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Ancient Burials of Metal Documents in Stone Boxes

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This paper is an expanded version of a paper presented earlier at the Library History Seminar VI in March 1980. It deals with the persistence, for something like three thousand years, of a strange documentary custom of the Mesopotamian kings, which was distinct and separate from the scribal tradition of clay-tablet writing associated with Assurbanipal. This custom led to numerous regal burials of metallic documents (often encased in stone boxes or other special containers), which were concealed in the foundations or other inaccessible recesses of temples and palaces. The discovery of metal documents beneath the foundations of the Serapis Temple, which housed the Serapeum Library at Alexandria, has also established an archaeological connection between the building practices of the Ptolemies and the Mesopotamian kings.

Introduction

A farmer in the western Peloponnesus was digging a well. Twenty feet down he came upon a stone box. He smashed in its lid. Inside there was a big object "like a bundle," dark in color and crumbly in texture. He

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thought he saw letters written on it. He informed the police, who informed the local director of antiquities; but for some time they could not get out to the farm.

It was 1944-45, and Communist squads were trying to control the roads. When at last the director was able to reach the farm, the object was gone. The farmer had thrown it on the dunghill "because it was not a treasure: it looked like dung and it fell to pieces quite soon." Others, however, had seen "many letters" on it and said that, although fragile, it held together on the dunghill for some days. Clearly it was a book roll . . . ; clearly it was precious to the man who buried it in a stone casket; certainly it would have been precious to us. But it was of no use to the farmer, and it is gone.¹

On the Ancient Preservation of Writing

Throughout antiquity, records of all kinds were intentionally buried for one reason or another. The Qumran literature, for instance, was not driven underground by the ravages of war. It was deliberately laid to rest in the "solemn communal interment" of a documentary funeral,² which served as the "final concealment" of a whole community library.³

This could only have taken place when the community was on the point of dying out. When that happened, however, we do not know. . . . But we know for certain that . . . when Josephus wrote his *Antiquities* . . . , the religious order [of the Essenes] was in a vigorous condition and could have had no reason to store its books carefully in a hidden and inaccessible place.⁴

The Qumran documents were apparently "embalmed" before they were buried. "The careful way in which the MSS were deposited" suggests, more than anything else, "the intention of preserving them as long as possible."⁵ There are some intriguing instructions for preserving library materials in the *Assumption of Moses*, where the aging prophet says to Joshua:

Receive thou this writing [about the preservation of documents] that thou mayest know how to preserve the books [of the Pentateuch] which I shall deliver unto thee: and thou shalt set these [books] in order and anoint them with oil of cedar and put them away in earthen vessels.⁶

These instructions, or something similar, were also behind the creation and preservation of written legal deeds for the transfer of real estate in Jeremiah 32:6-15. The documents, which were duly certified by witnesses, had been drawn up in duplicate (with both a sealed and an open copy) by Jeremiah, who then directed his scribe to "put them in an earthen vessel, that they may continue many days" (Jeremiah 32:14).⁷ The documentary methods of Moses and Jeremiah, furthermore, have been attested all over the ancient world. They occur in the Talmud, to be sure, but they are also "fully described in Greek sources" and found in the literatures of both Mesopotamia and Rome.⁸ Their presence in the West is implicit in a persistent legend about the books of King Numa, the traditional founder of Roman legal and religious institutions. Refusing cremation, he ordered his followers to make two "stone coffins" (*lithinas sorous*) in order to "bury his books along with his body." When he died, therefore, they sealed the coffins with lead, "the one holding his remains, the other containing the holy books he had written with his own hand," and buried them as directed at the foot of Janus Hill on the west bank of the Tiber.⁹ Four or five centuries later,¹⁰ the coffins were accidentally discovered intact.¹¹ When the lids were removed by breaking their leaden seals, Numa's body had wasted away to nothing,¹² whereas all of his books had been preserved, not merely well, but "in mint condition."¹³ The contrast was impressive: the books, written on papyrus scrolls, had been buried with their regal author in a hole in the ground,¹⁴ but they outlasted him hands down because the West, which learned to preserve its documents by procedures derived from the embalming

and entombment of corpses, never deigned to mummify its dead.¹⁵ Pliny, following Hemina (who deviates somewhat from other accounts of the burial and retrieval of Numa's books), describes the process in part:

How these books were able to last so long was amazing to many. But the man who found them had this explanation: a stone cube placed in the center of the coffin had been bound up with waxed cords running in every which direction. On [or in] the top of this stone [or stone box?] three books had been placed [or inserted]; and that probably explains why they had not decayed. Besides, the books themselves had been treated with citrus oil; and that doubtless explains why the moths [or gnawing worms] had not touched them.¹⁶

Numa's books (three, twelve, or fourteen) survived for half a millennium, if only to be burned by the Romans who found them,¹⁷ because deliberate measures were taken to ensure their survival. They were chemically treated for protection against moth and rust, sealed in a special stone container, and buried deep in the bowels of the earth. Citrus oil, waxed swaddling cords, hewn stone containers, leaden seals—all of this smacks of the cedar oil, waxed linen wrappings, unique earthenware jars, and tightly sealed lids used for preserving the Dead Sea Scrolls.¹⁸ The parallel is too close to be accidental. If using these things at Qumran "proves that the scrolls were hidden in the cave for safe preservation,"¹⁹ if "everything was done to preserve the scrolls as long as possible,"²⁰ can we say anything less of Numa's books? The Dead Sea Scrolls survived for more than 2000 years to be read in our own day.²¹ Why, then, couldn't the scrolls of King Numa survive in good condition for less than one-fourth as long?

Other buried libraries have survived for many centuries in both the Far and Middle East. About A.D. 1035, for example, the Buddhist monks of Chinese Turkestan, who were "under the threat of invasion," walled up their entire

collection of books in the cave of Tun-Huang. In A.D. 1900, almost nine centuries later, "the hiding-place was accidentally discovered by a Tibetan monk." Orientalists subsequently explored the cave, "where they found 20,000 scrolls preserved, dating from the sixth and seventh centuries, in Chinese, Tibetan, Sanskrit, and other languages."²² A second Buddhist library, discovered in the ruins of a tower at Gilgit, "also contained a great number of manuscripts, some dating perhaps from the fourth century."²³ The Nag Hammadi library, a Gnostic "Qumran" of Christian documents, was retrieved through an "earthenware 'time capsule' discovered in the sands of Egypt" when peasants, hunting for fertilizer in 1945, dug up "a large jar filled with leaves of papyrus, bound together like books."²⁴ The library, "well buried in a tomb very far away from all the monasteries," was virtually intact after more than 15 centuries.²⁵ It has been described as "the most remarkable ancient library we possess."²⁶ Its early codex-volumes, whose beautiful leather bindings "are among the oldest ever to survive,"²⁷ were preserved by the same techniques employed at Qumran.²⁸ Eusebius even mentions Ksisouthros, better known as Noah, who was commanded before the Deluge "to bury his books (which discussed the beginnings, middles, and endings of all things) in the sunlit city of Sippar." When the flood subsided, therefore, Noah took his family "back to Babylon as commanded, in order to retrieve the buried documents from Sippar and transmit them unto men." Accordingly, they "dug up the documents and began founding cities, setting up temples, and rebuilding Babylon."²⁹ These records were preserved temporarily, through extremely hazardous circumstances, by special techniques unknown to us. The clay tablet libraries have also survived through documentary techniques differing in significant ways from those which preserved their papyrus cousins.³⁰

There are no Qumrans or Nag Hammadis in the West,

for classical literature "is like a city which has been bombed and partially burned"; most of its streets and buildings are in ruins, although many have remained partially (and some wholly) intact.³¹ The literature we have is largely from the discard. The tablets from Crete and Mycenae, for example, "were not even fired: they became permanent only when the palaces were burned down."³² Virtually all of the Greek and Latin papyri, furthermore, "were found quite literally in rubbish dumps or in the ruins of abandoned houses."³³ A few manuscripts have nevertheless survived "because they were deliberately buried." These include two retrieved from coffins, one from a stone box found twenty feet below ground, and several from the wrappings of "cheap mummy cases";³⁴ some have even come from the "mouths 'and other cavities' " of embalmed sacred crocodiles!³⁵ But many of the writings buried in the West, as in the East, have been metallic documents clearly meant "to survive as long as possible."³⁶ Lillian Jeffery mentions the use of various metals for writing in the ancient Near East and among the Greeks, who "apparently passed on the practice to the Latin and Etruscan people,"³⁷ as the Roman use of bronze is firmly established.

The bronze plaque (pinax or deltos) was widely used. . . . The Greeks themselves appear to have had a tradition that texts of really pre-historic antiquity were (or should be) inscribed on bronze. Thus Agesilaos of Sparta, on opening a tomb at Haliartos . . . , found there . . . a pinax chalkous [bronze tablet] covered with barbaric characters which resembled Egyptian. . . . Akousilaos the Argive historian was said to have compiled his genealogies from deltoi chalkai [bronze tablets] which his father found while digging on his premises. . . . When Lucian's Alexandros went to Kalchedon to stage an elaborate piece of deception, he . . . arranged to excavate deltoi chalkai of incredible age from the old temple of Apollo there, containing alleged statements by Asklepios and Apollo his father.³⁸

We have no gold tablets from archaic Greece, although “a fifth-century inscription at Selinous appears to mention one.”³⁹ The nine golden plates of Orphism, however, had been carefully interred in coffins as guidebooks for the dead; they have helped explain the strange Near Eastern overtones of platonism because “Plato and the buried plates were drawing on the same eschatological literature.”⁴⁰ And the metal tablets from Pyrgi, found “some thirty miles north of Rome” in 1964, were “buried by pious hands” after the smaller of two temples, the sanctuary of Thefarie Velianas, had been reduced to ruins.⁴¹ Rubble from the sanctuary was found “in a rectangular niche between the two temples, carefully and piously disposed” to protect its most valuable records. “There, between large blocks of tufa” salvaged from its walls “and three slabs of its terminal tiles,” lying beneath “a heap of terracotta fragments, three sheets of gold leaf, with inscriptions on the outer face, had been hidden.”

Together with these gold leaves, there was a mysterious fourth inscribed sheet of bronze, in very poor condition. . . . The inscription on the bronze sheet with the three others on gold sheets suggests that the niche between the two temples had been made to preserve . . . a part of its archives, which contained different documents established on various occasions.⁴²

The Pyrgi tablets recall many ancient burials of metal documents, which include: (1) the legal agreements of a town in Spain with both its guests and its Roman overlords—two bronze tablets, “one placed exactly over the other with their written sides down,” discovered beneath “two roofing tiles carefully laid against each other and covered with debris”;⁴³ and (2) the golden “Torah” of Pali Buddhism found “in the brick chamber of an old mound”⁴⁴ at Hmawza—“a manuscript in every way similar to the palmleaf manuscript so common in India and Burma but

with [twenty] leaves of gold" and two gold covers,⁴⁵ which contains "the Law or Dharma Preached by the Buddha."⁴⁶

There is, finally, an interesting burial from the Bertiz Valley near the Turkish province of Maras, where some small silver plates "completely covered with Semitic characters" were discovered in the late 1940s. They had apparently been "unearthed in a badly dilapidated *Bronzekugel*," a brazen sphere "disregarded by the farmers who emptied it because of its beat-up condition."⁴⁷ Unusual burials like this are often dismissed as one of a kind. But there is nothing unique in this account: it resembles the Assyrian reburial, probably by Shalmaneser III (858-824 B.C.), of a small silver plate and two small gold plates from the reigns of Shalmaneser I (1274-1245 B.C.) and Tukulti-Ninurta I (1244-1208 B.C.).

The three tablets had been imbedded in sand in a small bowl. A second, similar bowl was inverted over the top and the two were apparently laced together through holes in their rims. This little "capsule" was half-sunk into the ground, a larger bowl was inverted over it, and the whole thing was buried.⁴⁸

These remarkable burials—of special documents carefully placed in peculiar containers designed specifically to preserve them—may actually be related to the long history of incantation bowl inscriptions which were interred well into the Christian era.⁴⁹ They introduce quite naturally the ultimate attempt of the ancients to immortalize their records—the gold and silver plates from Persepolis.⁵⁰

Before and after Persepolis

Old Persian studies got a new lease on life in 1926, "when an inscription of Darius was found at Hamadan, in duplicate on gold and silver tablets."⁵¹ The inscription, wrongly thought to be "wholly novel as to its form and content," was discovered in an old foundation "between



Figure 1. Buried stone box with gold and silver foundation plates, Persepolis, Iran (photo courtesy of the Oriental Institute, University of Chicago)

two square hewn stones that had been carefully prepared to receive it.”⁵² The find, which established the exact location of ancient Ecbatana, also elicited Herzfeld’s prediction that “we may expect with certainty the discovery of similar documents in the excavations at . . . Persepolis” and elsewhere.⁵³ This prophecy was fulfilled in September 1933, when Herzfeld discovered that “two shallow, neatly made stone boxes with [sealed] lids, each containing two square plates of gold and silver, had been sunk into the bedrock beneath the walls at the corners of . . . the apadana”⁵⁴ (the multicolumned audience hall of the Palace at Persepolis). (See figure 1.) The plates, which bore the same inscription as their counterparts from Hamadan, “were laid down, probably in the presence of Darius, in 516-515 B.C.”; they were retrieved 2,500 years later in perfect condition, “the metal shining as the day it was incised.”⁵⁵ There were now six metallic copies of the same inscription, three complete sets of duplicates proclaiming the majesty of Darius and the vast extent of his kingdom.

All these tablets – one gold and one silver from Hamadan, two gold and two silver from Persepolis – were discovered in situ. . . . The texts of the gold tablets from Hamadan and Persepolis vary only in the line arrangements imposed by different formats. The Persepolis tablets underlie the issuance of this “edition,” whose unconventional writing [of a particular word] . . . shows that all of its copies were created from one and the same Urtext in a central office. Darius had undertaken simultaneous building projects in Persepolis, Susa, and Ecbatana, and the administration of these buildings was a unified thing.⁵⁶

Four more gold tablets found at Hamadan bear inscriptions issued by Ariaramnes, Arsames, Artaxerxes III, and Darius II.⁵⁷ Of the six inscriptions from Hamadan, a full two-thirds – the silver tablet and three of the five gold tablets – were rescued from looters who had cut them into pieces for the purpose of melting them down.⁵⁸ One shudders to think of the many similar documents which have not escaped the cutters and melters. The Persepolis plates constitute the high point in a long tradition of concealed metallic documents which extend from Sumer to Alexandria. The stone boxes found in holes cut into rock foundations prove conclusively that the plates were building deposits. The Darius inscription on gold and silver tablets is therefore “of the same type as the foundation inscriptions on metal tablets of Warad Sin of Larsa [1843-1823 B.C.], of . . . the wife of Rim Sin [1822-1763 B.C.] . . . , of Tukulti-Ninurta I [1244-1208 B.C.], and of Sargon II [721-705 B.C.]”⁵⁹ Metallic foundation texts are older than that, however, possibly reaching as far back as Early Dynastic II (ca. 2700-2500 B.C.).⁶⁰ The stone chest may be older still, if an object dated ca. 2900 B.C. or earlier, which was found in a temple at Tell Brak, is actually an “early dynastic foundation box.”⁶¹ The metallic foundation tradition, though frequently interrupted,⁶² lived on until the crash

of the Late Assyrian Empire (ca. 626-609 B.C.), when it perished because the Neo-Babylonians instituted other documentary procedures. It was briefly resurrected from the Late Assyrian period by the Achaemenid dynasty of Persia (539-331 B.C.),⁶³ only to die once more, at least to all appearances, when Alexander the Great fired the palace at Persepolis. But the metallic foundation inscription surfaced yet again at Alexandria in the excavations of (1) a granite box for holding the writings of a late Greek author,⁶⁴ and (2) dozens of small metallic plates from the foundations of the Serapis Temple, which housed the Serapeum Library.⁶⁵

The "flames of Persepolis" symbolize in every way the significance of Persia as a major "turning-point in history."⁶⁶ She was the mystic counter of Greek naturalism, who created a comprehensive "synthesis of Near Eastern cultures" by combining all of the influences from the Fertile Crescent, "including those of Persia itself, Mesopotamia, Asia Minor, the Syria-Palestine coast, and Egypt."⁶⁷ Her material wealth in gold alone was staggering. Antiochus I minted more than \$7,250,000 in coins from the golden roofing tiles of one Ecbatana palace;⁶⁸ and Alexander the Great systematically looted the palace at Persepolis for "a treasure estimated . . . at over \$150,000,000" before putting it to the torch, plus virtually all of the valuable objects "which Persian art had made or Persian conquest gathered."⁶⁹ The figures are revealing, even without correction for inflation. The culture of ancient Persia, which "reached one of the high peaks of human experience," also produced the carefully hewn stone boxes of Darius with their magnificent cargo of gold and silver plates. The Darius inscriptions thus mark the "culmination of a metal art which had been at least 2000 years maturing, gathering inspiration from a variety of cultures."⁷⁰

It remains, then, only to review the history of metallic foundation inscriptions before and after the Darius plates,

and to summarize its significance for library history. Before doing that, however, we must ask an intriguing question. Only two stone boxes were discovered by Herzfeld, who retrieved them from the northeast and southeast corners of the apadana. But "the cavity meant to hold a third such box was [also] found at the destroyed northwest corner."⁷¹ Who destroyed the northwest corner before the excavators got to it? Could it be that Alexander the Great and his men actually found the missing limestone box with its fabulous treasure of gold and silver plates?

Before Persepolis

The history of metallic foundation inscriptions provides too many boxes and documents to discuss each one separately. This paper therefore reviews that history only in relation to (1) three Neo-Sumerian kings, whose peg deposits probably led to the later burials of metal documents in stone boxes; and (2) nine subsequent rulers, including one Kassite, one Chaldean, two Amorite, and five Assyrian kings, who ruled from the nineteenth through the seventh centuries B.C. The paper thus ignores a mass of material, which includes the numerous metal tablets from Early Dynastic peg deposits,⁷² the Akkadian bronze tablet from Samarra,⁷³ four deposits with uninscribed bronze plates from the Isin Larsa period,⁷⁴ the mysterious stone and metal tablets from Old and Middle Assyro-Babylonian times,⁷⁵ the vague references to metals deposited in foundations by Shamshi-Adad I (1813-1781 B.C.) and Esarhaddon (699-680 B.C.),⁷⁶ the built-up brick boxes from Lagash,⁷⁷ the many brick boxes from the Neo-Sumerian and later periods,⁷⁸ the door pivot boxes,⁷⁹ and the trinkets (beads, amulets, etc.) found embedded in bricks.⁸⁰ Hundreds of documents like the Elamitic inscription on a bronze plate (ca. 600 B.C.) found in the treasury of the Persepolis palace, are also ignored because they are not associated with building deposits.⁸¹

The stone box loaded with metal documents is probably derived from the peg deposits of the Neo-Sumerian Renaissance at Mari in the Ur III period (ca. 2100-2000 B.C.).⁸² Parrot uncovered "six foundation deposits" of Niwar-Mer, which had been embedded in the materials used to construct an ancient building. Four of these deposits, "placed very precisely at its corners, identified the building as the Ninhursag Temple, thanks to the inscribed bronze plates,"⁸³ which they included.

In each case a bronze plate, about 15 cm. square, was placed directly on the mud bricks. Each plate had a short inscription in one corner. In the center of each was a round hole through which was thrust vertically a bronze peg 12 to 14 cm. long. A slab of wood about the same size as the metal plate was put on top, and a miscellaneous collection of small objects—a spindle whorl, beads, small plaques, a pendant—was placed beside it.⁸⁴

Three of the corners in the temple of Dagan have also produced the foundation deposits of Ishtup-Illum. More complex than the previous deposits, they definitely suggest a development toward the stone box of Darius. They were found "inside the wall a little above the footing at the base of the temple in a rectangular space"⁸⁵ that had been carefully prepared to receive them.

In one corner of this rectangle was placed a box made of two square stone slabs. The lower slab had a square depression in which a bronze plaque about 13 cm. square was placed. A bronze spike about 27.5 cm. long was thrust through holes in the bronze plaque and the stone slab, and into the mud brickwork beneath. A second stone slab, of the same size as the first but without the depression or hole, was placed over the first. The rest of the . . . rectangle reserved in the brickwork was covered with a layer of round pebbles, among which were numerous small objects. . . . Next to the stone box, bur-

ied among the pebbles, were a tablet of white limestone and one of schist. The tablets and the bronze plaque bore identical inscriptions.⁸⁶

The several deposits of Apil-kin, one of Mari's early governors, were concealed in the boxlike cavities of false bricks built directly into or beneath the foundations themselves. The governor had found "a real hiding place" beneath the inner doors of the *sahuru*, a small entrance hall leading to the "Lions' Temple," which he had built behind the Temple of Ninhursag. This *cachette* was "arranged with much more care" than his predecessors had bestowed on theirs. He had actually "made a box by hollowing out one of the rough bricks in the footings beneath the foundation."

In this box a bronze plate had been deposited without being nailed down. It was encased in wood, as the cavity was larger than the metal plate. A [wooden] plank, cut to the exact dimensions of the cachette, covered both the plate and its framework. A mat was then placed over the whole thing, the hiding place with its hollow brick was concealed, the brick foundation was laid atop all this as though nothing had happened and construction continued.⁸⁷

The foundation deposits of Niwar-Mer, Ishtup-Illum and Apil-kin are also related to the elaborate boxes made up of baked bricks "laid flat in bitumen, in courses measuring 3 x 2 1/2 bricks."⁸⁸ All of these deposits with their various containers point to the long development which culminates in the rock holes, stone boxes, and metal documents of Darius.

Of more than a dozen rulers listed by Oppenheim, Warad-Sin (1834-1823 B.C.) and Rim-Sin (1822-1763 B.C.) are "the only Larsa kings who used peg deposits";⁸⁹ but both of these rulers were involved with either the boxes or the documents of the metallic foundation deposit. While clearing a small temple site in southeastern Ur of its su-

perimposed ruins from the Ur III and Isin-Larsa periods, Woolley dug into the remains of an old wall. He quickly found, in the rubble beside the wall, some "clay foundation cones . . . from its destroyed upper courses." Then about six inches below the wall's highest remaining surface, he uncovered "a box of burnt brick contrived in the mud-brick core of the wall." The box contained "an intact foundation-deposit consisting of the copper figure of the king" and a "brick-shaped inscribed steatite tablet." The cones, the statuette, and the tablet all bore the same inscription, which stated that "the temple was dedicated to En-ki, the water god of Eridu, . . . by Rim Sin king of Larsa," in the ninth year of his reign. The building and its deposit "can therefore be accurately dated to the year 1990 B.C."⁹⁰ The excavation disclosed no metal tablets, however, and none are known from Rim-Sin; but Simat-Inanna, "one of the wives of Rim-Sin," did deposit inscribed limestone and copper tablets in the foundations of a Larsa temple, which she dedicated to the goddess Belit-ekallim "during part of the reign of Hammurabi at Babylon [ca. 1792-1750 B.C.]."⁹¹ No deposits actually made by Warad-Sin have ever been recovered, and the same is true of Kurigalzu II (1345-1324 B.C.). But excavation of the later Ningal Temple, built by "the Assyrian governor of Ur in about 650 B.C.,"⁹² has produced a pair of steatite and copper tablets from each of those rulers. "The temple had been restored by Nabonidus [555-539 B.C.],"⁹³ the last Neo-Babylonian king, who also restored its foundation deposits. This reburial of tablets from the Amorite and Kassite dynasties not only proves that Warad-Sin and Kurigalzu II deposited foundation inscriptions in their buildings, but also demonstrates the astonishing antiquity and vitality of this vigorous metallic tradition.

Under the floor [of room three] there was found loose in the soil a [white] limestone foundation-tablet of Kuri-

Galzu and close to this two copper tablets and one of black steatite; one copper tablet was a duplicate of that in limestone and recorded the restoration of an ancient temple . . . , the other two also formed a pair and recorded the building by Warad-sin of "a great wall which like a tall mountain cannot be undermined" . . . ; neither of the two texts can have any reference to the site in which they were found; they must have been unearthed in the Neo-Babylonian period and given pious reburial under the new temple that was in course of construction.⁹⁴

After Kurigalzu II, the Assyrian kings more or less monopolized the metallic foundation deposit until the breakup of their empire (ca. 600 B.C.) by the Neo-Babylonians. The elaborate reburial by Shalmaneser III of a Schalenkapsel containing gold and silver plates from Shalmaneser I and Tukulti-Ninurta I has already been discussed.⁹⁵ The only other building documents from Shalmanesers I and III are an inscription of the former stating that he "placed stones, silver, gold, iron, copper, tin, and aromatic plants" in foundations,⁹⁶ and a lone gold tablet of unknown provenance from the latter.⁹⁷ It is nevertheless known that "small tablets of precious metal were used from the time of Shalmaneser I onwards."⁹⁸ The most complicated foundation deposits of Mesopotamia, on the other hand, come from the later Ishtar Temple of Tukulti-Ninurta I (1244-1208 B.C.), who dedicated its twin shrines to Ishtar Asshuritu and to Dinitu. The deposits from this temple to Assur constitute "a very elaborate combination of [inscribed] slabs and tablets, large and small, of various materials," installed with "a lavish use of beads and nondescript fragments of stone."⁹⁹ The slabs, which include seven made of lead (averaging about 5" x 15" x 30" in size and 880 pounds in weight) and two of limestone (one almost 9' x 5' x 16", the other about 4' x 6' x 12"), constitute "the most massive [deposits] so far discovered in Meso-

potamia."¹⁰⁰ The tablets include thirteen made of gold or silver and seven each of lead and alabaster.¹⁰¹ The complex arrangements of these twenty-seven documents defy verbal description, but they were partially disposed as follows:

First three lead blocks were placed upon the mud brick sub-foundation; two small inscribed tablets of gold and silver and a tiny square of sheet copper were placed on the middle block. A few baked bricks were laid along the wall face to make a level bed for the stone slab. Glass beads, fragments of stones, and . . . twigs or bits of wood were strewn over these objects, and the limestone slab was placed over them. . . . Mats were laid over the block, and . . . [near] its rear edge were placed more valuable trifles, including beads and . . . bits of ivory. On this "cushion" of beads and mortar went two more gold and silver tablets, and a square of sheet gold. Then the fourth lead block was laid over the lot and the construction of the wall continued in mud brick.¹⁰²

Additional gold and silver tablets were positioned, "together with beads and stone chips, on the cella pavement beneath the dais." Another complex deposit of similar foundation inscriptions was also discovered "beneath and behind the Dinitu shrine."¹⁰³

An important pair of gold and silver plaquettes has survived from Assurnasirpal II (883-859 B.C.).¹⁰⁴ "The actual provenance of these two inscriptions is unknown,"¹⁰⁵ but they were very probably found at Nineveh in the Temple of Nabu, the god of learning, writing, scribes, and secretaries.¹⁰⁶ The possible linkage of Nabu with the tablets is interesting for they present Assurnasirpal II as saying explicitly: "I laid the foundation of the palace at the city of X, the foundations of my royal residence, on tablets of silver and gold."¹⁰⁷ The actual wording of the tablets, as a matter of fact, means "to establish the foundation on documents."¹⁰⁸ In all of cuneiform literature, Bottéro knows specifically of "only one other formula somewhat like this

one." It occurs "in the Prism [text] describing the 30th year of Assurbanipal," the librarian-king from Nineveh. In this inscription, which deals with the Temple of Nergal at Kutha, Assurbanipal says: "In a favorable month, on a propitious day, I established its subfoundation on GULA oil, that fine oil, and upon tables of silver and gold." This statement, Bottéro notes, incorporates "the same verb (*addi*), the same preposition (*ina*), and the same mention of gold and silver tablets as in our text."¹⁰⁹ It suggests that foundation documents are not merely inscriptions discovered in foundations. They are basic documents bearing witness to the founding of important royal and religious buildings on *writing*, which was known anciently as "the King's Secret" — a mysterious something giving him both the right and the power to rule.¹¹⁰ The regal habit of building upon inscriptions, furthermore, probably symbolizes the original founding of the temple, the palace, and the city-state upon the written document,¹¹¹ and possibly upon the metallic document. At any rate, the practice was firmly established in ancient Mesopotamia.

Archaeological digs have amply documented this custom, observed by the Mesopotamian kings, of burying among the substructures of the temples or palaces they built or restored such things as clay nails; cones, barrel cylinders, and stone or metal tablets, on which they inscribed a permanent record of their labors.¹¹²

The utter seriousness of the kings who made these foundation deposits is exemplified by the solemn curse of Assurnasirpal: "If anyone should efface my name which I have written here, or misuse this document for his own pleasures or purposes, may Assur, the Great Lord, destroy his army, ravage his throne, and cut off from the land his name and all of his descendants!"¹¹³

The inscribed stone box "appeared for the first time in the reign of Assurnasirpal II [883-859 B.C.],"¹¹⁴ the last of

the Middle Assyrian kings. All previous examples of boxes, including the possible instance from Tell Brak and the box-like cachette of Apil-kin,¹¹⁵ were either uninscribed or directly incorporated into the structure of some building. In 1929, however, "a damaged stone box bearing an inscription" by Assurnasirpal II showed up in Philadelphia.¹¹⁶ The box came from the ancient city of Apqu, also known as Bumariyah or Tell Abu-Maria, "some twenty miles west of Mosul, near Telefar," in Iraq.¹¹⁷ It was pieced together by E. A. Speiser, who "identified it as a foundation box, and deciphered the [long] cuneiform inscription" on its sides and lid.¹¹⁸ It was probably taken from a foundation hole, although "there is no means of knowing the [actual] conditions under which it was found."¹¹⁹ Moreover, since the gold and silver tablets of Assurnasirpal II may also have come from Apqu, "it is possible that they were [originally] enclosed in the foundation box."¹²⁰

Another inscribed stone box inscribed by Assurnasirpal II was retrieved from "a mound called Balawat," supposedly the ancient Imgur-Bel near Nineveh, "about fifteen miles to the east of Mossul."¹²¹ It was found while Rassam was in Mossul by the local foreman of the dig, who described it as "a stone coffer with a lid, containing two tablets of stone covered with inscriptions."¹²² The foreman, who may or may not have removed the box from its find-spot, did rebury it for protection until Rassam returned to the site. It was apparently taken from the entrance to a burnt-out temple chamber, where Rassam also found, lying on a marble altar, "an inscribed marble tablet of the same size and shape as the other two."¹²³ Because the stone box had exactly enough room for this third tablet, he concluded that it "belonged to the same set" of documents, that it had been removed from the box and placed on the altar for reading, and "that before the priests had time to deposit it back in the coffer, the temple was burnt down, either by accident or by an enemy."¹²⁴ The cavity of the stone

box was something like 8" x 9", large enough to hold three tablets "twelve-and-a-half inches long, eight wide and two-and-a-half thick."¹²⁵ As that is less than half the length and width of the box and perhaps three-fourths its depth, the box itself probably measured about 12" x 18" x 28". It was a massive marble chest, whose great weight, though unspecified, was sufficient to tax Rassam's ingenuity in transporting it to Mossul.¹²⁶ There is yet another ninth-century example of this kind from the son of Assurnasirpal II, the first Neo-Assyrian king. What little is known of the box, which is engraved on three sides, has been stated by Ellis.

A similar stone box of Shalmaneser III [858-824 B.C.] was found on the ruins of the west gate of the outer wall of Assur. Unfortunately it was empty, and it had evidently rolled down from some other position to its find-spot. In spite of its evidently secondary position, the box lay on some agate beads, which may have been inside when it rolled to its final position.¹²⁷

These boxes seem to break with the conventional understanding of foundation inscriptions as documents about buildings. The box from Tell Bumariyah, for example, "does not include a building text" of any kind, and was probably "used for some other purpose."¹²⁸ The gold and silver tablets it may have housed also make it clear that Assurnasirpal II was founding buildings upon documents, not depositing documents about buildings.¹²⁹ The Balawat box, on the other hand, mentions the building or rebuilding of both a city and a temple, but "did not appear to have been buried," and "does not seem to have been a building deposit."¹³⁰ There is not much to say about the stone box of Shalmaneser III, as its find conditions are unknown: the king mentions rebuilding the city wall at Assur and urges its future builder to "restore its ruins" and "to return my inscription to its place."¹³¹ But where was its place? It is possible, certainly, that foundation documents served a

double purpose, and that at least some copies "of building inscriptions were kept in the temples, for safekeeping or in order to keep the record . . . permanently before the god,"¹³² or even for reading. Marinatos thought a similar marble chest from Mesenia "could have been a library-box."¹³³ If such a box "was considered a container suitable for stone tablets" or other documents, as at Balawat, "it may be that the stone boxes of Assurnasirpal II and Shalmaneser III served a similar purpose, and were not meant to be deposited in structures."¹³⁴ Their inscriptions, which deal mostly with the Great King and his domains, would seem to bear this out. Excavations at Nimrud and Arslan Tash in northern Syria have also disclosed six or seven inscribed "Assyrian statues of deities holding square boxes" in their arms.¹³⁵ Their inscriptions state explicitly that "they were set up for . . . Nabu," the learned god of the written word who was also known as "the perfect scribe."¹³⁶ All these statues, and especially those from Nimrud, "are close chronologically to the boxes of Assurnasirpal II and Shalmaneser III," and it is difficult to deny a connection between them. Mallowan, at any rate, has suggested that the statue boxes "might have been meant to hold tablets, in view of Nabu's association with writing and scholarship."¹³⁷

Sargon II (721-705 B.C.) indicates that he deposited inscribed materials of four to nine different kinds in foundations.¹³⁸ The fact is that building deposits from the late Assyro-Babylonian kings (858-539 B.C.) often include such inscriptions, a documentary custom actually "mentioned in texts from Sargon's time down to Nabonidus's reign [555-539 B.C.]."¹³⁹ The metallic foundation inscription flourished under the Neo-Assyrian kings, and it is therefore no surprise that "the depositing of inscribed documents was greatly elaborated in Sargon II's palace at Khorsabad."¹⁴⁰ The excavator of this palace, Victor Place, "was intrigued by the unusual thickness (nearly 26 feet), of one of its

dividing walls." On digging into the wall he found "two inscribed barrel cylinders" and "an alabaster block which he carefully unearthed." The block turned out to be "a stone box (whose lid had been broken by the weight of the wall), which measured about 11 x 15 x 17 inches; and in it he discovered five foundation tablets" on which Sargon II had "described the building of Khorsabad" from scratch.¹⁴¹ "These epigraphical documents have a high value for their texts themselves"; but in addition to that, "the material on which they were engraved increases, if possible, their extreme rarity," because "one of the tablets was made of gold, another of silver, the third of bronze, a fourth of lead, and the last" of a mysterious "white material," perhaps alabaster or magnesite, which has proven harder to identify.¹⁴² Of the three metallic inscriptions, the bronze tablet is the largest, the gold tablet the smallest, and the silver tablet somewhere in between.¹⁴³ The lead tablet and the inscribed stone box,¹⁴⁴ which completed this series of foundation documents from Khorsabad, disappeared in the infamous *nauffrage des collections* of 23 May 1855, "in which so many of the archaeological materials gathered by the French were lost."¹⁴⁵ Here again, "the box with its tablets was not actually [discovered] in the foundations," but in a wall "above the level of the floor."¹⁴⁶ This proves that foundation inscriptions were not deposited solely in foundations. It does not prove that the tablets of Sargon II were something other than foundation inscriptions, for they state repeatedly that he founded the city of Dur-Sharrukin (Khorsabad) and built its wall, the various shrines for its gods, and its several palaces; and they also say—again repeatedly—that he inscribed his name on those same tablets and deposited them in the "foundation walls" of the palaces.¹⁴⁷ For what they are worth, there are also some Urartean deposits from the Haldis Temple at Toprakkale near Lake Van in Asia Minor, which are probably contemporary with Sargon II.¹⁴⁸

At each corner of the square shrine a square depression, about 20 cm. on a side and 3-4 cm. deep, had been sunk into the bedrock. In two of these depressions were found deposits, each consisting of a square bronze plate and two tiny scraps, one of sheet gold, the other of sheet silver. None of these objects was inscribed.¹⁴⁹

The metallic foundation inscription came to an end with the fall of the Neo-Assyrian Empire ca. 626-609 B.C. "It was not adopted by the Neo-Babylonian rulers," who preferred "clay cylinders, the only type of inscribed building deposit used in their time."¹⁵⁰ A clay box¹⁵¹ and a brick box¹⁵² are associated with the first and the last Chaldean kings, and there may be others; but there were few if any stone or metal inscriptions. The years between 626-609 B.C. thus mark a chronological datum before which foundation documents were inscribed on metals but not after. "The custom was briefly revived by the Achaemenids," who intentionally resurrected it from the Neo-Assyrian or Urartean past.¹⁵³ It died for the second time in 331 B.C. when the Persian Empire was toppled by Alexander the Great, but it also underwent a second resurrection, this time in the great city of Alexandria.

The Alexandrian Echo of Persepolis

Archeology is problematic at Alexandria, where "excavation has yielded, and can yield, but little material for its reconstruction at any period."¹⁵⁴ There are many reasons for this, but the major causes are two:

The first is a general subsidence, probably of about four meters, which has taken much of the coastal region of the ancient city beneath sea level. . . . This subsidence is complicated by a second, man-made difficulty. . . . Intense building activity [since ca. 1850] has created a new and wholly artificial coastline, to a depth of some three hundred meters [900 feet] at its widest extent, in

the area . . . where the Corniche was completed in 1906.¹⁵⁵

The stratigraphy and ceramic sequences of Alexandria have thus been largely disrupted, as most of the "fill" for the modern city was taken from the ancient city, sherds and all.¹⁵⁶ These artificial conditions of her coastline unfortunately "exclude any possibility of accurate determination of the contours of the most important part of the city."¹⁵⁷ Excavators have therefore been forced to concentrate on the east and west sides of Alexandria, the former containing her ancient cemeteries and the latter her famous Temple of Serapis.¹⁵⁸ "The Serapeum," as a matter of fact, "is the only excavated temple" in the city; and its foundation deposits "may reasonably be described as the most important archaeological find of the Ptolemaic period [ever] made in Alexandria."¹⁵⁹ It is very disconcerting, therefore, to learn that "not only Parsons, *The Alexandrian Library . . .*, but also serious works like the *Handbuch der Bibliothekswissenschaft . . .* or the *Geschichte der Textüberlieferung . . .* [have] failed to take notice of the excavations."¹⁶⁰ The failure is understandable, however, as the archaeological and literary evidence for this temple is so confusing that virtually nobody can make sense of it.¹⁶¹

The Serapeum has been unfortunate in its principal excavators, Botti and Rowe. In the reports of the former it is frequently not clear what structures he is discussing, while the latter had little understanding of the historical problems connected with the site, and was unable to interpret satisfactorily his discoveries, important though some of these were. . . . Detailed interpretation of their plans and descriptions is [therefore] a task of considerable uncertainty.¹⁶²

On 23 August 1943, Alan Rowe discovered "a set of ten foundation plaques bearing bilingual inscriptions in hieroglyphs and Greek stating that Ptolemy III had built

the Temple and the Sacred Enclosure for Serapis." They were found in a hole sunk into a rock foundation beneath the southeast corner of the Serapeum at Alexandria. The set included (1) three metal plates of gold, silver, and bronze; (2) five opaque glass plates; (3) a tablet made of faience; and (4) a mud tablet, apparently uninscribed.¹⁶³ The find was repeated on 31 December 1944, when a "similar set of ten plaques of Ptolemy III" were taken from another deposit hole in the foundation trench under the southwest corner of the same temple.¹⁶⁴ The inscriptions, materials, and arrangements of the plaques were essentially the same as before, as was the actual find-spot.¹⁶⁵ "The holes themselves were filled with sand after the plaques had been laid at the bottom and then covered over with limestone foundation blocks which were later removed by unknown persons" who dug up the foundations without disturbing the foundation trenches.¹⁶⁶ Rowe also announced "part of a foundation deposit in a small hole cut in the rock discovered on 30th October, 1945," from which "the gold, silver, bronze and . . . [some] opaque glass plaques had been removed in ancient times."¹⁶⁷ The remaining glass plaques bore "two black ink inscriptions . . . , Greek on one side and hieroglyphic on the other." As these inscriptions were identical to those previously found, and since the early finds were uniformly alike, Rowe concluded that the deposit originally contained "ten plaques as in the temenos corners."¹⁶⁸ This find led to the discovery of ten more deposit holes, which enabled the Greco-Roman Museum to distinguish three separate structures in the same general area of the Serapeum, the early "Ptolemaic and [later] Roman temples of Serapis and a [small] Ptolemaic-Shrine of Harpocrates."¹⁶⁹ There were no less than eight deposit holes in the Shrine of Harpocrates alone, each meant to hold "ten plaques, which were placed in pairs of two [deposits] in every corner."¹⁷⁰ The museum also discovered north of these deposit holes "the

rock-cut holes for two other deposits," which may belong to the Harpocrates Shrine or to "the southern part of an adjacent ptolemaic shrine."¹⁷¹ These holes, like their deposits, were fairly uniform, measuring about 11" x 7" x 3";¹⁷² they were so skillfully hidden that they could not be detected unless the surface of the foundation trench was brushed.¹⁷³ The inscription on one of the gold plates, and presumably on the other plaques, "indicates that the shrine was made by Ptolemy IV (221-203 B.C.) and dedicated to Harpocrates, the son of Serapis and Isis."¹⁷⁴ Rowe thus found thirteen rock-cut holes in all, from which he actually retrieved forty-three foundation tablets made of glass, metal, and clay.¹⁷⁵ If these were all foundation holes, and if their deposits were indeed uniform, they should have contained originally 130 tablets—65 of glass and 13 each of gold, silver, bronze, faience, and mud. Other deposits doubtless remain in the northern foundation trenches of the Serapeum Enclosure and of its temples, where they cannot be excavated because they lie beneath the modern Bab Sidra Cemetery.¹⁷⁶ Similar foundation documents are also known from clandestine excavations in Alexandria and from various other sources.¹⁷⁷ Evidence for the Serapeum remains confusing, to say the least;¹⁷⁸ but thanks to Alan Rowe and the foundation plaques, five definite conclusions can now be drawn from it: (1) the buildings and grounds of the Serapeum, known as its temenos, were located on the west side of Alexandria where Pompey's Pillar now stands;¹⁷⁹ (2) the Temple of Serapis was built within the Serapeum Enclosure at its north end;¹⁸⁰ (3) the Shrine of Harpocrates, also inside the Enclosure, was a later adjunct to the southwest corner of the Serapis Temple;¹⁸¹ (4) Ptolemy III Euergetes (246-221 B.C.) built the Serapeum Enclosure and its Temple of Serapis;¹⁸² and (5) the Shrine of Harpocrates was built by Ptolemy IV Philopator (221-203 B.C.).¹⁸³

There are some hints about the presence of stone boxes

in Alexandria. The third deposit from the Harpocrates Shrine, for example, "was once enclosed in a kind of plaster box," whose remains were found by Rowe.¹⁸⁴ He also alludes to rectangular limestone coffers kept in niches in the long underground passages beneath the Roman Serapeum, "which Botti thought might be Ptolemaic in origin."¹⁸⁵ But the best evidence of stone boxes is the discovery in 1847 of a granite box bearing the inscription DIOSKOURIDES G TOMOI, "For Three Volumes by Dioscurides."¹⁸⁶ Discovered "in the garden of the Consulate General of Prussia," it was wrongly interpreted at first as "confirming the location of the great library in the same place."¹⁸⁷

Recently, while digging for some stones to use as building materials, someone discovered a small block of granite 17 1/2 inches (438 mm.) long, by 15 1/2 inches (394 mm.) wide and high. A cavity had been hewn in this block for holding papyrus rolls. . . . This cavity is 10 inches (254 mm.) long by 8 inches (203 mm.) wide and 3 inches deep. . . . Thus there would have been room for three rolls.¹⁸⁸

This granite box, which weighed over 380 pounds, was "already lost in 1848."¹⁸⁹ The grounds where it was found had been purchased by the Prussian Consul General to Alexandria, Antonio de Laurin of Austria, "who apparently conducted some [amateur] excavations there. . . . [But] no one knows what became of the artifacts from these digs. Unfortunately, they could have fallen into the hands of Cassavetti," an unscrupulous character who may have made a killing from the box on the antiquities market.¹⁹⁰ Whatever its fortunes, however, the whereabouts of the granite box remains completely unknown.¹⁹¹ Partly for that reason it was long thought to be an out-and-out hoax; an uncritical account of the box was the only one ever published, as it was subsequently ignored by serious scholars.¹⁹² Breccia, for example, repudiated the stories that he

had discovered the box, that it was made to hold ten rolls instead of three, and so forth.¹⁹³ It had been noticed briefly in 1848 by J. A. Letronne, who was quoting an excerpt from the letter written by Sir Anthony Charles Harris to Samuel Birch on 28 December 1847.¹⁹⁴ But this notice was ignored by virtually everyone until the daughter of Sir Anthony Harris, almost three decades after his death, delivered some of his notebooks to the Greco-Roman Museum in 1896.¹⁹⁵ Botti, who was then Director of the Museum, was thus able "to find the note which, as the files of Sir Antonio de Laurin had been scattered and his papers destroyed by a fire in 1892, takes on the value of an original source."¹⁹⁶ The description and drawing of a heavy granite box by the scholarly Harris was impressive. "Although his note cannot be given the authority of a meticulous epigraphic copy . . . , no one familiar with the usual exactitude of his notebooks" could flippantly dismiss the box or "doubt that the inscription was faithfully reproduced by him."¹⁹⁷ So, some of the scholars began to reassess the box. Reinach, for example, wrote about it in a spirit of atonement for his previous skepticism.¹⁹⁸ The box itself, however, which was too cumbersome to be typical,¹⁹⁹ must have been created for some special purpose, such as containing the *éditions de luxe* of the wealthy, immortalizing the famous or their works, controlling the humidity, preventing thefts, housing rare books, or protecting illuminated manuscripts.²⁰⁰ There is also a question about the actual shape of the box, because the visual proportions of the drawing by Harris do not fit the measurements he provides for it.²⁰¹

The inscription of the granite box is dated, on rather tenuous paleographical evidence, between 220 B.C.-A.D. 140.²⁰² The most difficult problem with the inscription, however, is probably its referent: Which Dioscurides is meant? There are eight or nine possibilities and no sure method of selecting the right one, although the choices

can be narrowed somewhat if Reinach's dates are accepted.²⁰³ His favorite is Dioscurides *Pedanius*, the one-book author of the *De Materia Medica*, for whom he argues somewhat speciously at great length.²⁰⁴ My own choice would be Dioscurides *Epigrammaticus*, the brilliant student of Callimachus, for whom I can present no better evidence, perhaps, than wishful thinking; but he certainly cannot be disqualified by the ultimate in scholarly "objectivity" – Reinach's assertion that "light poetry would be out of place in such a heavy chest!"²⁰⁵ If "the box of Dioscurides raises more questions than it resolves,"²⁰⁶ it is mostly because Reinach insists on regarding it as unique.²⁰⁷ It was nothing of the sort: the inscribed granite box had plenty of ancestors in Mesopotamia, and probably also in Egypt.

Conclusion: The Significance of All This for Library History

The antecedents of the foundation inscriptions from Alexandria must be Macedonian, Greek, Roman, Mesopotamian, Egyptian, or some combination thereof. Greco-Roman influence may be ruled out immediately, however, as foundation deposits of this kind have never been attested for any Greek or Roman building,²⁰⁸ and the influence of Egypt, which is unquestionably at work in the Serapeum, must be evaluated by others.²⁰⁹ But we are badly mistaken, I think, if we insist on deriving the accomplishments of the Ptolemies from their Greek or Egyptian subjugates. It is above all else the cultural force of Macedon and her long-standing openness to the peoples and influences of Mesopotamia which best account for those accomplishments. "The Ptolemies traced their descent from Dionysus,"²¹⁰ who was regarded as the father of Serapis himself.²¹¹ Dionysus, be it remembered, was known as the interloper god of Asian supernaturalism who forced his way into the mainland of Greek naturalistic thought by way of Thrace and Macedonia.²¹² When the aging Euripides

left Attica in a huff, disgusted with the smart-alec intellectuals of Athens, he withdrew to Macedonia in the rustic mountain country of hillbilly Greece; and there, in the northern backlands of the wild, wild West, he wrote the *Bacchae*, a play about the fundamentally irreconcilable conflict of the Apollonian and Dionysiac “gospels” in ancient Greece.²¹³ The awesome issues raised here by Euripides have not been resolved to this day; but the Macedonians, although fascinated with the sophic traditions of Apollonian Greece, never swerved from their fierce devotion to the mantic Dionysus. And that, I think, is the basic fact which must always be remembered in evaluating the influences of Macedon, Mesopotamia, and Egypt upon the Ptolemies. It is difficult for the modern mentality to comprehend the sacral outlook of the ancient mentality. When a king runs a foundation trench, lays down a permanent record of his authority and domains inscribed on stone tablets or metal plates, and erects a building on top of it, what is he really doing? He is saying in the sacral language of a dramatized ritual enactment that every aspect of human civilized culture – the civilizing tendency itself, which gives birth to the temple, the palace, the city-state, his entire kingdom, and even to his own powers – is built upon the written document. Could there possibly be a better way to say it? The foundation inscription was not used for communicating in any ordinary sense of the word,²¹⁴ but it was by no means insignificant. It was rather the backbone of the whole documentary system of Mesopotamia. The royal inscriptions, written either by the kings or under their direct supervision, included both the foundation tablets or other forms of building inscriptions and their historical elaborations, which were known as “annals” or “chronicles.”²¹⁵ The inscription was a secondary element in “Early Dynastic foundation deposits.” Its use increased with the decline of the peg, however, and “the inscription began to take on more importance.” As time wore on, these

“building deposit inscriptions became both longer and more numerous,” thus leading to the historical document and “in Assyria [to] the literary prism.”²¹⁶ The documents derived from building inscriptions, moreover, “must be taken to reflect literary patterns.”²¹⁷ The royal inscriptions of Assyria, for example, include such things as chronicles, long-winded invocations, paeans, triumphal hymns, poetic language, and episodic narratives. It is “only when the royal inscriptions are linked with their literary background,” therefore, that “their diversification and . . . stylistic changes can be explained.”²¹⁸ Nabonidus even “enlivens inscriptions with dialogs” in which gods, kings, priests, and common laborers participate. He also “quotes in scholarly fashion the texts of the documents his workmen had excavated from the ruins of temples,” just as Assurbanipal repeatedly includes “descriptions of his training and . . . achievements as a scholar and a soldier.” All of this demonstrates “the continuity and tenacity of a living literary tradition” – distinct from the scribal tradition “preserved in the royal library of Nineveh” – which makes it necessary for the would-be writer of Mesopotamian literary history “to consult these living, changing royal inscriptions.”²¹⁹ These two literary traditions, the regal and the scribal, were for the most part intertwined in Mesopotamia. They may have shared a common origin; and if they did, it was probably the stereotyped inclusions of the ancient foundation inscription: an invocation of the god, the names and accomplishments of the king, mention of something (like a temple or kingdom) built upon the civilizing functions of writing, a curse on anyone desecrating the foundation document, and blessings for those who honor it.²²⁰

The most important development in Assyrian literature is to be found in the royal inscriptions. These were modelled on the old Babylonian building inscription. . . . From this fixed form the Assyrians developed

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the long historical inscriptions on which our knowledge of . . . Mesopotamia is largely based. By elaborating the title of the king, and giving a more discursive account . . . of the dedication, the scribes were able to give general accounts of the principal events of their time. . . . Thus arose the general account of a king's exploits. The next step was to arrange the events in their chronological sequence. . . . Finally . . . each year or each campaign was elaborately and separately described, and then a complete history of the reign . . . [was] recorded on clay or stone with all the literary art of which the writer was capable. . . . The building inscription remains, [but] the annalistic element is entirely new. . . . The annals of the Assyrian kings from Sargon onwards deserve to be classed with the most important literary works in cuneiform.²²¹

If the history of librarianship is reduced to library history, the substance of this paper has little relevance to it. There is more to carpentry than the history of boards and shingles. Why, then, must librarianship be regarded as so much bibliographic lumber? The history of books and libraries is the history of instruments, like the history of hammers, nails, saws, tool cribs, and lumberyards. It can therefore have only instrumental relevance to librarianship, which must use communicative instruments of one kind or another in order to do its job. But the history of librarianship is not the history of its instruments; it is the history of societal information systems in which ideas are expressed and recognized by means of communicative instruments – such as bard traditions, marked arrows, cattle brands, metal plates, stone tablets, clay cylinders, palm leaves, papyrus rolls, waxed boards, parchment codices, paper books, microforms, magnetic tapes, data banks, print-outs, computer terminals, and who knows what all. The information systems of the ancient Near East are thus an integral part of the history of librarianship. They were

based on "the marvelous function of writing as the great synthesizer," for the old Egyptians and Mesopotamians knew instinctively that "to write is to synthesize."²²² We have forgotten all that in our insane commitment to the scientific analysis of everything. There is therefore no critical librarianship today, no comprehensive synthesis of knowledge in which anything that is known can be located and correlated with everything else that is known. We have pushed Humpty Dumpty off the wall and watched him shatter into thousands of little bits and pieces; and we have descended on the pieces and broken them down into progressively smaller bits and pieces. But we cannot put him together again because we find it much easier to analyze than to synthesize. The modern age has no House of Life, no temple where its knowledge records can be copied and discussed and studied as a whole.

Ancient records come to us not in single books but in whole libraries. These are not mere collections but organic entities . . . representing every department of human knowledge. . . . There is no aspect of our civilization that does not have its rise in the temple, thanks to the power of the written word. In the all-embracing relationship of the Divine Book everything is relevant. Nothing is really dead or forgotten; every detail belongs in the picture, which would be incomplete without it. Lacking such a synthesizing principle, our present-day knowledge becomes ever more fragmented, and our universities and libraries crumble and disintegrate as they expand. Where the temple that gave it birth is missing, civilization itself becomes a hollow shell.²²³

Notes

1. Gilbert Highet, "The Wondrous Survival of Records," *Horizon* 5 (November 1962): 93.
2. Matthew Black, *The Scrolls and Christian Origins* (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1961), 12. Black notes that "such a burial of the books may have been among the last solemn duties of the remnant Essenes at Qumran, when the sect had either been swallowed up

in Palestinian forms of Christianity or was disappearing owing to the constant pressure and hostility of rabbinical Judaism."

3. Paul E. Kahle, *The Cairo Geniza*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1959), 15, cited in Black, *The Scrolls and Christian Origins*, 12, n.1.

4. *Ibid.*

5. *Ibid.*

6. *Assumption of Moses* 1:16-18. For an English translation of the text, with critical notes, see R. H. Charles, *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1976), 2:415.

7. The expression "earthen vessel" here translates the Hebrew *kāli hāres* and the Greek *aggeion ostrakinon*, both describing a ceramic container of some kind.

8. L. Fischer, "Die Urkunden in Jer. 32:11-14 nach den Ausgrabungen und dem Talmud," *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 30 (1910): 139: "Diese Art der Ausstellung eines Dokumentes, wie wir sie bei den erwähnten Papyri, die sämtlich in griechischer Sprache abgefasst und nicht jüdisch sind, gesehen haben, finden wir ebenso in der talmudischen Literatur beschrieben." The Greek sources mentioned here are the Elephantine and the Hibe papyri. On the Mesopotamian practice of making legal duplicates, see A. Leo Oppenheim, *Ancient Mesopotamia: Portrait of a Dead Civilization* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972), 282.

9. Plutarch, *Numa* XXII, 2-3. Stone coffins were more common in antiquity than one might think; "for an unburned body a coffin would normally be used, while later the stone sarcophagus, often elaborately carved, became very popular with those who could afford it." See Herbert J. Rose, "Dead, Disposal of," in *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1970). For two examples, see Theophrastus, *De Igne* XLVI, and Dioscorides Medicus I, 124. For the leaden seals see Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita* XL, 29, 3. The ancient custom of writing "on lead and linen scrolls" (*in plumbeis linteisque voluminibus*) is also noted by Pliny, *Historia Naturalis* XIII, 27, 8. See also Augustine, *De Civitate Dei* XXXIV, 26-29. He states that Numa had his books buried "where he thought they were safe" (*obruit ubi tutum putavit*).

10. Plutarch, *Numa* XXII, 4, says "about four hundred years later." Pliny, *Historia Naturalis* XIII, 27, 85 places the discovery of the stone coffins "535 years after Numa's accession" (*ad quos [libros repositos] a regno Numa colliguntur anni DXXXV*). The dates are problematic, but a common guess is that the coffins were buried ca. 672 B.C. and discovered in 181 B.C.

11. They were unearthed by a flood from heavy rains, according to Plutarch, *Numa* XXII, 4; but they were dug up by ploughmen according to Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita* XL, 29, 3; Lactantius, *Divinae Institutiones* I, 22, 5; Valerius Maximus, *Factorum et Dictorum Memorabilia* I, 1, 12; Pliny, *Historia Naturalis* XIII, 27, 84; Augustine, *De Civitate Dei* VII, 34, 7-11, and *De Viris Illustribus Urbis Romae* III, 3.

12. There was nothing left of the body, not even a trace, according to Plutarch, *Numa* XXII, 5. Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita* XL, 29, 5, adds that "the wasting action of so many years had destroyed everything." These statements may be intentionally overdrawn as a way of emphasizing the very different states of preservation observable in the contents of the two coffins. At any rate, there was a body, however decomposed, in Numa's coffin, according to Lactantius, *Divinae Institutiones* I, 22, 5. ("Arcae duae lapideae sunt repertae a fossoribus, quarum in altera corpus Numae fuit, in altera . . . libri," and so forth).

13. Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita* XL, 29, 6. H. Bettenson's translation of *recentissima. Non integros modo sed recentissima specie*, might also be translated "not only *in toto* but looking almost new."

14. Pliny, *Historia Naturalis* XIII, 27, 85. ("Hos fuisse e charta, maiore etiamnum miraculo, quod infossi duraverint.")

15. Rose, "Dead," in *Oxford Classical Dictionary*. This article on disposing of the dead, for example, does not mention mummification. The body of Alexander the Great was embalmed in honey following Mesopotamian rather than Egyptian practices. For many sources, see Alan Rowe, "A Contribution to the Archaeology of the Western Desert: III," *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 38 (1955-56): 160-61. The preservation techniques of Mesopotamia, on the other hand, are probably themselves derived from Egypt, as those of Moses certainly were. Whatever their ultimate origin, however, the point is that all of these techniques have a common source somewhere in the ancient Near Orient.

16. Pliny, *Historia Naturalis* XIII, 27, 86. The stone cube (*lapidem quadratum circiter*) was quite literally "a stone hewn to the square on every side" — whether hollowed out or not. The text is a bit unstable: the crucial statement is *in eo lapide insuper libros III sitos fuisse*, which would ordinarily mean "three books had been placed on the top of this stone"; but a swarm of variant readings for *sitos* muddies the water. If we read "inserted" (*insitos*) for "placed" (*sitos*), we should probably also read the ambiguous *in* as "in" rather than "on," suggesting that the "stone cube" was a "stone container" of

some sort. But there are other variants (*inse positos, sepositos, impositos, situm*, and so forth), and it will take a better textual critic than I to figure out what is going on here.

17. The ancient sources disagree on the number of books and other particulars. I know of no way to reconcile all of their statements, but the consensus, for what it is worth, seems to be that two sets of seven books each were found in a separate coffin (one set in Latin treating Roman law, the other in Greek discussing sacral matters), not three books on or in a stone container or platform found in Numa's books. See also C. A. Forbes, "Books for the Burning," *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 67 (1936): 118. There exists scholarly skepticism about the whole story of Numa's books, and about everything else related to Numa: see R. M. Ogilvie, *A Commentary on Livy, Books 1-5* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1965), 88-95. See also Leon Herrmann, "Ennius et les Livres de Numa," *Latomus* 5 (January/June 1946): 87-90, for most of the sources dealing with this whole legend in antiquity.

18. C. T. Lewis and C. S. Short, "Citrus," in *A Latin Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975). The citrus and cedar trees are closely (even etymologically) related, both producing preservative oils which are poisonous to worms and insects. See also *ibid.*, s.v. "candela." The wax covering a cord "preserved it from decay." Cf. Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita* XL, 29, 6, "Two bundles of seven books each wrapped up in waxed cords" (*duo fasces candelis involuti septenos habuere libros*) with A. Dupont-Sommer, *The Dead Sea Scrolls; a Preliminary Survey* (New York: Macmillan, 1952), 14, who described the linen swaths at Qumran that "were coated with wax or pitch or asphalt." See also Kahle, *The Cairo Geniza*, 14: "The scrolls had originally been wrapped carefully in linen and deposited in the earthenware jars the lids of which were tightly closed"; and Dupont-Sommer, *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, 15: "The shape of the jars," moreover, "is without parallel."

19. Dupont-Sommer, *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, 15.

20. Kahle, *The Cairo Geniza*, 14.

21. Cf. Roland de Vaux, "La Grotte des Manuscrits Hébreux," *Revue Biblique* 56 (1949): 596. He dates the ceramic jars which held the Dead Sea scrolls: "de la fin de l'époque hellénistique, elle est du II^e siècle avant notre ère, à la rigueur du début du I^{er} siècle, certainement antérieure à l'époque romaine." See also Hightet, "Wondrous Survival of Records," 82. The papyrus Book of the Dead was unrolled "in excellent condition" in 1960 "three thousand years after it was buried in the tomb of an Egyptian high priest."

22. Dupont-Sommer, *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, 17. Also cf. Jean Doresse, *The Secret Books of the Egyptian Gnostics* (New York: Viking, 1960), 120-21.

23. *Ibid.*, 121, n. 7.

24. John Dart, *The Laughing Savior: The Discovery and Significance of the Nag Hammadi Gnostic Library* (New York: Harper & Row, 1976), 36, 24, and cf. 49, 51; and Doresse, *Secret Books of Egyptian Gnostics*, 128, 133. For the best account of this discovery, see J. M. Robinson "The Jung Codex: The Rise and Fall of a Monopoly," *Religious Studies Review* 3 (1977): 17-30.

25. Doresse, *Secret Books of Egyptian Gnostics*, 134; and Dart, *The Laughing Savior*, 15. "The manuscripts were probably bound into book form about 350 and may have been hidden in the jar in 367, or as late as 400" (Dart, *The Laughing Savior*, 24). Cf. Doresse, *Secret Books of Egyptian Gnostics*, 135: "This library was hidden, at the latest, about the beginning of the fifth century [A.D. 400]." It has turned out to be "nothing less than the sacred library of an ancient [Christian] sect, to all appearances complete" (120).

26. Jean Doresse, "A Gnostic Library from Upper Egypt," *Archaeology* 3 (Summer 1950): 69-73. Cited in Dart, *The Laughing Savior*, 26. Cf. Doresse, *Secret Books of Egyptian Gnostics*, 136.

27. Dart, *The Laughing Savior*, 26. For a picture of the leather-bound papyrus codices, see 14.

28. *Ibid.*, 22, 24; and Doresse, *Secret Books of Egyptian Gnostics*, 134, n. 35. Doresse also notes the wider application of these techniques: "It was in such receptacles [as jars] . . . that people usually stored their books and many other things" (*ibid.*, 134). According to K. Preisendanz, *Papyrusfunde und Papyrusforschung* (Leipzig: Hiersemann, 1934), 113, "Manuscripts of the pharaonic age as well as the Roman epoch in Egypt have fairly often been found in jars."

29. Eusebius, *Chronicon* I, 3, in PG 19:114-16. A tall tale, perhaps; but maybe not, as important historical truths often lurk beneath stories such as this.

30. So many cuneiform libraries have survived from the ancient Near East that one example, the collection from Tell El Amarna, must suffice. See for examples: William F. Albright, "The Amarna Letters from Palestine," in I. E. S. Edwards et al., eds., *The Cambridge Ancient History*, 3rd ed., 12 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 2:2:98-116; and A. H. Sayce, "The Cuneiform Tablets," in William M. F. Petrie, ed., *Tell el Amarna* (Wiltshire, England: Aris & Phillips, 1974), 34-37. In the West there were two good examples — the palace libraries of Knossus and Pylos; see John A. Chadwick,

The Decipherment of Linear B, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967). The discoveries of both collections – over three thousand tablets found in 1900 by Sir Arthur Evans, and six hundred in 1939 by Carl Blegen – are discussed for nonspecialists in Chadwick's monograph, 5-39.

31. Hight, "Wondrous Survival of Records," 76. Cf. Dart, *The Laughing Savior*, 26: "There does not exist, even in Greek papyri, anything comparable [to the Nag Hammadi library]." Dart is here quoting Doresse, who overstates the case because the full significance of Qumran had not yet become apparent; but Doresse is certainly correct in relation to Greco-Roman literature.

32. Hight, "Wondrous Survival of Records," 90.

33. *Ibid.*, 93, "In one day's work at Oxyrhynchus . . . Bernard P. Grenfell and A. S. Hunt got thirty-six basketfuls of papyrus rolls out of one mound alone. These had apparently been discarded as worthless."

34. *Ibid.* One of the very earliest Greek manuscripts, which contains our only text of a poem by Timotheus, "was discovered in a leather pouch, laid carefully in the coffin of a dead Greek soldier buried in Egypt." The second book of the *Iliad* "was set in a coffin as a pillow beneath the head of a young woman." The text of a lost play by Euripides, the *Antiope*, was partially restored from a mummy case wrapping; and the scroll from a stone box, which survived for who knows how long, was discarded in a manure pile by the farmer who found it, *ibid.*

35. *Ibid.*, "At Tebtunis, . . . Grenfell and Hunt came on a cemetery of sacred crocodiles. One dead sacred crocodile is very like another, and the job of excavating these saurian mummies soon palled. Eventually a workman lost his temper and smashed one of them to pieces. Then it appeared that the crocodiles . . . were encased in molded papyri, and some even had rolls stuffed into their mouths 'and other cavities.' From such absurd hiding places do we recover the records of the past."

36. *Ibid.*, 90, "If you wish information to survive for many centuries, however, cut it on stone or bake it on clay. . . . Do not try casting it in metal, for someone will almost certainly melt it down." The lowly clay tablet, which has no intrinsic value, is the all-time winner at the survival game, whereas metals like gold and silver have always been a prime target for looters. Metal documents have nevertheless managed to survive all over the ancient world. See H. Curtis Wright, "Metallic Documents of Antiquity," *BYU Studies* 10 (1970): 457-77. Many hundreds, and perhaps thousands, of exemplars are cited.

37. Lillian H. Jeffery, *The Local Scripts of Archaic Greece* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1963), 55-56. Writings on gold, silver, lead, tin, and other metals are known in the West, which nevertheless seemed to prefer bronze. "The most famous instance [from Italy] is that of the Twelve Tables [of Roman law], c. 450 (*tabulae, deltoi*), but earlier instances are recorded, beginning with Ancus Marcius." Greek examples, "in addition to the large number of Elean and other [bronze] plaques which have survived at Olympia, . . . have been found in Athens, Megara, Ozolian Lokris, Arkadia, Achaia, Sikyon, Lakonia, Argos, Hermion, Mycenae, in Sicily near Leontinoi, and in the Achaian colonies round Kroton," 55.

38. *Ibid.*, 55-56.

39. *Ibid.*, 56: "Lead was used in scroll form in the late Hittite Empire, and this usage may possibly have spread to the Greeks, for Pausanias saw what he thought was a very old text of Hesiod inscribed on lead at Helikon . . . ; but the earliest surviving examples are of curses (*defixiones*) of the fifth and fourth centuries B.C. Silver is used for a plaque dedicated at Ephesus . . . , and [for] a smaller one found at Poseidonia in Italy."

40. William K. C. Guthrie, *Orpheus and Greek Religion: A Study of the Orphic Movement* (New York: Norton, 1966), 176, and pls. 8-10. The Orphic gold plates, found in different parts of the Mediterranean world and dating from the fifth century B.C. to the second or third centuries A.D. constitute the basic sources of Orphic doctrine, 171-87. See also Wright, "Metallic Documents of Antiquity," 465-66, 474-75. Pythagoreanism, which was associated with Numa's books, also helps explain the Near Eastern impact on Plato's thought.

41. Giovanni Colonna, "The Sanctuary at Pyrgi in Etruria," *Archaeology* 19 (January 1966): 11, 23.

42. J. Heurgon, "The Inscriptions of Pyrgi," *Journal of Roman Studies* 56 (1966): 5-6. The bronze inscription "is a little earlier than the three other inscriptions," 6. See Colonna, "The Sanctuary at Pyrgi," 21: The gold inscriptions "go back to ca. 500 B.C., or a little later." The dating of these plates varies somewhat in other scholarly accounts.

43. H. Nesselhauf, "Zwei Bronzeurkunden aus Minigua," *Mitteilungen des deutschen archäologischen Instituts (Madrid)* 1 (1960): 142. These Gast- und Patronatsverträge fall "between the years 27 B.C. and 40 A.D.," although their dates "cannot be determined exactly," 147-48. They were discovered in 1958. "As with all legal agreements, the guest and patron agreements were drawn up on bronze tablets," 147.

44. C. Duroiselle, "Excavations at Hmawza," *Annual Report of the Archaeological Survey of India* (1926-27): 171.

45. *Ibid.*, 179. Cf. "The Gold-leaf Pali Manuscript of Old Prome," *Report of the Superintendent, Archaeological Survey of Burma* (1938-39): 12. "These [twenty] leaves, within their two gold covers, were found bound together by a thick gold wire with its ends fastened to the covers by sealing wax and small glass beads. There are two holes in each leaf and cover, through which the gold wire was passed, to keep the whole in position and proper order. It was necessary to cut this wire in order to free the leaves," Duroiselle, "Excavations at Hmawza," 179, pl. 42g.

46. *Ibid.*, 180. Duroiselle adds that "this is the reason why, in some cases . . . in the absence of other relics, manuscripts are enshrined in pagodas. This custom is responsible for the discovery of our manuscript," which was regarded "as embodying the Dharma." Cf. two other inscribed gold plates from the same region, which were found in a brick in an old pagoda; Maung Tun Nyein, "Maung-gun Gold Plates," *Epigraphia Indica* 5 (1898-99): 101-2.

47. M. Anstock-Darga, "Semitische Inschriften auf Silbertafelchen aus dem 'Bertiz'-Tal (Umgebung von 'Maras')," *Jahrbuch für kleinasiatische Forschung* 1 (1950): 199-200. The texts from two of these plates were published by Anstock-Darga in a different journal with a similar title. See *Jahrbuch für kleinasiatische Forschungen* 1 (1949): 75ff. The plates are thought to date from late Hittite times, probably in the late seventh century B.C. The actual details of their discovery are obscure.

48. Richard E. Ellis, *Foundation Deposits in Ancient Mesopotamia* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1968), 98. The burial of this Schalenkapsel (with pictures of the three bowls, a technical description of the plates, and a sectional drawing of the whole package) is discussed in W. Andrae, *Die jüngeren Ishtar-Tempel in Assur* (Leipzig: Hinrich, 1935), 51-54.

49. See Ellis, *Foundation Deposits*, 124-25, 161; and J. A. Montgomery, *Aramaic Incantation Texts from Nippur*, "Publications of the Babylonian Section," vol. 3 (Philadelphia, PA: The University Museum, 1913), 26-41. The Aramaic incantation bowls, for example, "are roughly hemispherical; the writing is usually on the inside, though sometimes the outside was also inscribed. . . . Most of them have been found buried in the ground upside down; sometimes two bowls are found together, one inverted over the other" (Ellis, *Foundation Deposits*, 124-25).

50. I call these metal tablets "plates" because another set of

seven stone tablets, also found at Persepolis, is constantly confused with them. I spent a hectic couple of days, for example, searching the *New York Times* for "Herzfeld's translation into English of two inscriptions": See Roland G. Kent, "The Present Status of Old Persian Studies," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 56 (1936): 211-12. It finally became clear that the Oriental Institute of Chicago had released only the story of the stone tablets of Xerxes to the *Times* ("Tablets Reveal Deeds of Xerxes," *New York Times*, 9 February 1936, sec. 2, p. 9). But it published both that story and an account of the Darius plates in J. P. Barden, "Xerxes a Doughty Warrior until He Met the Greeks," *University of Chicago Magazine* (February 1936): 23-25. The stone tablets were discovered in 1936 by E. F. Schmidt, the metal plates by Ernst E. Herzfeld in 1933.

51. Kent, "Present Status of Old Persian Studies," 209.

52. Ernst E. Herzfeld, "Eine neue Darius-Inschrift aus Hamadan," *Deutsche Literaturzeitung* 47 (1926): 2105. He adds that the inscription "was thus found in its original position and would have been preserved in perfect condition had it not been subsequently cut up into about twenty small pieces for the purpose of melting it down. As luck would have it, the document was spared this fate." Throughout this article Herzfeld speaks in the singular of "the inscription," which was actually recorded in duplicate on both a gold and a silver plate.

53. *Ibid.* These plates, which launched a new era of old Persian studies, were much discussed. For further discussion see Carl D. Buck, "A New Darius Inscription," *Language* 3 (1927): 1-5; S. Smith, "Inscription of Darius on Gold Tablet," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1926): 433-34; Roland G. Kent, "The Recently Published Old Persian Inscriptions," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 51 (1931): 229-31; F. H. Weissbach, "Zu der Goldinschrift des Dareios I," *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und verwandete Gebiete* 37 (1937): 291-94; Ernst E. Herzfeld, "A New Inscription of Darius from Hamadan," *Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India* 34 (1928): 1-7.

54. Ellis, *Foundation Deposits*, 104. The lids had been so tightly fitted to the boxes that they were opened only with the greatest of difficulty. The sides of the first box had already been broken before being excavated, but the second box was retrieved intact. They are described as "carefully" and "beautifully" cut limestone boxes by Kent, "Present Status of Old Persian Studies," 212; and Barden, "Xerxes a Doughty Warrior," 25.

55. Barden, "Xerxes a Doughty Warrior," 25.

56. Ernst E. Herzfeld, *Altpersische Inschriften, Erster Ergänzungs-*

band zu den archaeologischen Mitteilungen aus Iran (Berlin: Reimer, 1938), 18-19. See Herzfeld for the photograph of one of the duplicate sets of the Darius plates from Persepolis (pl. VI). The plates from Hamadan were 19 cm square, whereas the Persepolis plates measure 33 cm by 33 cm. This accounts for the different line arrangements of the tablets. Each tablet was trilingual, incidentally, repeating the same information in Old Persian, Elamite, and Babylonian.

57. For Ariaramnes, see Roland G. Kent, "The Oldest Old Persian Inscriptions," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 66 (1946): 206-12. For Arsames and Artaxerxes II, see A. V. Pope, "Recently Found Treasures: Achaemenid Gold Objects," *Illustrated London News*, 17 July 1946, 58-59; and H. H. Paper, "An Old Persian Text of Darius II (D2Ha)," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 72 (1953): 169-70, illus. opp. 169. Additional sources on Ariaramnes, Arsames, and Artaxerxes are found in Roland G. Kent, *Old Persian: Grammar, Texts, Lexicon*, 2nd ed. rev. (New Haven, CT: American Oriental Society, 1953), 107, 111-12. Some scholars, but not all by any means, regard the first two plates as forgeries.

58. The gold tablets of Darius I, Ariaramnes, and Arsames were cut into twenty, five, and three pieces respectively. See note 52 above; Kent, "Recently Published Old Persian Inscriptions," 229-30; Kent, "Oldest Old Persian Inscriptions," 207; Pope, "Recently Found Treasures," 58, illus. 5; and Kent, *Old Persian*, 107.

59. Smith, "Inscription of Darius," 433.

60. See the graphic summary of foundation documents on clay, metal, and stone in Ellis, *Foundation Deposits*, illus. 36. Metal foundation inscriptions probably derived from the early Mesopotamian peg deposits, which are "first attested from EDII [2700-2500 B.C.]. The use of the peg was . . . varied in form during EDIII [2500-2300 B.C.]. An important innovation during this period was the inclusion of inscribed objects with building deposits. Inscribed ovoids and cones of stone and metal, which may have been the prototypes of later clay cylinders, were apparently used as building deposits, both alone and together with peg figures, from the time of Eannatum of Lagas," 154.

61. M. E. L. Mallowan, "Excavations at Brak and Chagar Bazar," *Iraq* 9 (1947): 87a, pl. 48, no. 6. The object is called "an alabaster foundation box," 54. It is further described as a "foundation box, white limestone, measuring 51 x 23 x 17 cm. This box, which had been pulled to pieces by plunderers, was reconstituted and photographed on the spot where it was found. . . . It consisted of eight blocks and originally contained two, or possibly four, compart-

ments. The separate blocks were riveted together and stuck with white lime mortar. . . . There is, indeed, no proof that this was a foundation box, since it was not found in its original position, but the fact that it had been torn to pieces suggests that it had originally contained treasure, and there are later analogies for the construction of brick foundation boxes. . . . If the Brak foundation box belonged to the Eye-Temple of the Jamdat Nasr [or late protoliterate] period [3100-2900 B.C.], it is the earliest object of its type, and the absence of its contents is a grievous loss," 195-96.

62. It was interrupted, that is, by the different informational practices of the Akkadians, Neo-Sumerians, and Old Assyrians. The Neo-Babylonians, of course, completely disrupted the tradition, Ellis, *Foundation Deposits*, illus. 36.

63. Ellis, *Foundation Deposits*, 104, 161.

64. Discussed by Adolph J. Reinach, "Dioskourides g tomoi," *Bulletin de la Societe Royale d'Archeologie d'Alexandrie* 11 (1909): 350-70.

65. See Alan Rowe, *Discovery of the Famous Temple and Enclosure of Serapis at Alexandria*, Supplement aux Annales du Service des Antiquites de l'Egypt, Cahiere 2 (Le Caire, France: Institut Francais d'Archeologie Orientale, 1946).

66. Cf. Mortimer Wheeler, *Flames over Persepolis, Turning-Point in History* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1968), 127: "The end of Persepolis was the end of the Persian Empire."

67. Edward M. Burns and Philip L. Ralph, *World Civilizations: Their History and Their Culture*, 5th ed. (New York: Norton, 1974), 71. "The culture of the Persians . . . was largely derived from that of previous civilizations. Much of it came from Mesopotamia, but a great deal of it from Egypt, and some from Lydia and northern Palestine," 72. The combined influence of this cultural synthesis had been enormous. Mitigated somewhat in Hellenistic times, it nevertheless affected Alexandrian civilization, overwhelmed the Greco-Roman tradition in late antiquity, and sustained the Middle Ages for nearly a thousand years. It has also created the ambivalence of modern thought by confronting humanism with theological pre-suppositions. After the Egyptian capitulation to Persia in 525 B.C., "the ancient civilization [of Egypt] was never again revived," 32.

68. Ernst E. Herzfeld, *Archaeological History of Iran* (London: Oxford University Press, 1935), 22. "The palaces [at Ecbatana] had columns and roofs of cedar and cypresses . . . covered with metal; the roofs had tiles of silver and gold. . . . This display of wealth . . . is proved to be true by the discovery of similar gold

coverings at Persepolis. These were taken off and folded when Alexander's soldiers plundered the palace. In the same way Alexander and Seleucus I treated Agbatana. And still Antiochus coined 1 1/4 million sterling worth of money out of the tiles of the Anahit temple," 44. Anahit was later identified with Athena.

69. Robert W. Rogers, *A History of Ancient Persia* (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1929), 335-36. The loot from the palace at Persepolis "was conveyed to Susa temporarily and thence later to Ecbatana, whither it was carried, so the story goes, in 10,000 two-mule carts, and upon the backs of 5,000 camels." Cf. Ulrich Wilcken, *Alexander the Great* (New York: Norton, 1967), 337: "That Persepolis was deliberately looted and fired is certain." See also A. T. Olmstead, *History of the Persian Empire* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), 520-22: "Their loot was enormous. . . . Had Persepolis been taken by sack and not freely surrendered . . . , it could not have received worse treatment. . . . So thorough was the search for loot that only a handful of coins have been unearthed by the excavators. A few more scraps of gold leaf are all of this precious metal that have rewarded their labors."

70. Pope, "Recently Found Treasures," 58-59.

71. Ellis, *Foundation Deposits*, 104. Cf. Erich F. Schmidt, *Persepolis*, 3 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), 1:79: "A square depression in the exposed bedrock at the destroyed northwest corner . . . induced [Fritz] Krefter," Herzfeld's architect, "to calculate the positions of the . . . northeast and southeast corners of the hall," where he discovered the limestone boxes laden with gold and silver plates. "Apparently both foundation boxes had been set into depressions just below the level of the lowest courses of the walls."

72. See André Parrot, *Le Temple d'Ishtar* (Paris: Geuthner, 1956), 55-57, fig. 38, pls. 23-24; André Parrot, "Les Fouilles de Mari: Première Campagne (Hiver 1933-34)," *Syria* 16 (1935): 117-40, fig. 11; André Parrot, "Les Fouilles de Mari: Quatrième Campagne (Hiver 1936-37)," *Syria* 19 (1938): 1-29, pl. 1, 3; and André Parrot, "Les Fouilles de Mari: Septième Campagne (Hiver 1951-52)," *Syria* 29 (1952): 183-203, pl. 18. See also E. J. Banks, *Bismya, or the Lost City of Adab* (New York: Knickerbocker, 1912), 200, 275; Daniel D. Luckenbill, *Inscriptions from Adab* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1930), nos. 19-22; and Ellis, *Foundation Deposits*, 76-77, 154.

73. F. Thureau-Dangin, "Tablette de Samarra," *Revue d'Assyriologie et d'Archeologie Orientale* 9 (1912): 1-4, pl. 1.

74. André Parrot, "Les Fouilles de Mari: Neuvième Campagne (Automne 1953)," *Syria* 31 (1954): 161-62, fig. 5.

75. Ellis, *Foundation Deposits*, 95, 160.

76. *Ibid.*, 146, 151, 173-174, 177-78.

77. E. de Sarzec and L. Herzey, *Decouvertes en Chaldee* (Paris: E. Leroux, 1884-1912), 2:71-72.

78. Ellis, *Foundation Deposits*, 63-64, 66-68, 142-43, 161.

79. *Ibid.*, 130, 143-44.

80. Mallowan, "Excavations at Brak and Chagar Bazar," 33, 36-37, 50-51.

81. For the Elamite inscription, see Schmidt, *Persepolis*, 2:64-65, pls. 27-28. For myriads of similar inscriptions, see also Wright, "Metallic Documents of Antiquity," 457-77.

82. According to Hallo's revision of Porada, the Neo-Sumerian period (2300-2000 B.C.) includes both of the periods known as Post Akkadian (2300-2100 B.C.) and Ur III (2100-2000 B.C.). See William W. Hallo and William K. Simpson, *The Ancient Near East: A History* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1971), 36-37, n. 16, 77. For the history of peg deposits, see Ellis, *Foundation Deposits*, 46-93.

83. André Parrot, "Les Fouilles de Mari: Sixieme Campagne (Automne 1938)," *Syria* 21 (1940): 1-28. He added that "heretofore only the temple of Ishtar had yielded foundation deposits, all un-inscribed," 5, n. 2. For a diagram of the six find-spots, cf. 6, fig. 4.

84. Ellis, *Foundation Deposits*, 58. For diagrams and photographs, see illus. 11; and Parrot, "Les Fouilles de Mari: Sixieme," 7, pl. 2. Cf. G. Dossin, "Inscriptions de Fondation Provenant de Mari," *Syria* 21 (1940): 152-53: "Parrot . . . has explicitly noted that each [of the six deposits] included one or more inscriptions engraven on bronze plates or on stone tablets. The total of these inscriptions has risen to fifteen: four bronze plates from the Ninhursag Temple, two bronze plates from the building known as the shahuru, nine inscriptions from the 'Temple of Lions' (one bronze plate and two stone tablets from each of the three recently cleared deposits). . . . Each of the four bronze plates, in the form of a square, carries the identical inscription in six lines."

85. Parrot, "Les fouilles de Mari: Sixieme," 20.

86. Ellis, *Foundation Deposits*, 59. For sketches and photographs, see illus. 12; and Parrot, "Les Fouilles de Mari: Sixieme," 19-22, fig. 15, pls. 9-10.

87. Parrot, "Les Fouilles de Mari: Sixieme," 6-7. For illustrations see Parrot, fig. 5 and pl. 2; and Ellis, *Foundation Deposits*, illus. 13. "The bronze plate bore a short text in Akkadian stating that Apil-kin had built the shahuru" (Ellis, *Foundation Deposits*, 60). The deposits of Apil-kin also suggest the three brick-lined cavities in the floor of

the palace at Mari, and the twenty-two cavities found at Telloh (Ellis, *Foundation Deposits*, 127-28, 142-43).

88. Ellis, *Foundation Deposits*, 66. He adds that "most of the Ur III deposits . . . were enclosed in capsules or boxes made of square baked bricks. . . . A cavity measuring 1 [brick] by 1/2 brick was reserved in the center of each course. The cavities . . . were [usually] six courses deep. . . . [They] were coated inside with bitumen," 66. For a sketch of the typical Ur III box, see Ellis, *Foundation Deposits*, illus. 21. Pegs and cylinders have also been found in brick boxes from the Isin-Larsa or later periods, 72, 114-15.

89. *Ibid.*, 150. For a list of Amorite rulers in the Larsa Dynasty, see Oppenheim, *Ancient Mesopotamia*, 336-37.

90. Leonard C. Woolley, "Excavations at Ur, 1929-30," *Antiquaries Journal* 10 (1930): 323, fig. 1, pl. 38. Woolley here follows the older high chronology still accepted by some scholars. The date would be ca. 1831 B.C. according to Oppenheim, *Ancient Mesopotamia*, 337, who follows the middle chronology accepted by most scholars today.

91. Cyril J. Gadd, "Babylonian Foundation Texts: 1. Limestone and Copper Tablets of a Wife of Rim-Sin," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1926): 679. The limestone and copper tablets, numbered 116662 and 116663 respectively, are now in the British Museum. The tablets are translated, with critical commentary and drawings, 679-84.

92. Leonard C. Woolley, "Excavations at Ur, 1924-1925," *Antiquaries Journal* 5 (1925): 368.

93. *Ibid.*

94. Leonard C. Woolley, *The Ziggurat and Its Surroundings* (New York: British Museum, 1939), 63. Cf. Woolley's other account of this find in Woolley, "Excavations at Ur, 1924-1925," 370, fig. 3, pl. 36, no. 1; and the account in Ellis, *Foundation Deposits*, 95. Also, "a couple tablets of stone and copper of Kurigalzu II," from the Middle Babylonian Period (ca. 1571-985 B.C.), "were found in secondary context at Ur, while cavities in the sides of a well in the same city probably once held tablets of the same king" (Ellis, *Foundation Deposits*, 160).

95. Ellis, *Foundation Deposits*, 6-7.

96. *Ibid.*, 143, 174.

97. *Ibid.*, 101; and Andrae, *Die jüngeren Ischtar-Tempel in Assur*, 54, n. 2. The tablet bears a Festungsmauerinschrift "that had to come from Assyria" (*ibid.*). It is translated in Daniel D. Luckenbill, *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia*, 2 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1926-27), 1:251, item 706.

98. Ellis, *Foundation Deposits*, 160. This despite the fact that "the stone tablet was the most common form of building deposit" in the Middle Assyrian Period. Many of the building inscriptions from this period, whether on stone or metal, "were buried in foundations or built into walls," 60.

99. *Ibid.*, 138. For the whole story of these deposits, see Andrae, *Die jüngeren Ischtar-Tempel in Assur*, 37-51, figs. 14-17, pls. 1-3, 17-25.

100. Ellis, *Foundation Deposits*, 99. See also the excellent photographs in Andrae, *Die jüngeren Ischtar-Tempel in Assur*, pls. 18, 21, 23.

101. Ellis, *Foundation Deposits*, 99: "The [alabaster] tablets of Adad-nirari I [1307-1275 B.C.] were buried in Tukulti-Ninurta's time."

102. *Ibid.*, 98. He adds that "all of the inscribed objects, of stone, lead, and precious metals, were placed with the beginnings of their inscriptions up and toward the rear of the cella." Cf. illus. 28 for an informative drawing of these complicated arrangements. See also Andrae, *Die jüngeren Ischtar-Tempel in Assur*, figs. 14-17, pls. 1-3, 17-25.

103. Ellis, *Foundation Deposits*, 99. He adds that the only difference between the two sets of deposits was that "the three lead blocks beneath the stone slab were omitted in the Dinitu shrine."

104. These little "platelets" are described: Jean Bottéro, "Deux tablettes de fondation, en or et en argent, d'Assurnasirpal II," *Semitica* 1 (1948): 25-32. The gold plate measures approximately 1 5/8" by 5/8" by 1/12", the silver plate about 2 1/2" by 1 1/2" by 1/7", 25. "The gold plaquette . . . has suffered a bit, especially on the back side, where it is hammered in spots. Each bears eighteen lines of writing, nine per side," 25.

105. *Ibid.*

106. R. Campbell Thompson and Richard W. Hutchinson, "The Excavations on the Temple of Nabu at Nineveh," *Archaeologia* 79 (1929): 108, 109, n. 1. The excavators of the Nabu Temple, after listing their "chief finds during 1927-8," were also shown "two small plaques—one in gold, the other in lead—incribed with a text of Assurnasirpal, indicating that he had decorated the palace of the city Apki for his abode." But they declined to discuss the plaques further, "as it would trench too far on the possessor's rights." See also Ferris J. Stephens, "The Provenience of the Gold and Silver Tablets of Ashurnasirpal," *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 7 (1953): 73. According to Stephens, "it seems probable that these were our gold

and silver tablets. The silver piece might easily be mistaken for lead since it has indentations on the reverse giving the appearance of softness in the metal. It is of course possible that there was also a lead copy of the inscription. . . . The note of Thompson and Hutchinson is included in the report of finds in 1927-8. This may be taken as the date of the discovery of the pieces," 73.

107. Bottero, "Deux tablettes de fondation" translated and transliterated by Bottéro. See also Ellis, *Foundation Deposits*, 100: "This is one of the few instances in which we can be certain that a term actually used in a building deposit text refers to the objects on which it is written."

108. Bottéro, "Deux tablettes de fondation," 30: "Établir les fondations sur des documents."

109. Ibid. He adds that "*temmenu* is also basically the synonym of *ussu*." The cuneiform sentence under discussion is *ina arhi tabi umemeseme ina samni GULA samni tabi kaspi hurasi addi temmen-su*. This statement is fully discussed by E. Nassouhi, "Prism d'Assurbanipal daté de se Trentième Année, Provenant du Temple da Gula a Babylone," *Archiv für Keilschriftforschung* 2 (1924-25): 97-106.

110. Hugh Nibley, "Genesis of the Written Word," in Truman G. Madsen, ed., *Nibley on the Timely and the Timeless: Classic Essays of Hugh W. Nibley* (Salt Lake City, UT: Publishers, 1978), 120. See also Ellis, *Foundation Deposits*, 163. "Building deposits are found in both religious and secular buildings," i.e., in temples and palaces, but "private houses did not have them."

111. See H. Curtis Wright, *The Oral Antecedents of Greek Librarianship* (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 1978). I have discussed this occurrence in the first half of the fourth millennium B.C. in the chapter, "Before and After the Permanent Temple," 43-64. For its recurrence *mutatis mutandis* in the West, see also, "The Age of Revolution," 94-107. The consequences of these two occurrences for civilization are not to be underestimated. The symbolism of foundation documents may also extend to the empires established by the various "fathers" of different peoples, and even to the foundation of the universe by God. See Lord Raglan, *The Origins of Religion* (London: Watts, 1949), 58-69; and Sigmund Mowinckel, *Religion und Kultus* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck, 1953), 76, 94.

112. Bottéro, "Deux tablettes de fondation," 29. He adds that "it is enough to cite . . . the nine foundation deposits found by Parrot at Mari," and "the tablets of gold, silver, bronze, lead, alabaster, and marble exhumed from the foundations of the palace of Sargon at Nineveh," 10-12. Bottero also cites as evidence the inscribed gold

and silver plates of Tukulti-Ninurta I, which were "recovered from a bed of pearls," and the gold inscription of Shalmaneser I (Bottéro, "Deux tablettes de fondation, 29, n. 1).

113. *Ibid.*, 26. He adds a blessing if his deposit is respected by a subsequent monarch: "May the Prince who comes after me not efface my name which I have written here! May Assur, the Great Lord, attend his prayer," 26.

114. Ellis, *Foundation Deposits*, 100.

115. See text accompanying n. 61 and 87.

116. "A Foundation-Box from Tell Abu-Maria in Iraq," *Art and Archaeology* 30 (1930): 190.

117. Ephraim A. Speiser, "Translations of the Foundation-Box from Tell Abu-Maria," *Art and Archaeology* 30 (1930): 191.

118. *Ibid.*, 190 (for the decipherment, see 190-91). Inscriptions on the outsides of stone boxes recall the incantation bowl inscriptions on both the insides and outsides of bowls (n. 49).

119. *Ibid.*, 191. The box was given to someone in Philadelphia by friends in Iraq, and no one has been able to determine its exact provenance or find-conditions.

120. Stephens, "Provenience of Gold and Silver Tablets," 74. This article recapitulates the scholarly attempt to locate ancient Apqu (including the original clue provided by Thompson and Hutchinson, the "incorrect interpretation of the name of the city" [p. 74] by Bottéro, and its correct identification by Lewy), and offers this reconstruction: "The first builder of a palace in Apqu was Ashur-reshishi I (1132-1115 B.C.), whose grandson Ashur-belkala (1073-1056 B.C.) completed his work. . . . When Adad-nirari II (911-891 B.C.) came to the throne he found the city of Apqu completely ruined. He . . . rebuilt it entirely . . . [and] built a royal palace there. . . . This palace was still standing in the time of Ashur-nasirpal II (883-859 B.C.), the grandson of Adad-nirari II," 73. The discovery at Bumariyah of "a baked brick with an inscription of Ashur-reshishi," together with the foundation-box inscription of Assurnasirpal II, makes it very probable "that Bumariyah was ancient Apqu, and that our gold and silver tablets came from there," 74.

121. H. Rassam, "Excavations and Discoveries in Assyria," *Transactions of the Society of Biblical Archaeology* 7 (1882): 45. The identification of Balawat with Imgur-Bel, also known as Imgur-Enlil, is rejected by others. See E. A. Wallis Budge and L. W. King, eds., *Annals of the Kings of Assyria* (London: British Museum), 167-68, n. 2. But it is accepted by Luckenbill, *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia*, 1:194; and regarded as putative by Ekhard Unger, "Imgur-

Enlin," in Max Ebert, ed., *Reallexikon der Vorgeschichte* (Berlin: Verlag W. de Gruyter, 1924-82), 6:50. Only "the upper side of the box was inscribed" (Ellis, *Foundation Deposits*, 101). For the inscription, see E. A. Wallis Budge, "On a Recently Discovered Text of Assur-natsir-pal, B.C. 885," *Transactions of the Society of Biblical Archaeology* 7 (1882): 59-82; Budge and King, *Annals of the Kings of Assyria*, 1:167-73; and Luckenbill, *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia*, 1:194, 96.

122. Rassam, "Excavations and Discoveries in Assyria," 53.

123. *Ibid.*, 54-55. The chamber turned out to be part of the Temple of Machir.

124. *Ibid.*, 55. He adds that "in this chamber a large quantity of human remains were found."

125. Budge, "Recently Discovered Text of Assur-natsir-pal," 59.

126. Rassam, "Excavations and Discoveries in Assyria," 54. "I was meditating about the removal of the coffer to Mossul . . . ; but how to remove this huge block of marble for a distance of about fifteen miles without a cart was more than my wits and engineering could at once accomplish. . . . I was at my wits' end how to accomplish the immediate removal of the marble coffer into Mossul." The box is variously referred to as a "stone coffer," a "marble chest," a "marble coffer," and a "huge block of marble" by Rassam and others, 53-55; as a "limestone coffer" by Budge and King, *Annals of the Kings of Assyria* 1:167, n. 2; and even as "ein Koffer aus Gipsstein mit zwei Steintafeln aus demselben Material" by Unger, "Imgun-Enlin," 6:50. It may have been made of alabaster, as implied by Budge, "Recently Discovered Text of Assur-natsir-pal," 59. Ellis, *Foundation Deposits*, 100-101, is silent as to its material. H. Rassam, *Asshur and the Land of Nimrod* (Cincinnati: Curtis & Jennings, 1897), 216-17, merely repeats the above account.

127. Ellis, *Foundation Deposits*, 101. For the text from this box, see O. Schroeder, *Keilschrifttexte aus Assur Historischen Inhalts* (Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichung der deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft, 16, 37), 2 vols. (Leipzig: Hinrich, 1911-22), 2:66; and W. Andrae, *Die Festungswerke von Assur: Textband* (Ausgrabungen der deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft in Assur, A: Baudenkmaler aus assyrischer Zeit, 2; Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichung der deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft, 23 (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1913), 175. For its transliteration with a German translation, a drawing, and a photograph see, *ibid.*, 174-75, and pl. 104. For its English translation, see Luckenbill, *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia*, 1:251, items 703-5 (where the box is called an "alabaster slab"!). This box is also discussed in *Die Welt des Orients* 1 (1947-52): 387-88, which I have not seen.

128. Ellis, *Foundation Deposits*, 100.
129. *Ibid.*, 14-15.
130. *Ibid.*, 101, 104-5. Ellis adds that "there is evidently no question of the box having been buried in the structure of the building," 101.
131. Luckenbill, *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia*, 1:251. This common formula is also included in the inscription on the Balawat box. See Budge, "Recently Discovered Text of Assur-natsirpal," 77.
132. Ellis, *Foundation Deposits*, 105. He adds that "a parallel practice would be the preservation in temples of tablet-shaped kudurru's [boundary stones], which are generally assumed to be 'Tempelurkunden' rather than 'Feldurkunden' " (*ibid.*).
133. "Es konnte eine Bibliothekskiste gewesen sein," S. Marinatos, "Verlust einer Handschrift in Messenien," *Gnomon* 33 (1961): 233.
134. Ellis, *Foundation Deposits*, 105. He adds that "it would have been simple enough to adopt the box later for tablet-shaped building deposits" or vice versa, I should think.
135. *Ibid.* "Three such statues have been found in Adad-nirari III's Nabu Temple at Nimrud. Three others, and a fragment that probably belongs to a fourth, turned up at Arslan Tash and nearby sites," 105-6.
136. M. E. L. Mallowan, *Nimrud and Its Remains*, 3 vols. (London: Collins, 1966), 1:260-61, 351-52, n. 48.
137. Ellis, *Foundation Deposits*, 106. Cf. M. E. L. Mallowan, "The Excavations at Nimrud (Kalhu), 1955," *Iraq* 18 (1956): 7 and pl. 2. These statues were each carrying "a box for the god. What was the box supposed to contain? Perhaps it was the tablets, the tablets of destiny or the like, appropriate to the god of learning and the scribal arts, in whose precincts many learned documents, particularly of a religious character, were once housed." See also Mallowan, *Nimrud and Its Remains*, 1:260-61.
138. Ellis, *Foundation Deposits*, 102-3, 134, 152, 176.
139. *Ibid.*, 135.
140. *Ibid.*, 101. Khorsabad, also known as Dur-Sharrukin, was the "capital of Assyria, founded by Sargon II (721-705 B.C.), twelve miles northeast of Nineveh. . . . The city had been built toward the end of the reign of Sargon and seems to have been maintained as seat of a governor for nearly a century thereafter" (Oppenheim, *Ancient Mesopotamia*, 393).
141. Maurice Pillet, *Khorsabad: Les Découvertes de V. Place en As-*

syrie (Paris: Éditions E. Leroux, 1918), 84. I have not seen the basic account of this discovery by Victor Place, *Ninive et l'Assyrie*, 3 vols. (Paris: Imprimerie Imperiale, 1867-70), 1:61-63; 2:267, 303-7; 3: pls. 4, 77. This source should by all means be consulted, if possible. A second account by J. Oppert, who did not witness the discovery, is also presented (Place, *Ninive et l'Assyrie*, 2:303), where seven inscribed materials are listed. Oppert was mistaken here, as he apparently followed Sargon's list of seven epigraphical substances deposited in various foundations instead of reporting what Place actually found (Pillet, *Khorsabad*, 84-85). The mistake has persisted to this day despite its correction; see Jules Oppert, *Expédition Scientifique en Mesopotamie*, 2 vols. (Paris: Imprimerie Imperiale, 1868-69), 2:343. The resulting confusion of the Assyriological literature on this point is discussed; see Ellis, *Foundation Deposits*, 102, n. 2.

142. Pillet, *Khorsabad*, 84. On the identification of the "white material" of the fifth tablet, see B. Landsberger, "Tin and Lead: The Adventures of Two Vocables," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 24 (1965): 285-86, and n. 7; and R. Campbell Thompson, *A Dictionary of Assyrian Chemistry and Geology* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1936), 116-17. The material of the fifth tablet was "properly alabaster (carbonate of lime), equated sometimes with parutu, marble," 117, and Landsberger would more or less agree. However, "no inscriptions on marble or alabaster were discovered by the digs of Botta or Place" (Pillet, *Khorsabad*, 85). The material of the fifth tablet is identified as magnesite (Ellis, *Foundation Deposits*, 102). On the "extreme rarity" of metallic documents like Sargon's, I can only say that they are not as scarce as Pillet thinks, for virtually everybody underestimates the relatively large number of gold, silver, bronze, lead, and other metal epigraphs created by the ancients.

143. The measurements of the bronze, silver, and gold tablets in inches are about 8" x 5" x 1/6", and 3" x 1 1/2" x 1/5" respectively; and the tablet of "white material" measures about 4" x 2 1/2" x 2/5" inches: David G. Lyon, *Keilschrifttexte Sargons Konige von Assyrien (722-705 v. Chr.)* (Leipzig: Hinrich, 1883), xii-xiii.

144. Ellis, *Foundation Deposits*, 102. The box "had a lid with a cuneiform inscription."

145. Pillet, *Khorsabad*, 87; and Luckenbill, *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia*, 2:56. The first four tablets, which were brought out of Assyria by Place himself, are presently in the Louvre Museum. As the box and the leaden tablets were too heavy for inclusion in his personal luggage, however, Place decided to load them on the rafts which were supposed to bring the products of his digs down

the Tigris River to Bassora. But the rafts capsized at Qurnah and everything was lost, including the leaden tablet and the stone box with its broken lid-inscription; see Pillet, *Khorsabad*, 85; Pillet, *Expédition Scientifique*, 2:343; Ellis, *Foundation Deposits*, 102; François Lenormant, "Les Norms de l'Airain et du Cuivre," *Transactions of the Society of Biblical Archaeology* 6 (1878): 337; and Lyon, *Keilschrifttexte Sargons*, xii. This may be the most tragic loss of archaeological artifacts in the history of archaeology.

146. Ellis, *Foundation Deposits*, 103.

147. Luckenbill, *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia*, 2:57-59, items 107-15. For the cuneiform texts together with various transliterations, translations, and commentaries, see Oppert, *Expédition Scientifique*, 2:343-50; Lyon, *Keilschrifttexte Sargons*, 20-21, 47-57, 82; and Hugo Winckler, *Die Keilschrifttexte Sargons*, 2 vols. (Leipzig: Pfeiffer, 1889), 2:43-45.

148. Ellis, *Foundation Deposits*, 103. "The date of the founding of the temple is not known, but the city was founded by Rusas I (733-714 B.C.)."

149. *Ibid.* Ellis adds that "it is impossible to say whether the Urartean practices derived from Mesopotamia, from the Hittites, or were a native development," 103). Urartia was an Iron Age kingdom in central Turkey which paralleled the Neo-Assyrian dynasty (858-609 B.C.).

150. *Ibid.*, 104, 157. The empire started falling to pieces during the reign of Assurbanipal (668-626 B.C.), and he was followed by four minor-league kings who could do nothing to arrest the sudden decline of Assyria or prevent the frightful vengeance taken on her by her enemies. "Building deposits in this [Neo-Babylonian] period were limited almost entirely to clay cylinders," 157.

151. Ellis, *Foundation Deposits*, 105. A clay box "was made in Nabopolassar's reign (625-605 B.C.) to hold an ancient tablet recording a temple endowment by Nabu-apla-iddina, a younger contemporary of Assurnasirpal II (883-859 B.C.). Rassam found the box beneath the bitumen floor of an otherwise undescribed room near the ziggurat of Sippar. What exactly it contained is now difficult to establish; certainly there was a stone tablet with a relief picture and an inscription and two baked clay impressions of the relief on that tablet. The box and the back of one of the [clay] impressions bore inscriptions of Nabopolassar. This box is of course no building deposit but it represents a pious disposal of valued, though useless, antiques."

152. S. M. A. As-Siwani, "A Prism from Ur," *Sumer* 20 (1964):

69. In 1960-61 at Ur, a "barrel-shaped prism in buff clay" was discovered. "It is covered with a cuneiform inscription belonging to Nabuna'id [Nabonidus] (555-539 B.C.), the last Chaldean King of Babylon. . . . It had been built into the wall in a box of burnt bricks lined with bitumen."

153. Ellis, *Foundation Deposits*, 104, 161. Evidence for the disruption of this practice by the Neo-Babylonians is also provided by the Achaemenid jewelers, who deliberately followed Neo-Assyrian rather than Neo-Babylonian customs: See John B. Bury et al., eds., *The Assyrian Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1929), 109.

154. Peter M. Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria*, 3 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972), 1:8.

155. *Ibid.*, 8-9. "It is to be noted that the Corniche only completed or elaborated a process which had begun in 1882. . . . 'Much material (often from the ancient city) has been tipped into the sea . . . to secure the site of the new homes built since the events of 1882.' " See also D. G. Hogarth, "Report of Prospects of Research in Alexandria," *Report of the Egypt Exploration Society* (1894-95): 9. (Cited in Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria*, 2:20, n. 34.) A similar subsidence has complicated excavations from the Old Babylonian period at Babylon (Ellis, *Foundation Deposits*, 159).

156. Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria*, 1:9. "When the Corniche was built, and subsequently when 'fill' has been required . . . , the soil necessary for this task was largely taken from . . . the neighbourhood of Lake Mairut and from the mounds . . . between Chatby and the Jewish and Christian cemeteries to the South. The ancient sherds in the soil . . . were emptied along with it in the sea. . . . Consequently, when soil . . . is dug, early Ptolemaic sherds . . . may be found among or above Roman and Byzantine sherds. . . . Soil from modern foundations full of ancient sherds had . . . formed new elevations subsequently built upon. True stratification is thus limited to individual sections of undisturbed building structure and the associated finds, if any." "The built-up pseudo-coastal belt of the harbour area also creates insoluble stratigraphical problems."

157. *Ibid.*, 10.

158. *Ibid.*, 9. The cemetery excavations are also complicated by "the gradual growth of deposits . . . ejected on the sands," as deep as thirty feet at times, which contain "remains of all periods in complete disorder, beneath which the Ptolemaic and Roman graves lie largely undisturbed." The cemeteries have nevertheless yielded

important "tombs of different types and dates" and played "a key role in the determination of the chronology of early Alexandria."

159. *Ibid.*, 1:27-28.

160. Rudolf Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1968), 102, n. 2.

161. Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria*, 1:36, 37. The result is that "the development of Alexandria as a city largely escapes us" and that "we are still a long way from being able to follow, and shall indeed never be able to follow, the development of the city as a historical process."

162. *Ibid.*, 2:91, n. 191. "The ultimate in confusion is . . . Botti's attempt to explain and identify the statues [described by Letronne]. . . . Rowe . . . also gets into deep waters, where we may leave him" (2:89, n. 190).

163. Rowe, *Discovery of the Famous Temple*, 1. For a tabular description of the plaques and a drawing and photograph of the foundation hole, see *ibid.*, 4-7, and pl. 1.

164. *Ibid.*, 3.

165. "It was . . . in a hole in the rock below the junction of the east and south outer walls that the first set of plaques was discovered; the second set came from a similar position under the outer walls at the south-west angle" (Rowe, *Discovery of the Famous Temple*, 5).

166. *Ibid.*

167. *Ibid.*, 51, n. 2. He adds that "the deposit hole was not covered by a stone when found."

168. *Ibid.* The deposit included only a mud plaque and three glass plaques, which meant on the assumption of uniformity that the gold, silver, and bronze plaques, two glass plaques, and faience tablet were missing.

169. *Ibid.*, 51.

170. *Ibid.*, 54, and pl. 16. He adds that "no plaques were found in [the inner] holes Nos. 8, 9, 10, 11 . . . , which had been completely plundered in ancient days."

171. *Ibid.*, 59, and pl. 16. Rowe adds that "No. 5 had been completely robbed in ancient days while No. 7, also robbed, consisted at the time of discovery of a small piece of blackish opaque glass."

172. Rowe, *Discovery of the Famous Temple*, 54, n. 3. "All of the deposit holes . . . [in plate 16, numbers 1-11) are numbered according to the order of their discovery" (59, n. 1). The particular hole described here "was covered by a rectangular block of limestone measuring" 38" x 26 1/2" x 20", p. 55.

173. Rowe, "A Contribution to the Archaeology: III," 160. Rowe adds that brushing was the means by which he discovered the foundation deposits of the Serapeum.

174. Rowe, *Discovery of the Famous Temple*, 55.

175. Rowe, "A Contribution to the Archaeology: III," 160; Alan Rowe, "A Contribution to the Archaeology of the Western Desert: IV," *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 39 (1956-57): 489. I have not been able to determine the distribution of these materials among the forty-three plaques, as Rowe tends to discuss them in clusters.

176. Rowe, "A Contribution to the Archaeology: IV," 505, and map opp. p. 492; and Rowe, *Discovery of the Famous Temple*, 54, n. 1, pl. 17.

177. These include the inscribed gold plates from Canopus and from the Old Bourse excavations, which are discussed in W. M. F. Petrie, *Naukratis, Part I: 1884-85* ("Third Memoir of the Egypt Exploration Fund") (London: Trubner, 1886), 32; M. N. Tod, "A Bilingual Dedication from Alexandria," *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 28 (1942): 53-56, and pl. 6; H. G. Walters, *A Guide to the Department of Greek and Roman Antiquities in the British Museum*, 6th ed. (London: British Museum), 108-9; and Rowe, *Discovery of the Famous Temple*, 10-13. Several others are described in J. J. Clère, "Deux Nouvelles Plaques de Fondation Bilingues de Ptolémée IV Philopator," *Zeitschrift für Ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde* 90 (1963): 16-22. Clère generalizes about Alexandrian foundation deposits: they are usually "bilingual foundation plaques made of different materials, notably of gold or silver or bronze, and of opaque glass or pottery. The plaques made of the last two materials are usually found in clusters of several exemplars, whereas each deposit has only one exemplar of the plates made from each of the different metals," 16.

178. Since "the debris in the Serapeum area has generally been turned over and over again," for example, "no reliable evidence for dating levels is to be obtained from it in most cases" (Rowe, *Discovery of the Famous Temple*, 42).

179. Alan J. Wace, "Recent Ptolemaic Finds in Egypt," *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 65 (1945): 106: "This area has at last been definitely proved to be the site of the famous Serapeum of Alexandria." Also cf. p. 108: "The temenos of Sarapis has now been identified beyond question." Pompey's Pillar, incidentally, is actually the Column of Diocletian.

180. Deposit hole no. 6, discovered by Rowe and Wace, marks "the south-east corner of the Temple of Sarapis, and solves one of the long-standing problems of archaeology. The site of the great

temple of Serapis is now at last fixed," although part of it "presumably lies beneath the Bab Sidra Cemetery" (Wace, "Recent Ptolemaic Finds in Egypt," 108).

181. The foundation documents of this little adjunct bear inscriptions "indicating that here has stood a shrine of Harpocrates" (Wace, "Recent Ptolemaic Finds in Egypt," 108).

182. *Ibid.*, 106, 108. Cf. Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship*, 102. "Ptolemy III . . . called Euergetes . . . is now attested as founder of the new temple."

183. *Ibid.*, 108. Wace indicates that the Shrine of Harpocrates was "erected by Ptolemy IV Philopator."

184. Rowe, *Discovery of the Famous Temple*, 56.

185. *Ibid.*, 34-35, and 36, fig. 7. Botti felt, however, that these limestone coffers were for holding human or animal remains, not for holding documents, 35. Rowe also refers to one of the sons of Cheops who retrieved an inscription "from a hidden chest in the temple of Hermopolis"; but he does not specify the material of the chest. (Petrie, *Naukratis, Part I: 1884-5*, 32, cited in Rowe, *Discovery of the Famous Temple*, 15, n. 15). This raises the whole issue – which I am not prepared to investigate – of Egyptian foundation deposits.

186. This inscribed granite box is discussed in detail by Reinach, "Dioskourides g tomoi," 350-70.

187. *Ibid.*, 351. Reinach cites Mahmoud Pacha El Falaki's account of his researches in 1865-66. The discovery of a granite box in the garden of the Prussian Consulate proves only that a granite box was discovered in the garden of the Prussian Consulate, nothing more. On this topographical controversy, see Reinach, "Dioskourides g tomoi," 350-52, 354-58, 369; and Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria*, 2:31, n. 77. "Reinach . . . showed that this chance find had no significance for the history or the site of the Library." This topographical fallacy has nevertheless been advocated by André Bernand, *Alexandrie la Grande* (Paris: Arthaud, 1966), 116: "Il est donc parfaitement possible que ce monument indique l'emplacement de l'ancienne bibliothèque, partie du Musée." Serious objections remain to such a view.

188. Reinach, "Dioskourides g tomoi," 355-56. On the dimensions of the box, see also p. 353; and Giuseppe Botti, *Plan de la Ville d'Alexandrie a l'Epoque Ptolémaïque* (Alexandria, Egypt: L. Carrire, 1898), 65.

189. Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria*, 2:31, n. 77. The box weighed 173 kilograms, or 380.6 lbs. Reinach, "Dioskourides g tomoi," 357, 367.

190. Reinach, "Dioskourides g tomoi," 354. Reinach adds that de Laurin was the Austrian Consul General until 1852. "Mrs. Penelope de Laurin remembers, writes Botti, some digs by her late husband on these grounds. Roughly speaking, he could have found there such things as sphinxes, inscriptions, marble busts, and mummies."

191. Cf. *ibid.* "One regrets . . . that nothing is known of the fortunes of the granite block found on these premises in 1847."

192. *Ibid.*, 350-51. "A published account appeared only in the passage following Mahmoud Pacha El Falaki's explanation of his researches in 1865-66 for the records of Napoleon III." "There is not the slightest hint of the discovery discussed by Brugsch with Mahmoud El Falaki in writers like Puchstein, Dziatzko, Susemihl, or even in Brugsch himself," 352. For the published account, see Bey Mahmud, *Memoire sur l'Antique Alexandrie, ses Faubourgs et Environs Découverts par les Fouilles* (Copenhagen: B. Luni, 1873), 53. This work, despite its French appearance, is in Arabic.

193. See Reinach, "Dioskourides g tomoi," 350. See also the two notices by Evarsito Breccia, "Monsieur le Directeur," *Bulletin de la Société Archéologique d'Alexandrie* 10 (1908): 250-52; and Breccia, "Dioskourides g tomoi," *Bulletin de la Société Archéologique* 18 (1921): 62-64.

194. See J. A. Letronne, *Revue Archéologique* 5 (1848): 758. I have not been able to lay hands on this article. The portions of the letter cited by Letronne appear in Reinach, "Dioskourides g tomoi," 355-56. See also Botti, *Plan de la Ville d'Alexandrie*, 64.

195. Reinach, "Dioskourides g tomoi," 353, n. 1. "Harris' notebooks were acquired in 1896 by Botti from the daughter of the English Consul," that is, from the daughter of Anthony C. Harris, who was "the British Consul to Alexandria (1846-1872)."

196. *Ibid.*, 352-53. This note, found on page 39 of his Cahier XI, was "discovered precisely as copied into his notebooks" by Harris, 253.

197. *Ibid.*, 360, and 350 for the drawing. The scholarly reputation of A. C. Harris was apparently beyond reproach, although I have been unable to find out very much about him. "His name remains attached to the famous hieratic papyri and to the discourse of Hyperides against Demosthenes, both of which he discovered," 353. Also cf. 368. For a bibliography of over seventy scholarly articles about the Harris Papyri, see Dieter Jankuhn, *Bibliographie der hieratischen und hieroglyphischen Papyri*, *Gottinger Orientforschungen*, vol. 4 (Wiesbaden, Germany: Harrassowitz, 1974), 48-51.

198. Cf. Reinach, "Dioskourides g tomoi," 369-70. "Is it . . . brash to think that the granite box, brought to light in 1847, will one day take its rightful place in front of the door to the New Museum Library at Alexandria? Can these few pages at least draw attention to such a precious monument and dissipate the doubts and legends surrounding it? I have personally contributed too much to the propagation of these legends and shared too many of these doubts not to hope, by way of reparation, that I have established the reality and demonstrated the importance of the granite box which contained the work of Dioscurides"; cf. also p. 350.

199. See *ibid.*, 357. "Such an inconvenient arrangement, where three rolls would have required a granite box weighing at least 380 pounds, could not have been adopted in a library of 700,000 volumes or so." That would have required well over 200,000 of these "boxes", 355. "Granite is not only the heaviest material anyone could choose but also the most difficult to engrave and the most expensive. It is difficult to imagine the organizers of temple libraries . . . bringing . . . the thousands of blocks . . . necessary for even the smallest libraries where each work required such a box. . . . No one could invoke the furnace in order to explain the disappearance of so many tons of granite; and you would be pressed even harder to explain their presence, for granite was apparently used at Alexandria only for very prestigious monuments," 363. Cf. Evaristo Breccia, *Alexandria ad Aegyptum* (Bergamo, Italy: Istituto Italiano d'Arti Grafiche, 1922), 94. "We have only to think of the enormous weight and of the great difficulty of working granite to persuade ourselves that it is impossible for such book-cases to have been used in the Library of the Ptolemies, which possessed hundreds of thousands of rolls."

200. See Reinach, "Dioskourides g tomoi," 364, 366-69.

201. *Ibid.*, 350; 370, n. 1. Reinach removes this difficulty by doubling the measurements given by Harris and providing another sketch of his own. The sketch by Harris also appears in Botti, *Plan de la Ville d'Alexandrie*, 65.

202. Reinach, "Dioskourides g tomoi," 359-61. The dating is mostly based on Harris's rendering of sigma by its lineal rather than its round form – the former being common before, the latter after, the Roman annexation of Alexandria. This study needs redoing, I think, by someone competent to judge the scanty available evidence.

203. *Ibid.*, 361. "Those who admit these epigraphical limitations are . . . justified in rejecting the identification of our Dioscurides with three other writers of the same name." Reinach also eliminates

two more candidates whose written works, if they existed at all, were never popular (Reinach, "Dioskourides g tomoi," 361-62). But even that leaves three or four writers with the same name, any one of which could be associated with the granite box.

204. *Ibid.*, 357-63. See Reinach's argument, which is essentially that Pedanius was the only Dioscurides famous enough to be recognized by his name alone, without reference to his works. This long argument may reflect nothing more than a preference for the Dioscurides associated with the famous magical papyri discovered by A. C. Harris. It may, in fact, be ultimately traceable to Harris himself.

205. The Alexandrian selection of poetry from this Dioscurides, which includes only his best, amounts to "about forty epigrams in the Greek Anthology, some based on the work of his predecessors Asclepiades, Callimachus, and Leonidas. Eight deal with famous poets; many are paradoxical anecdotes. The rest—save one hate poem—are lively poems in the sharpest epigrammatic style," Gilbert Highet, "Dioscorides," in *Oxford Classical Dictionary*. For this poetry, see A. S. F. Gow, and D. L. Page, eds., *The Greek Anthology: Hellenistic Epigrams*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), 1:81-96, lines 1463-772, and 2:235-70.

206. Reinach, "Dioskourides g tomoi," 369.

207. See *ibid.*, 369. "Did not Pharaonic Egypt have to make granite boxes like this for her most venerated papyri? And would not the box of Dioscurides thus be a unique specimen of these boxes created by the Alexandrian enthusiasts for their precious volumes? . . . Does it not become a document, unique in its kind, for the history of the book in antiquity?" Cf. the reference to this box as a "chance find" by Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria*, 2:31, n. 77.

208. I was told this in 1966 by the late Donald W. Bradeen, Professor of Ancient History in the Classics Department of the University of Cincinnati. Cf. the cautious statement of Alan J. Wace cited in Rowe, *Discovery of the Famous Temple*, 18: "At present the evidence about foundation deposits made when a Greek temple was built is unsatisfactory. No certain case is known and as a rule it has not been the practice of excavators of Greek sites to look for foundation deposits in connection with Greek temples." (This statement is also cited in Rowe, "A Contribution to Archaeology: III," 160, n. 1.) Architecturally speaking, furthermore, the Serapeum "follows the Egyptian rather than the Greek custom," as only one instance of "a Ptolemaic sanctuary with buildings constructed in the Greek style has been found in Egypt," namely, the sanctuary discovered

beneath the ruins of the great Basilica at Hermopolis Magna. "Nothing like this has yet been found at Alexandria" (Wace, "Recent Ptolemaic Finds in Egypt," 108-9).

209. I have been remarkably unsuccessful in trying to find my way around in things Egyptian. This is, I think, no place for amateurs unless expert guidance is available. There are, I understand, foundation deposits, metallic documents, and stone boxes in Egypt, although I have never been able to get a solid line on them. See Wright, "Metallic Documents of Antiquity," 473; and Rowe, *Discovery of the Famous Temple*, 13-15. Rowe derives everything from the Egyptian past because he apparently knows nothing of Mesopotamia, as in his discussion of Palestine (*ibid.*, 18-19).

210. Nicholas G. L. Hammond and Guy T. Griffith, *A History of Macedonia*, 3 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1979), 2:17. The new Satyrus fragment (Oxyrhynchus Papyrus no. 2465) "is concerned with the names of the demes in Ptolemaic Alexandria. There the Bacchiad genealogy is traced backwards from Bacchis, king of Corinth, . . . to Antiochus. . . . The mother of Antiochus was Deianeira, who was the daughter of Dionysus and Althaea." It was because of this lineage that two demes of Alexandria were named Deianeiris and Althaeis. The Bacchiadae of Macedon "traced their line back to Heracles and so to Dionysus. . . . Thus Dionysus was the founder of the Bacchiad family" (p. 17), from whom the Ptolemies were descended.

211. For the marble inscription discovered by Botti, which identified Serapis (Serapeion) as the son of Dionysus, see Rowe, "A Contribution to the Archaeology: IV," 499.

212. For a good introduction to Dionysus see Lewis R. Farnell, *The Cults of the Greek States*, 5 vols. (Chicago: Aegaian, 1971), 5:85-324. "The first chorus of the Bacchae is full of names recalling the Asiatic cult of Dionysis," according to Guthrie, *Orpheus and Greek Religion*, 147, n. 40.

213. Much of this is discussed by E. M. Blaiklock, "The Natural Man," *Greece and Rome* 16 (1947): 49-66. See also Guthrie, *Orpheus and Greek Religion*, 114: "Euripides himself makes no secret of the fact that he is fascinated by the thrilling service of the Thracian god, so much so that his play the Bacchae is our richest source of information on the cult. . . . If the orgiastic worship of the Thracians was received with opposition, as in many parts of Greece it was, this opposition was largely fed by feelings of contempt for the Thracians themselves, who to Greek eyes were barbarians and beyond the pale." That goes for the Macedonians, too, who were more or less one with the Thracians in Greek eyes.

214. See Ellis, *Foundation Deposits*, 166-67; and Oppenheim, *Ancient Mesopotamia*, 26: "Only a small fraction of these documents was written for the purpose of recording and conveying information to be read; on the contrary, they were buried carefully in the foundations of temples and palaces or engraved in other inaccessible places." Cf. Oppenheim, *Ancient Mesopotamia*, 146-48.

215. On the identification of annals and chronicles in Assyria, see Carl Roebuck, *The World of Ancient Times* (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1966), 143-44.

216. Ellis, *Foundation Deposits*, 120. Other evidence for this development is the discovery of two tablets (one with a building inscription, the other bearing Shalmaneser's annals) from the same foundation deposit in the city wall of Assur, and the Achaemenid deposits, which follow the Mesopotamian pattern but include no building inscriptions at all, 101, 104, 162. The literary prism often presents massive amounts of historical information, as in the clay prism of Assurbanipal, which contains the annals of his reign (668-626 B.C.). The original has ten sides, is 19 1/2 inches high, and contains 1,303 lines of writing; see Rassam, *Asshur and the Land of Nimrod*, opp. p. 218.

217. Oppenheim, *Ancient Mesopotamia*, 148.

218. *Ibid.*, 148-49.

219. *Ibid.*, 149-50. Assurbanipal "succeeded in assembling in Nineveh what has every right to be called the first systematically collected library in the ancient Near East. . . . [This] collection is representative of the main body, if not the entire content, of the scribal tradition," 15.

220. These fixed ingredients of the recipe for creating foundation inscriptions are listed in Bury, *The Assyrian Empire*, 111.

221. *Ibid.*, 111-12.

222. Nibley, "Genesis of the Written Word," 114.

223. *Ibid.*, 114-16.