-god Zu snatched the tablets away and flew to a distant mountain rock. None of the gods dared to do anything to recover the tablets, for all power now rested with Zu, but the shepherd Lugalbanda, thus we must conclude, succeeded in recovering them by a trick which he played on Zu, and Enlil requited this service by making him king of Erech, and, after a reign of 1,200 years, even made him a god. As such he was worshipped even in the later times of Babylonian history.

"King Dumuzi was originally a fisherman, but the goddess Ishtar fell in love with him and made him King of Erech. Concluding from certain allusions in the Gilgamesh epic, it seems that Ishtar after some time killed her lover, though afterward she seems to have repented of her deed, for, in order to bring him back from the dead, she herself descended into Hades.

Ishtar's Journey

"A table that I found among the collections of the museum depicts the famous scene when Ishtar enters the realms of the dead. She passes through the first gate, and the crown is taken from her head. 'Why do you take this away from me?' she asks, and the



This Tablet Contains the Earliest Known Account of the Flood and the Fall of Man.

pieces, different fragments of the same tablet being often found in the contents of different boxes. This and the fact that the clay from which the tablets were excavated adhered to the tablets, together with other matter with which they were brought in contact in the packing, made the cleaning and mending very slow work. The assistants engaged in this work, not being versed in the cuneiform writing, relied on the correspondence of fractures, general similarity of writing or of color and texture in the clay in bringing fragments together which belonged to one tablet. In this way many pieces were sometimes brought together, and a tablet more or less complete built up from pieces of varying sizes.

How Tablets Were Read

Since these fragments came as often as not from different parts of the box and often from different boxes there were only two ways of assembling the fragments. One was the method already described and the other was by means of context in the inscription written on the surface of each tablet. This latter method can be used only by those who read the cuneiform text. After the assistants have exhausted the resources of the first method it sometimes happens that a Babylonian scholar discovers in reading the inscriptions that two apparently distinct pieces actually belong to the same tablet.

After being cleaned by means of soft brushes and other methods devised to avoid injury to the tablets, a lot of fragments, large and small, are spread out on long tables, and the work of discovering the pieces that belong together proceeds until no more joints can be made. Each tablet is then packed separately in cotton and placed in receptacles which are kept in rooms with dry atmosphere and even temperature, for these tablets are often of un-

baked clay and, being impregnated with certain salts, are apt to disintegrate under unfavorable conditions.

The important considerations which have been kept in mind, said Dr. Gordon, are to secure the preservation of the tablets with special reference to their scientific and historical value, and to make them accessible to Babylonian scholars, in order that such facts of importance for human history as may be contained in these ancient writings may find interpretation and become matters of general knowledge. Babylonian scholars everywhere have been invited to avail themselves of the opportunity which these tablets afford for the investigation of general history, and the collections have been placed at their disposal, with proper facilities for their study.



Tablet Containing the First Bankrupt Act.

greater part of them contain grammatical exercises of pupils. They all deal with the Sumerian language, which the young scribes of those days had to acquire as at the present time boys of the higher schools are instructed in Latin and Greek. These linguistic tablets, which partly date from 2500 and partly from 1300 B. C., can, of course, claim a greater interest only from Sumerian scholars; for them, however, their value will be immense; for they give not only good many new readings of cuneiform signs, but a few of them contain paradigms of the most difficult and so far only imperfectly known parts of the Sumerian language, namely the personal pronouns and the verbal forms. These new tablets will form the first sure basis for a Sumerian grammar.

"The history of the tablets is told by Director G. B. Gordon of the museum. In the Spring of 1910, he said, 115 boxes of inscribed tablets and fragments of tablets, excavated by the University of Pennsylvania Babylonian expedition at Nippur during the years 1888-1900, were unpacked in the workrooms of the museum, and since that time trained assistants were engaged in the laborious task of cleaning these tablets, assembling the fragments which belonged originally to the same tablet, putting these together, and securing the proper preservation of the collection. Between 1888 and 1910 620 tablets and fragments were examined and catalogued. The estimated number which came from the boxes unpacked in 1910 is 10,000. The collection of Babylonian tablets in the museum therefore numbers about 17,000.

A large proportion are in many

of weeks at half a dollar, and now for a quarter."

"But why did you buy so many gloves of an unsalable size in the first place?" asked the customer, curiously.

"We had to," the saleswoman replied. "When we gave the order we knew we would be badly stuck on this size, but we had to do it. You see, no matter what a customer wants, we must be ready to supply the order. Of course, we know that few women can wear these small sizes, but when one of them calls we have to be ready to lay before her just as extensive an assortment of gloves of her size as of any other size. It does not do to have two ladies come in together, say one with a No. 6 hand and the other with a 5 1/2 hand, and be able to supply one with a glove of a certain shade and refuse the other."

"The woman with the smallest hand

A Hard Life

Experience—So you want to buy a farm down here? Just take my advice and don't do it.

Young city man—Oh, I like the country, the location is great, and it can't be hard work.

Experience—Work! Well, I bought a farm ten years ago, and I've never got the work all done yet—I sometimes quit, but I never get through.

Straight

Madge—You shouldn't say he's a confirmed bachelor unless you know.

Marjorie—But I do know; I confirmed him.

BARGAINS FOR SMALL HANDS

WOMEN with exceptionally small hands may, if they keep their eyes open, glove themselves neatly the year round at an expense scarcely worth considering. A few days ago a woman who had just bought a pair of No. 6 gloves in a shop devoted exclusively to the sale of kid gloves, and had paid \$1.75 a pair for them, stopped in front of a box on the counter on the way out. The box was about half full of gloves of every shade, and apparently of fine make. What attracted the woman's attention was a card announcing in large letters that the gloves could be bought for 25 cents a pair. She asked an explanation of a clerk and received this illuminating reply:

"These gloves are in every way as perfect and as well made as those for which you just paid seven times the price. There are absolutely no defects in them and two months ago we were offering them at \$1.75 a pair. The reason why we now sell them for a quarter is that new styles will soon come in, and as we cannot afford, for our reputation's sake, to retain these unsold gloves in stock, we might as well get rid of them for a few cents a pair as to throw them away.

"You see, they are so small that there is almost no sale for them. They are all size 6 1/2. Now, there are hosts of women with 5 1/2 hands and infinitely more with 6 and 6 1/4 hands. But women with 5 1/2 hands are few, so we have had a big stock of these little gloves left over. We offered them for a cou-

ple of weeks at half a dollar, and now for a quarter."

"But why did you buy so many gloves of an unsalable size in the first place?" asked the customer, curiously.

"We had to," the saleswoman replied. "When we gave the order we knew we would be badly stuck on this size, but we had to do it. You see, no matter what a customer wants, we must be ready to supply the order. Of course, we know that few women can wear these small sizes, but when one of them calls we have to be ready to lay before her just as extensive an assortment of gloves of her size as of any other size. It does not do to have two ladies come in together, say one with a No. 6 hand and the other with a 5 1/2 hand, and be able to supply one with a glove of a certain shade and refuse the other."

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Well knows her point of vantage. She demands as much, or even more, consideration than the others, and it wouldn't pay us to give her the chance to tell her friends, as she undoubtedly would do from vanity, if nothing else, that such and such a famous glove house cannot fit her with gloves of the shade and make she wants, because her hands are so small. Consequently, for our own sake, we are compelled to lay in a stock of these small sizes, quite as varied, if not as large, as other sizes."

"Why, if I had a hand as small as that," said the customer, smiling, "I should wait until you reduced your prices before I purchased."

"That is just what many of the 5 1/2 ladies do," said the clerk. "It is our loss, but we can't help it. When we put these gloves down to half a dollar we sell them rapidly; when we offer the rest at a quarter the stock rarely lasts more than two or three days."

"As an example, take that small lady you spoke to when you stopped in front of this counter. She bought two dozen pairs of these little gloves. She is a regular customer at this time of the year. She just told me that she has been watching us for six weeks. She said that every time she passed the store lately she dropped in and took a look at the bargain boxes. She was tempted when she saw the half-dollar sign on the box, but concluded to risk a still further delay. She was rewarded by getting her two dozen assorted pairs of gloves for \$6."