# The Organization and Use of Documentary Deposits in the Near East from Ancient to Medieval Times:

## Libraries, Archives, Book Collections and Genizas

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*Your file Votre référence*
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*For*

My Father, Jan du Toit,

(On his sixtieth birthday, January 18th, 2002)

*and*

My Mother, Linda du Toit.

חבלים נפלו לי בנעמים אף נחלת שפרה עלי

# ABSTRACT

A multidisciplinary approach is utilized to assess the organization and use of ancient and medieval Near Eastern textual deposits. An elaborate survey of the published material in ancient Near Eastern studies and library and archival studies indicates a general and pervasive insensitivity to and misuse of key terminological constructs. The indistinct portrayal of the nature of ancient libraries and archives is identified as of particular concern; as well as a widespread disregard for the recognition of textual collections older than the famed Library of Alexandria. This dissertation endeavours to indicate the presence of distinct textual collective units in the ancient Near Eastern context on equal footing with their much later counterparts and more broadly defined than the traditional library and archive, to include entities such as the geniza, building and foundation deposits, and so forth. Furthermore, the ancient temple library, as a restricted and well-regulated collective entity, is suggested as representative of literary standardization in the Near East, and the canonization process of the Hebrew Bible, in particular. Ancient archives are attested as equally prevalent textual units, clearly distinguishable from adjunct textual deposits, often loosely, but incorrectly, termed "archives" in modern scholarly discourse. In conclusion, this dissertation reconsiders the status of the two traditionally most valued ancient textual entities, the Library of Assurbanipal and the Library of Alexandria, and concludes that these entities are atypical examples of ancient textual collections. As closest claimants to the improbable and often religiously imbued ideal of universal collection of information, these libraries erroneously became the impossible standards by which all ancient collections were measured and found wanting. As alternate, the applicability of the theoretical constructs proposed in the earlier part of this dissertation, such as the introduction of an information theory continuum and the archival approach to the understanding and management of ancient textual deposits, are suggested as of vital importance to the realignment of traditional scholarly discourse on ancient textual deposits to accommodate present-day archaeological and scientific realities regarding these most important by-products of the invention of writing.

# RÉSUMÉ

Une approche multidisciplinaire est utilisée pour évaluer l'organisation et l'utilité des dépôts de textes de Proche-Orient ancien et médiévale. Une enquête élaborée du materiel publié dans les études Proche-Orientals et les études en bibliothèques et archives indiquent une générale et répandue insensibilité et mauvais emploi d'important de construire terminologique. La répresentation indistrincte de la nature des bibliothèques et archives anciennes est indentifiée comme une affaire particulière, aussi l'indifférénce très répandue pour la reconnaissance des collections de textes plus vieux que la renommée biliothèque d'Alexandrie. Cette dissertation s'efforce d'indiquer la présence de distincts éléments collectifs de textes dans le contexte de Proche-Orient ancien sur une position égale avec leurs equivalents postérieurs et définir plus largement que la bibliothèque et les archives traditionelles pour inclure des entités comme la geniza, les dépôts de bâtiments et fondations. De plus, l'ancienne bibliothèque du temple, qui est restrainte et bien regularisée comme entité collective est suggeré comme représentatif de la standardisation littéraire dans le Proche-Orient, et de procédé de la canonisation de la Bible hebraïque en particulier. Les archives anciennes sont attestées comme également des éléments courants de textes, clairement distinguables des dépôts accessoire de textes, souvent approximativement, mais incorrectement, intitulé "archives" dans le discours savant et moderne. En conclusion, cette dissertation reconsidère le statut des deux plus appréciés entités de textes anciens: la bibliothèque d'Assurbanipal et celle d'Alexandrie et concluent que ces entités sont des exemples non-caractéristiques des collections de textes anciens. Comme les requérants le plus proches de l'idéal improbable de la collection de l'information universel, ces bibliothèques, par erreur, sont devenues des standards impossibles que toutes les collections anciennes ont été mesurées et ont été trouvées manquante. Comme alternatif, l'applicabilité des constructions théoriques qui ont été proposées dans la partie précédente de cette dissertation comme l'introduction d'un continuum de théorie de l'information et l'approche d'archive pour la compréhensions et la direction des dépôts anciens de textes sont suggerés comme l'importance essentielle pour le regroupement du discours savant traditionel sur les dépôts anciens de textes pour satisfaire les réalités archéologiques et scientifiques d'aujourd'hui concemant les plus importants dérivés de l'invention d'écriture.

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# CONTENTS

# ABBREVIATIONS

The *SBL Handbook of Style* was followed in matters of abbreviation, bibliography and style:

| | |
|---|---|
| ABRL | Anchor Bible Reference Library |
| *AfO* | *Archiv für Orientforschung* |
| AJSL | *American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literature* |
| AoF | Altorientalische Forschungen |
| AS | Assyriological Studies |
| ASOR | American Schools of Oriental Research |
| *BA* | *Biblical Archaeologist* |
| *BAR* | *Biblical Archaeology Review* |
| *BASOR* | *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* |
| *BO* | *Bibliotheca orientalis* |
| *BRev* | *Bible Review* |
| BZAW | Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft |
| CAD | *The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago* |
| *CANE* | *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East* |
| *CurBS* | *Currents in Research: Biblical Studies* |
| *EncJud* | *Encyclopaedia Judaica* |
| FAT | Forschungen zum Alten Testament |
| *HUCA* | *Hebrew Union College Annual* |
| *IEJ* | *Israel Exploration Journal* |
| *JAAR* | *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* |
| *JANESCU* | *Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society of Columbia University* |
| *JAOS* | *Journal of the American Oriental Society* |
| JB | Jerusalem Bible |
| *JBL* | *Journal of Biblical Literature* |

| | |
|---|---|
| *JCS* | *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* |
| *JJS* | *Journal of Jewish Studies* |
| *JNES* | *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* |
| JSOT | *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* |
| JSOTSup | Journal for the Study of the Old Testament: Supplement Series |
| *JSS* | *Journal of Semitic Studies* |
| KJV | King James Version |
| NIV | New International Version |
| *OEANE* | *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Archaeology in the Near East* |
| *OLZ* | *Orientalistische Literaturzeitung* |
| Or | *Orientalia* |
| *RA* | *Revue d'assyriologie et d'archéologie orientale* |
| *RevQ* | *Revue de Qumran* |
| SBL | Society of Biblical Literature |
| SHANE | Studies in the History of the Ancient Near East |
| *SJOT* | *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament* |
| *STDJ* | *Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah* |
| SWBA | Social World of Biblical Antiquity |
| *VT* | *Vetus Testamentum* |
| VTSup | Supplements to Vetus Testamentum |
| *ZA* | *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie* |
| *ZAW* | *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* |

# Chapter 1

## Introduction:
## A Common Theme[1]

> The sense of order is central to all Sumerian literature, and even if it is most explicitly set out in the myths, it is to be found in almost every kind of composition. Most characteristically, it is expressed by the notion of ME, a Sumerian word that is notoriously difficult to pin down. It denotes the proper way of being in the world. It can apply to things and actions, particularly to rites, as they must be done in the exact proper fashion. The MES are, in turn, closely connected to a Tablet of Destinies, which could not be altered even by the gods. The MES and the Tablet of Destinies (that is, the physical embodiment of destiny) had their proper place, and myths were written about the effects of their displacement ... The return of the MES and the Tablet is the stuff of the ensuing narratives and of the new reality that is created as order is restored to the universe.[2]

The Sumerians invented writing in the late fourth millennium or early third millennium B.C.E. At the cusp of the divide between pre-history and history, writing is the ultimate technological innovation of the ancients. This invention holds unparalleled sway as interlocutor between the ancient and the modern. The decipherment of the early

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[1] "There was a smaller group of narrative poems concerning deities that might be called myths. Although they differ from each other in story line and in cast of characters, many of them share a common theme: the problem of order and disorder in the universe. Typically, they begin with an anomalous situation in which the order of the world is either disturbed, as when the mythical Anzu (or Zu) bird stole the Tablets of Destinies, or is not fully established as in *Enki and the World Order*, which describes the creation of the cosmos and its allotment to individual gods. The action of the text leads to the reinstatement of order, or in the establishment of proper control under the rule of the hierarchy of deities," Piotr Michalowski, "Sumerian Literature: An Overview," *CANE* 4:2285-2286.

[2] Piotr Michalowski, "Sumerian Literature: An Overview," 2286.

scripts gave voice to text and reintroduced the ancient Near East into the nineteenth- and twentieth-century scholarly discourse with an unparalleled sense of propinquity.

As the physical representation of human speech, writing offered an articulate, objectified departure from the subjective retention of societal memory in the mind. Writing offered qualities as long-term conservator, facilitator and purveyor of human thought and action that outweighed the benefits of a required immediacy and the continual responsive adaptation of oral presentation. Nevertheless, the sustained existence of both oral and written traditions in the Near East indicates an inextricable link between the two entities that defied the simplification of the writing process by alphabetization and the wider distribution of intellectual resources with the development and diffusion of state and religious structures.

The inevitable increase in knowledge transfer through the facility of writing created multiplicities of texts that gave rise to the same thematic response generated by Sumerian myth: the quest for the establishment of order out of disorder to enable the achievement of universal equilibrium. Writing as medium of knowledge transfer necessitated an equally objectified response to a function previously the sole prerogative of human memory: knowledge mediation through the selection and discard, as well as the classification and organization of information to enable conservation and successful retrieval.

The ensuing work renders an interdisciplinary response to the study of the organization and use of documentary deposits in the Near East. It makes the innovative claim that the accumulations of texts in its various permutations are not the result of a chronologically dependent developmental process, but represent the physical accommodation of human memorization, irrespective of time or place. The dissimilarities

in the natures of textual deposits are not the result of a natural progression but were influenced solely by the contextual requirements of the societal environments in which each deposit was created. A chronological listing of textual deposits is therefore shunned for methodological reasons in favour of a typological presentation, in keeping with what Chapter 2 indicates as of central concern in the survey of the published material on the subject: terminological inconsistency.

The subsequent chapters venture to address the above premise by a process of interdisciplinary synthesis. Although painfully aware of the inevitable allegation of arbitrariness or selective treatment of individual subject matter to which this may give rise, it is nevertheless argued that the purposes of the present discourse are best served by a select overview of the most significant matters at hand. Library history and archival science are introduced into the present discourse on textual deposits in the various sub-disciplines associated with ancient Near Eastern studies. Particular emphasis is placed on Assyriology, as cuneiform texts are by virtue of the durability of the writing medium the most representative of all ancient documentary deposits, and on biblical studies, as this field represents the most durable tradition of a fixed corpus of texts.

As the birthplace of writing, the ancient Near East is used as the geographical matrix for the study. The designation, "ancient Near East," as the term suggests, is demarcated by both chronological and spatial parameters. It is conventionally used to indicate the period from the development of writing in the late fourth millennium B.C.E., until the rise of Alexander the Great. It refers to the expanding and contracting interaction of assorted civilizations in the Middle East. Geographically this area encompasses in its most expansive guise modern-day Turkey, parts of the Aegean, Cyprus, Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Jordan, Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, the Arabian Peninsula, Egypt, parts of Libya,

Sudan and Ethiopia. Following this definition, the textual heritage collected in this vast geographic and historical expanse would all be considered pre-Alexandrian.

The Library of Alexandria came into being soon after the death of Alexander the Great and therefore falls chronologically just outside the traditional understanding of the ancient Near East. Thus, according to convention, this collection has often featured in scholarly discourse as the means and triumph of Greek intellectualism, despite the fact that it so evidently and very precariously straddled the ancient Near East and the Hellenistic world in both an intellectual, chronological and geographic sense. The traditionally imposed divide between the ancient Near Eastern and Hellenistic periods is therefore held responsible for the still-existing *impasse* in library history regarding the consideration of any textual deposit older than the Alexandrian Library within the framework of the library and archival history of Western civilization.[3]

Chapter 2 sets out to investigate the challenges imposed on present descriptions of the function and use of ancient textual deposits through a general and pervasive misuse of terminology, as it pertains to all ancient and medieval text collections and ancient Near Eastern textual deposits in particular. The subsequent chapters build on the survey of the literature by indicating the persistent influence of five important twentieth-century scholars, Morris Jastrow, Mogens Weitemeyer, Ernst Posner, Klaas Veenhof and Olof

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[3] See, for example, the recent history of libraries by Lionel Casson on this subject: "In sum, Near Eastern collections were of a specific nature that answered to the needs of the civilization of which they were part. They ceased to exist when that civilization came to an end; they were not the seed which engendered the libraries with their far wider horizons that were to arise in the world of Greece and Rome" (*Libraries in the Ancient World* [New Haven, Conn.: Yale University, 2001], 15).

Amélie Kuhrt argues convincingly for the wider interpretation of the cultural heritage of the ancient Near East, by pointing to the problematic and arbitrary nature of the traditionally accepted demarcation in relation to her own work on the ancient Near East: "Recent studies have emphasized, rightly, the elements of cultural and institutional continuity throughout the region in the Hellenistic period. The only reason, then, for ending this introduction to Near Eastern history with Alexander is the structuring of the series in which it is published, which reflects the European perspective on ancient history" (*The Ancient Near East c. 3000-330 BC* [2 vols.; Routledge History of the Ancient World; London: Routledge, 1995], 1:9).

Pedersén, on the perception and resultant representation of the ancient collective entity in library history, archival science and ancient Near Eastern studies. It is argued that current portrayals of ancient textual deposits in the standard scholarly literature are reflective of twentieth-century scholarship and have little or no bearing on the nature and use of the ancient entities themselves.

Hence, Chapter 3 proposes Morris Jastrow's early twentieth-century denial of the existence of temple libraries as the foundation to which present perspectives on religious textual collections, canonization and pre-Alexandrian libraries respond. It is suggested that caution should prevail in the reconstruction and characterization of textual entities and that more attention be paid to the societal context for an understanding of ancient collections and their influence on literacy, technology, the private and collective ownership of information, and canonization, but also as pertaining to social, economic, religious and educational contexts that may impact on the present-day understanding of religious communication within regulated chronological confines. In conclusion the chapter amalgamates archaeological evidence with the work of William Hallo and Nahum Sarna on literary standardization and canonization. It offers a refutation of Jastrow's premise for the nature and prevalence of ancient Near Eastern libraries as limited to a single entity, the Library of Assurbanipal, by arguing for the existence of religious text collections as far more prevalent, but numerically limited units.

Chapter 4 investigates the work of Mogens Weitemeyer as the source of the evolutionary model for the development of textual entities from primitive to mature. Despite the similarity in the descriptive language, *development* of writing and *development* of libraries and archives (the best known of these accumulative entities of ancient texts), this chapter suggests that the parallelism created by traditional scholarship

between writing and documentary deposits in its various forms is based on a critical fallacy. Unlike writing, libraries and archives are not the outcome of an invention but of a convention. Devoid of the inevitable expectation of an evolutionary development from primitive to mature, associated with "invention" as point of departure, the divergent use and organization of documentary deposits in the Near East are more readily explained. Thereby providing accommodation to adjunct textual deposits such as discarded dumps of textual material, genizas, foundation and building deposits, all traditionally uneasily amalgamated with archival entities under the heading, "ancient archives."

It is argued that, in order to be labelled, "library" or "archive," a textual deposit should prove to have been created as the consequence of a conscious and deliberate policy of collection development. That is, the conscious execution of a policy of acquisition through careful selection, the implementation of a recognizable method for the cataloguing and classification of information with eventual retrieval of information as the ultimate objective. This requires no value judgement as to the sophistication of selection policies or cataloguing and classification practices. The existence of such practices may be argued by means of *in situ* discovery: an indication of existing interconnectivity between entities in the collection at moment of final deposit, destruction or discard, through inventory lists and catalogues that may throw light on such practices, but also by means of textual references to the retrieval of required information from an existing textual collection.

Chapter 4 indicates the mutual benefit of the introduction of archival principles into the study of ancient textual deposits. This position is most convincingly argued by the Assyriologist, Klaas Veenhof, but where Veenhof suggested the value of the archival approach for the description of ancient archives and libraries alone, the present work

draws attention to the wider benefit to be found in the application of archival principles to the management of ancient deposits within the modern context, irrespective of typological distinction.

Chapter 5 concludes with a philosophical perspective on the two most influential textual collections in ancient times: the Library of Assurbanipal and the Library of Alexandria. These collections are set apart from other ancient collections by policies of universal collection of information that consequentially impeded the discard of texts of transitory relevance. The absence of selection of information, a prerequisite for the act of collection that includes both the inclusion and exclusion of information, argues against these entities as examples of either "libraries" or "archives." It is therefore incorrect to claim that either the Library of Assurbanipal or the Library of Alexandria could feature rightfully as progenitors of modern library practice, as traditional scholarship asserts. These entities are to be regarded as the exception rather than the rule for ancient Near Eastern collections. Nonetheless, because Assurbanipal and Alexandria are so indelibly ingrained in Western lore, an inevitable misrepresentation results from posing hypothetical derivatives most closely related to these best-known examples of traditionally accepted ancient "libraries."

Concluding the survey of twentieth-century scholarship's perspective on ancient collections, this chapter then considers Jacques Derrida's *Archive Fever*. This work confirms the earlier assessment of the inherent necessity of inclusion and exclusion as the incontrovertible parameters for the understanding of the establishment of an ancient textual collective. Deconstructionist thought assigns the central role within government to the organizational structures that regulate the collective textual entity as the instrument and emanation of political control over societal memory. In light of the initial agreement

with Derrida, Chapter 5 considers the revisionist proffers of hypothetical Persian or Hellenistic archival or library origins for the Bible. Denial of an earlier origin for the biblical text as collective entity prompts Niels-Peter Lemche, Philip Davies and Thomas Thompson to argue strenuously for the alternate hypothetical existence of a Persian or Hellenistic textual collection as origin and disseminator of the biblical literature. These alternate entities are found to resemble most closely the universal libraries of Assurbanipal and Alexandria. As such the revisionist "regional libraries," "Hasmonean Library" or "temple archive" is constructed on a false premise of the nature of ancient collections nurtured by early twentieth-century scholars' (notably Jastrow's) perception of Assurbanipal and Alexandria. It conforms to neither the delineation of ancient collections put forth by the present study nor the deconstructionist "impression" provided by Derrida. Chapter 5 argues that these entities represent a hypothetical impossibility. Unless alternate textual entities are posited with greater circumspection, the present revisionist offerings for a late origin of the biblical text should be regarded with grave suspicion and may therefore not be used as standard underpinnings in the refutation of a maximalist approach to the biblical textual history.

# Chapter 2

## Survey of the Published Literature: The "Paths in the Wilderness" or "Some Intelligible Plan"

> The question of the future, so far as the material of history is concerned, relates to getting at what has been accumulated, - the ready extraction of the marrow. In other words, it is a problem of differentiation, selection, arrangement, indexing and cataloguing. To-day [*sic*] we are like men wandering in a vast wilderness, which is springing up in every direction with tropical luxuriance. The one great necessity is to have paths carried through it on some intelligible plan, which will at once enable us to find our way whither we would go, or tell us in what directions further research would be futile.[1]

### 2.1 Introduction

"This book is the first full-scale study of libraries in the ancient world," is the introductory sentence to the latest work by classicist, Lionel Casson.[2] Casson's summary dismissal of all previous work on the subject is deceptively final. As the subsequent survey of the published literature will prove, the true state of affairs is somewhat more complex. Nonetheless, it is interesting to note the resemblance of Casson's assertion to a preamble favoured in presentations and books by Ernest Cushing Richardson at the

[1] Charles Francis Adams, April 13, 1899, as quoted by T. R. Schellenberg (*The Management of Archives* [Columbia University Studies in Library Service 14; New York: Columbia University, 1965], 1).
[2] Lionel Casson, *Libraries in the Ancient World* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University, 2001), ix.

beginning of the twentieth century.[3] Richardson, interested in the history of ancient libraries, was fond of introducing his, for the time, decidedly novel choice of subject matter with the words: "The very title of this paper has amused some, quite as if they thought the subject would be exhausted by the sentence 'there was none.'"[4] Richardson did his utmost to disabuse scholars of this popular notion.

The century that divides the introductory words of Richardson and Casson will be the main focus of this chapter. For this reason, it is important to note at the outset that, despite a hundred years of scholarly output in the most prolific century in history and despite countless archaeological discoveries and advancements in science, this particular topic can still be introduced by versions of a similar pronouncement. It will allude to the two principal elements underlying the treatment of ancient collections in the published literature: a negation of the existence of a "full-scale"[5] historiographic tradition for ancient textual collections and the denial that collections older than the Library of Alexandria are "true" libraries and/or archives.[6] Casson's claim represents the low sense

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[3] Richardson (1860-1939) is of particular importance to this study as he is one of a limited number of historians on ancient collections to incorporate both library science and theology in his career and writings. Richardson was librarian at Hartford Theological Seminary and later at Princeton University. Among his varied publications were translations of Eusebius and Jerome, as well as three prominent works on ancient libraries. For more information, see the biography by Lewis Branscomb, *Ernest Cushing Richardson: Research Librarian, Scholar, Theologian: 1860-1939* (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow, 1993).

[4] Ernest Cushing Richardson, *Some Old Egyptian Librarians* (New York: Scribner's, 1911), 10. See also, Ernest Cushing Richardson, *Biblical Libraries: A Sketch of Library History from 3400 B.C. to A.D. 150.* (Princeton: Princeton University, 1914), 1.

[5] See Lionel Casson, *Libraries in the Ancient World*, ix.

[6] The term "true library" comes from an article by Laura Arksey on the Library of Assurbanipal (Laura Arksey, "The Library of Assurbanipal, King of the World," *Wilson Library Bulletin* 51 [1977]: 832-840). See also Wiseman's earlier usage of the term in similar fashion to denote a collection of texts at Assur established under the patronage of Tiglath-pileser I (D.J. Wiseman, review of M. Weitemeyer, *Babylonske og Assyriske Arkiver og Biblioteker* and "Archive and Library Technique in Ancient Mesopotamia," *OLZ* 57:373-376). Morris Jastrow (Morris Jastrow, "Did the Babylonian Temples have Libraries" *JAOS* 27 [1906]: 170) first used the term in relation to a depiction of "an extensive literary collection," an indirect reference to the Library of Assurbanipal. The application of "true library" denotes an underlying qualitative distinction instinctively drawn by most library historians between collections that predate the Library of Alexandria and those that follow it. A differentiation between ancient and modern collections is common, but authors tend to designate both by the same terminological convention: "library" or "archive." To

of awareness that typifies the work of scholars in ancient Near Eastern studies and classics with regard to the work on ancient libraries published by scholars in the field of archival science, but especially library history. This dismissive attitude springs from an often-valid criticism of the background, approach and methodology employed by many a scholar of ancient libraries and archives. Rarely is the reason for such exclusion voiced and almost never as vocally expressed as in an article on the Library of Alexandria, written by Anne Holmes, a librarian herself.[7] Holmes' criticism of the treatment of the Library of Alexandria can easily be extrapolated to give voice to the disregard apparent in the writings of scholars in the disciplines related to the ancient Near East, Greece and Rome. She found that the typical approach of library historians to the ancient material was often fragmentary, lacking overview, abounding in much extraneous and irrelevant material and often hampered by an author's lack of training in the languages of antiquity and a resultant unwillingness (or inability) to consult primary sources. Her greatest regret

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distinguish, scholars therefore often qualify ancient counterparts as "proto" libraries and/or archives. The cut-off between ancient and modern for libraries is the Library of Alexandria. For archives the cut-off is relative. Ernst Posner, for example, allows for the influence of the Achaemenid administrative system up to the eighteenth-century C.E. (Ernst Posner, *Archives in the Ancient World* [Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University, 1972], 11). Most archival histories assert that "modern" archival science is the product of the French Revolution and the establishment of the French National Archives.

It should also be noted that the usage of the term "archival" was in recent years expanded to incorporate collections of records preceding the traditionally recognized date for the development of writing in the fourth millennium B.C.E. Hence the term "archives before writing," in, for example, Piera Ferioli et al., eds., *Archives Before Writing: Proceedings of the International Colloquium Oriolo Romano, October 23-25, 1991* (Pubblicazioni del Centro Internazionale di Ricerche Archeologiche Antropoligiche e Storiche 1; Turin: Scriptorium, 1994). In the same fashion, but far more esoterically, library histories lay claim to a prehistory embedded in so-called "oral repositories," that is, the preservation and recital of a communal cultural heritage by bards and elders in a pre-literate and early literate community. Thus it is asserted: "... the human memory was the library of society" (Jesse H. Shera, foreword to *The Oral Antecedents of Greek Librarianship*, by H. Curtis Wright [Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University, 1977], ix). For further elaboration, see also H. Curtis Wright, *The Oral Antecedents of Greek Librarianship* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University, 1977).

[7] Anne Holmes, "The Alexandrian Library," *Libri* 30/4: 285-294.

was that, "... there is no study of the library that combines a training in Classics with some knowledge of librarianship and library techniques."[8]

Although Holmes' critique is valid for the more extreme examples in the genre of library and archival history, it does not hold true for all. We can identify a more benign reason for a certain laxity in approach other than Holmes' underlying suggestion of pervasive interdisciplinary incompetence. The twentieth century saw great changes in the nature of librarianship, and these changes were accelerated by the dawning of the information age in the years following the Second World War.[9] Professionally, librarians and archivists faced a continual re-evaluation of their historical *raison d'être* as the custodians of knowledge. A process of continuous change and transformation forced the profession to adopt a utilitarian approach: the pursuit of history had to prove its relevance to the present and future endeavours of information management.[10] Hence the standard introductory apologetics for the writing of a history of libraries or archives, found as an apparent prerequisite preface to most publications on the subject.[11] In the struggle for

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[8] Holmes, "The Alexandrian Library," 285.

[9] See Dorothy B. Lilley and Ronald W. Trice, *A History of Information Science: 1945-1985* (Library and Information Science Series; San Diego, Calif.: Academic Press, 1989).

[10] Jesse Hauk Shera, an acknowledged *phenomenon* in the field of twentieth century theory of librarianship, provided the most memorable description of this "adapt or die"-approach. Shera's eschatological language indicates most clearly the dire circumstances experienced by librarianship at the crossroads: "Despite the fact that the topography of the future is obscured by yet undispelled fog, as the contours of Martha's Vineyard are shrouded by the mists of early morning, and currents moving beneath the surface, that can dramatically reshape the coastline of librarianship so familiar to us today. The librarian can blind himself to these changes in his environment and follow the sabre-toothed tiger to extinction; or he can see in them the vision of a new heaven and a new earth with boundless opportunities for extended and more effective service, and with them, almost unlimited enrichment of the intellectual content of his professional practice" (Jesse H. Shera, *Documentation and the Organization of Knowledge* [ed. D. J. Foskett; Hamden, Conn.: Archon, 1966], 121.)

[11] Ernst Posner commences his *magnum opus* most tellingly with the introductory sentence: "A book on the history of archives – even a slim volume – must justify its existence" (Posner, *Archives in the Ancient* World, 1). See also Raymond Irwin's classic article addressing the question: Richard Irwin, "Does Library History Matter?" *Library Review* 128 (1958): 510-513; as well as the archival counterpart thereof: Terry Cook, "Clio: The Archivist's Muse?" (review of Carl Berger, *The Writing of Canadian History: Aspects of English-Canadian Historical Writing, 1900-1970* and Charles F. Delzell, *The Future of History: Essays in the Vanderbilt University Centennial Symposium*), *Archivaria* 5 (1977-1978): 198-203.

relevancy, the history of libraries and archives became an optional adjunct to university curricula that had to deal with exponential technological advancement and information proliferation that exceeded all expectations. Always an applied, interdisciplinary endeavour, library and information science of necessity came to emphasize the management of information and information systems as the primary concern. Thus, unless library history could prove relevant and useful within the present and future contexts of information management, it was perceived to face the very strong possibility of becoming obsolete, that is, of inconsequential and anecdotal importance in the pursuit of the management of the still ballooning product of the information age.

In an effort to make historical material relevant to the present, scholars opted to customize ancient institutions and historical figures and then claim a heritage from these institutions and figures by ascribing to them attributes of the "first," the "oldest," "the father of," and so forth. A scribe often mentioned in a collection of texts may be assigned the title "librarian;" text collections, regardless of nature, are designated "libraries" or "archives" whether or not any inherent organizational structure could be perceived; and the numerous lists for which ancient Near Eastern text deposits are well-known often bear the moniker "catalogue." Thus, a prescriptive rather than descriptive approach to the material was the inevitable outcome, and the methodology too often took the route of imparting preconceived modern notions and professional attributes that ill-fitted their ancient subjects.[12]

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[12] A sarcastic description of this practice is contained early on in its development in W. Max Müller's review of Richardson's *Some Old Egyptian Librarians*: "The author has written a charming essay to furnish the modern benefactor of humanity, called librarian, pride and comfort. The first gift is a long row of ancestors. ... Then, wishing to raise these worthy ancestors as high above the common Egyptians as possible, he attributes to 'librarians' the keeping of copies of the divine oracles. ... Many an overworked modern librarian will feel grateful for this comfort from antiquity. I tremble playing here the part of the dry, joy-killing specialist who, with cold, merciless hand destroys the delight of such good people out of sheer

In light of the above, it is certainly possible to argue that Casson's introductory statement is to be read not as patent disregard for an existing tradition of historiography of libraries and archives,[13] but as an indication of the authority often denied to publications on ancient collections in the fields of library history and archival science. In turn, Anne Holmes' devastating critique may point at least partly to a limited knowledge of ancient languages and a lack of training in the related disciplines that may inhibit library historians and limit their inclusion of work from ancient Near Eastern studies and classics. This explains why scholars with interdisciplinary training and interests authored most of the crossover publications identified. Crossover publications, written and informed by several disciplines, are unfortunately rather the exception than the rule. For the most part, compartmentalization of the topic by discipline leads to an unavoidable lack of synthesis of the material and findings.[14] Some publications also run the risk of datedness of results and information far more than others. Archaeological excavation, for

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pedantry. I must, however, state that Mr. Richardson has used great poetic licence, especially in assuming *a priori* that in ancient Egypt 'scribe' and 'librarian' were synonymous. ... Alas, this optimistic assumption cannot be substantiated, ... we must be more careful in transferring modern conditions to the ancient Orient. And thus little positive will remain of Mr. Richardson's ancestry I fear" (W. Max Müller, review of Ernest Cushing Richardson, *Some Old Egyptian Librarians*, *Library Journal* 37 [1912]: 217). Another classic example is the work of the librarian, Katharine Pedley, on Qumran (Katharine G. Pedley, *The Library at Qumran: A Librarian Looks at the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Peacock Biblio Series 1; Berkeley, Calif.: Peacock, 1964). Father Roland De Vaux consulted Pedley when he considered the nature and function of the "scriptorium", while digging at the Qumran settlement in the early 1950s.

It should be noted that this non-critical attribution of modern professional practice to ancient persons and institutions is not entirely restricted to library historians. See in this regard, for example, Hartmut Stegemann, *The Library of Qumran: On the Essenes, Qumran, John the Baptist, and Jesus* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans, 1998), 39-40.

[13] For a general discussion of historiography in library and information science, see Richard Krzys, "Library Historiography," *Encyclopedia of Library and Information Science* 15:294-330. Note that James Ollé, in his survey of the "state of the art" of library history, criticized the very aspect of Krzys' rendering of library historiography that appeals to this particular study: "The result (of Krzys' version of library historiography) is disappointing, partly because Krzys concerns himself more with the ancient roots of the subject than its modern branches, and partly because his dry analytical approach to library history leaves the reader with little inclination to explore it further" (James G. Ollé, *Library History*. [Outlines of Modern Librarianship. London: C. Bingley, 1979], 11).

[14] James Ollé, in reference to the deficiencies of library history, described the "greatest problem" and the "greatest challenge" in library history as arising from its "greatest defect": "It is closed circuit history. If it is not by librarians for librarians, it is by historians for librarians." See James Ollé, *Library History*, 26.

example, provides a natural breeding-ground for new data and results. Publications in a discipline that does not inform itself of these results are naturally going to lag in terms of current academic discourse.

As mentioned before, a limited number of publications have nevertheless transcended these artificially imposed boundaries and have gained, as a result, an added weight and importance. These publications are listed chronologically and will be utilized as important markers in the survey of the published literature, as well as in the chapters to follow:

A. "Did the Babylonian Temples have Libraries?"[15] was Morris Jastrow's response to the so-called "Peters-Hilprecht Controversy" (1905-1908) that erupted at the University of Pennsylvania as a result of the publications forthcoming from the university's first few years of excavation at Nippur from 1888 to 1900.[16] The controversy and its resultant fall-out will be addressed in greater detail in Chapter 3.

B. After the Second World War, Mogens Weitemeyer, a Danish Assyriologist and librarian,[17] published perhaps the most often cited work on the subject of ancient

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[15] Morris Jastrow, "Did the Babylonian Temples have Libraries?" 147-182.

[16] For a summary of the controversy and the Jastrow-years at the University of Pennsylvania, see Cyrus Gordon, *The Pennsylvania Tradition of Semitics: A Century of Near Eastern and Biblical Studies at the University of Pennsylvania* (Biblical Scholarship in North America 13; Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars, 1986), 13-32. It should be mentioned that Morris Jastrow, the son of the famed Marcus Jastrow, had interdisciplinary credentials: as much as he was world-renowned as Professor of Semitics at Penn and later as chair of the department, Jastrow also served in earlier years as university librarian at the same institution.

[17] Weitemeyer studied Assyriology under O.E. Ravn and J. Laessøe. He was an employee of the Municipal Libraries of Copenhagen. For more information on Weitemeyer's background and publications, see Mogens Weitemeyer, *Bedre Biblioteksbenyttelse: Mogens Weitemeyers Biblioteksfaglige og litterære Artikler og Indlæg Udgivet på 60-års dagen d. 26. maj 1982* (Copenhagen: Danish Royal Library, 1982).

libraries and archives in both library history and ancient Near Eastern studies: "Archive and Library Technique in Ancient Mesopotamia."[18] The emphasis on "technique" is significant and will be addressed in Chapter 4. This article was an English adaptation of one of the chapters of his Danish work: *Babylonske og Assyriske Arkiver og Biblioteker* ("Babylonian and Assyrian Archives and Libraries").[19] The book has not been translated into English, and Weitemeyer's influence on ancient Near Eastern libraries and archives is therefore largely restricted to the English journal article, "Archive and Library Technique in Ancient Mesopotamia."[20]

C. In 1972 Ernst Posner[21] published his *magnum opus, Archives in the Ancient World.* Intended as the first part of an epic history of archives, this volume became the solitary tribute to that noble ideal, as Posner's advancing age prevented him from proceeding further with his project. This has become a standard reference work for all publications on textual collections in antiquity and is, along with the

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[18] Mogens Weitemeyer, "Archive and Library Technique in Ancient Mesopotamia," *Libri* 6/3 (1956): 217-238.

[19] Mogens Weitemeyer, *Babylonske og Assyriske Arkiver og Biblioteker* (Studier fra Sprog- og Oldtidsforskning 227; Copenhagen: Branner og Korchs, 1955), 61-82.

[20] D.J. Wiseman considered the book in Danish and accompanying article in English of such importance that he warranted it a belated review, partly because this book in particular had drawn little prior notice in the scholarly community, except for two reviews by Alfred Haldar in 1958. Wiseman justified his decision by referring to what he considered to be: "... the importance of the subject and ... the manner in which it has been treated by M. Weitemeyer" (Wiseman, review of Weitemeyer, 373). See also Alfred Haldar, review of M. Weitemeyer, *Babylonske og Assyriske Arkiver og Biblioteker*, *BO* 15: 112; and Alfred Haldar, review of M. Weitemeyer, *Babylonske og Assyriske Arkiver og Biblioteker*, *JSS* 3: 105-106. The state of affairs that prompted Wiseman's review has not changed in the years since. There is still an exceptionally low absorption rate for published material from library history into mainstream scholarly discourse.

[21] Posner was an archivist by training and professor in archival science, history and administration in the program offered by the American University in cooperation with the National Archives. For more biographical information, see the introduction to the compilation of essays presented by the Society of American Archivists to Posner on his 75th birthday (Paul Lewinson, introduction to *Archives and the Public Interest: Selected Essays by Ernst Posner*, ed. by Ken Munden [Washington, D.C.: Public Affairs, 1967], 7-19); as well as Rodney A. Ross, "Ernst Posner: The Bridge Between the Old World and the New," *American Archivist* 44 (1981): 304-312.

work by Klaas Veenhof, responsible for the current upsurge in publications on ancient archives, archival technique, bookkeeping, public records in antiquity, and so forth. An equivalent volume on ancient libraries does not exist.[22]

D. The Dutch Assyriologist, Klaas Veenhof, spearheaded the 30th *Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale* in Leiden, entitled: *Cuneiform Archives and Libraries*. The conference volume[23] and Veenhof's remarkable and groundbreaking introduction[24] represents influential recognition of the nature of ancient collections, especially ancient archives. This invaluable work was inspired by the similarly entitled Dutch version of Veenhof's inaugural address as professor at the University of Leiden in 1982: "Cuneiform Archives."[25]

E. The recent work by Olof Pedersén,[26] entitled, *Archives and Libraries in the Ancient Near East: 1500-300 B.C.*,[27] is added to this list of most influential publications. Although admittedly scant reference to this work has yet surfaced in publications outside the narrow confines of Assyriology, it holds the potential for

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[22] It may be coincidence, but it is interesting to note that Lionel Casson chose a title closely suggestive of an equivalent to Posner's earlier work: *Libraries in the Ancient World.*

[23] Klaas R. Veenhof, ed., *Cuneiform Archives and Libraries: Papers Read at the 30e Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, Leiden, 4-8 July 1983* (Uitgaven van het Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut te Istanbul 52; Istanbul: Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut, 1986).

[24] Klaas R. Veenhof, "Cuneiform Archives: An Introduction," in *Cuneiform Archives and Libraries: Papers Read at the 30e Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale in Leiden, 4-8 July 1983* (ed. Klaas R. Veenhof; Uitgaven van het Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut te Istanbul 52; Istanbul: Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut, 1986), 1-36.

[25] Klaas R. Veenhof, *Spijkerschriftarchieven: Rede Uitgesproken Bij De Aanvaarding van het Ambt van Gewoon Hoogleraar in De Talen en Geschiedenis van Babylonië en Assyrië aan de Rijksuniversiteit te Leiden op 4 Juni 1982* (Leiden: Brill, 1982).

[26] The Swede, Pedersén, is professor of Assyriology at the University of Uppsala. He is best known for his exhaustive interpretation of textual deposits in the city of Assur, unearthed during the German excavations. See Olof Pedersén, *Archives and Libraries in the City of Assur: A Survey of the Material from the German Excavations* (2 vols.; Studia Semitica Upsaliensia 6, 8; Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1985-1986).

[27] Olof Pedersén, *Archives and Libraries in the Ancient Near East: 1500-300 B.C.* (Bethesda, Md.: CDL, 1998).

making a significant contribution as reference work and source for up-to-date information on the topic for both ancient Near Eastern scholars and students of library history alike.

This study regards these five publications as the most influential crossover work on the subject of ancient textual deposits.[28] In order to fully appreciate their significance, we must return for a moment to the origins of writings on the history of ancient collections.

## 2.2 The "Heroic Period"

According to tradition, Terentius Varro, a contemporary of Julius Caesar, wrote the first history of libraries. Varro's work comprised three volumes and is, unfortunately, lost to posterity.[29] Justus Lipsius' late sixteenth-century *De Bibliothecis Syntagma* ("A Brief Outline of the History of Libraries")[30] is therefore the first extant example of a conscious attempt at tracing the history of ancient libraries. The author, a polymath of extraordinary reach, was well equipped to deal with what was, at the time, unexplored territory.[31] To this day, most references to ancient writers by modern historians of this

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[28] Simo Parpola's oft-quoted "Assyrian Library Records" (*JNES* 42/1 [1983]: 1-29) may also qualify to be included in this list. It was decided against, as this specific article by Parpola refers solely to ten Neo-Assyrian fragments originating from the Library of Assurbanipal. Despite references to this work in discussions of an overarching nature, the title of Parpola's article is somewhat misleading. The publication limits itself to the ten fragments concerned and to conclusions that may be reached from a study of these fragments. The work does not purport to be a general survey of so-called "Assyrian Libraries." It is nevertheless considered to be highly significant and influential and will be referred to in subsequent chapters.

[29] See Frederick J. Teggart, "Contribution towards a Bibliography of Ancient Libraries," *Library Journal* 24 (1899): 5-12, 57-59; and also Thomas D. Walker, "Justus Lipsius and the Historiography of Libraries," *Libraries and Culture* 26/1 (1991): 49-65.

[30] Justus Lipsius, "A Brief Outline of the History of Libraries," in *Literature of Libraries in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (eds. John Cotton Dana and Henry W. Kent; trans. John Cotton Dana; 1907; repr., Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Reprint Corporation, 1967).

[31] See Walker, "Justus Lipsius," 49-54; also Gerhard Oestreich, "Justus Lipsius als Universalgelehrter zwischen Renaissance und Barock," in *Leiden University in the Seventeenth Century: An Exchange of*

topic can be traced via Edward Edwards' mid-nineteenth-century *Memoirs of Libraries*[32] to Lipsius' work. The prototype Lipsius developed for his treatise relied heavily on references to secondary sources, mostly Greek and Roman, which is understandable given the fact that an archaeological foil for such a discussion did not emerge for another two hundred and fifty years. This approach would be adopted in almost the same manner by his nineteenth-century successor.

Edwards[33] was the fervent heir to Lipsius' legacy, and, with true Victorian classificatory zeal, went about the task of creating order out of perceived disorder by bringing "... together materials which have hitherto been widely scattered, and arrange them, to the best of (his) ability, in serviceable order."[34] It is important to note that Edwards never claimed to be more than an organizer of entities. He itemized, rather than interpreted his subject matter, especially as far as the ancient material was concerned.[35] Nevertheless, Edwards' approach to the collections of antiquity would become the stylistic standard for historiographers in librarianship. Added to this, Edwards' background in the Public Libraries Movement is of particular significance,[36] as it explains

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*Learning* (ed. Th. H. Lunsingh Scheurleer and G.H.M. Posthumus Meyjes, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1975), 177-201.

[32] Edward Edwards, *Memoirs of Libraries: Including a Handbook of Library Economy* (2 vols.; Burt Franklin Bibliography and Reference Series 72; London: Trübner & Co., 1859).

[33] Edward Edwards (1812-1886) was librarian at the British Museum and later in Manchester. He is best remembered as the driving force, with William Ewart, behind the Public Libraries Act of 1850. For more complete biographical background, see W. A. Munford, *Edward Edwards: 1812-1886* (London: The Library Association, 1963) and Thomas Greenwood, *Edward Edwards: The Chief Pioneer of Municipal Public Libraries* (London: Scott, Greenwood and Co., 1902).

[34] Edwards, *Memoirs of Libraries*, 1:5.

[35] Richard Garnett is quoted by James Ollé, describing Edward Edwards' work: "He was erudite and industrious ... though not sufficiently discriminating. His works occupy a place of their own, and will always remain valuable mines of information" (James Ollé, *Library History: An Examination Guidebook* [2nd ed.; Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books & Clive Bingley, 1971], 17).

[36] See John Minto, *A History of the Public Library Movement in Great Britain and Ireland* (The Library Association Series of Library Manuals 4; London: George Allen & Unwin, 1932).

the emphasis on the public nature of collections (ancient and modern) reflected in his presentation of the material in the *Memoirs* to the reader:

> ... as a contribution towards a more wide-spread acquaintance with Libraries, when regarded especially – though not exclusively – as public property maintained for public uses. My highest ambition for the book will be satisfied if it be found to give some real furtherance to the efforts which on many sides are now being made to add to the number of our accessible collections, and to increase the usefulness of those we have already.[37]

As will be noted further on in this discussion, it is remarkable to what extent the definition of an ancient library that was soon to develop actually conformed to the late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century expectations of what a public library should be.

The significant bearing of Edward Edwards' monumental scholarly work on the field of library history, especially in its underlying emphasis on public libraries, cannot be overstated. As far as *Memoirs of Libraries*' influence on the description of libraries in the ancient Near East in particular is concerned, the added significance of the historical setting of the appearance of the work should be noted.

The ancient Near East came to scholarly and popular attention at the beginning of the nineteenth-century, with Napoleon's expedition to Egypt (1798-1801).[38] Historians invariably employ Napoleon's expedition as the *terminus a quo* for what is conversely referred to as the "rebirth," "re-emergence" or "re-introduction" of the ancient Near East as an intellectual construct into Western academic discourse.[39] Egypt became the

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[37] Edwards, *Memoirs of Libraries*, 1:7.

[38] For a detailed overview of the Napoleonic Expedition to Egypt, see Charles Coulston Gillispie, historical introduction to *The Monuments of Egypt: The Napoleonic Edition*, ed. by Charles Coulston Gillispie and Michel Dewachter (Old Saybrook, Conn.: Konecky & Konecky, 1987), 1-29.

[39] See Mogens Trolle Larsen, "Orientalism and the Ancient Near East," *Culture and History* 2 (1987): 96-115. See also Walter Burkert's introduction for a concise discussion of the nineteenth-century intellectual

archetype for the new intellectual marvel that was the ancient Near East. A reversal of approach that echoed the words of Diderot and d'Alembert's *Encyclopédie*: "It (Egypt) was once a country to be admired; nowadays it is one to be studied."[40]

This altered approach was given the necessary impetus by the early nineteenth-century discoveries of ancient artefacts and texts by French, British, German and later American explorers in the Middle East; the careful cultivation of a public interest in the discoveries through a string of popular accounts of their expeditions; an open rivalry between colonial powers for the acquisition of treasures to supplement the holdings of newly-emerging national museums and private collections; and - most importantly for the purposes of this study - the decipherment of cuneiform and hieroglyphic writing. Leo Oppenheim refers to the era that approximated the first seventy-five years of the nineteenth-century, as "the heroic period"[41] of the new science of Assyriology, but also of ancient Near Eastern studies. The romantic overtones with which this designation is imbued are particularly apt, given its representation of this stage of transition in Western consciousness regarding the "Orient." Within an extraordinary short time-span, historic, geographic, archaeological and scientific considerations replaced the mythical and legendary. This period was filled with romanticized and embellished figures, explorers such as Claudius Rich, Paul Emile Botta, Austen Henry Layard, Henry Creswicke Rawlinson, William Kennett Loftus, Hormuzd Rassam, Jules Oppert and George Smith. These men were the darlings or villains of poets and politicians. They expertly, but

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influences at work in the fracturing of the image of "pure, self-contained Hellenism" and the resultant dawning of the ancient Near East: Walter Burkert, *The Orientalizing Revolution: Near Eastern Influence on Greek Culture in the Early Archaic Age* (trans. M. E. Pinder & W. Burkert, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University, 1995), 1-8.

[40] Gillespie, "Historical Introduction," 4.

[41] A. Leo Oppenheim, *Ancient Mesopotamia: Portrait of a Dead Civilization* (rev. ed. completed by Erica Reiner; Chicago: University of Chicago, 1977), 9.

sometimes ineptly, used their newfound fame to advance further and more elaborate expeditions.[42]

The discovery and eventual decipherment of the Rosetta Stone had intimated at the rich potential of the Middle East for the newly developing science of archaeology. But it was the expeditions in Mesopotamia under the auspices of the British, the French, the German and later the Americans, that would yield a great magnitude of textual deposits. The ancient inhabitants of Mesopotamia used the clay tablet as their preferred writing material. Clay was able to withstand the ravages of time and the greatest scourge of ancient and modern libraries - fire. Thus many of these collections were discovered fairly intact and on occasion, if the archaeologists preceded the antiquity hunters, also *in situ*. These were the so-called "libraries of clay," as one French explorer soon dubbed them, which started to appear in museums all over Europe and North America by the mid-nineteenth-century. Brief references to these discoveries made their way into Edwards' *Memoirs of Libraries*[43] with astonishing rapidity, but with very little attention to detail. This position has not changed much in the century since, and a significant delay between

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[42] Many descriptions of this period of exploration exist. For recent renderings, see for example, Seton Lloyd, *Foundations in the Dust: The Story of Mesopotamian Exploration* (rev. and enl. Ed.; New York: Thames and Hudson, 1980); as well as Mogens Trolle Larsen, *The Conquest of Assyria: Excavations in an Antique Land 1840-1860* (London: Routledge, 1996).

Sir E.A. Wallis Budge, later to become Keeper at the British Museum, wrote the earliest history of this period in Assyriology (E.A. Wallis Budge, *The Rise and Progress of Assyriology* [London: Martin Hopkinson & Co., 1925]). It was Budge who dubbed Henry Creswicke Rawlinson the "Father of Assyriology." Budge was also actively embroiled in a campaign against Hormuzd Rassam. Layard openly accused Budge of being the source of untruthful rumours regarding Rassam's alleged involvement in an ongoing problem the British Museum experienced: antiquities from legitimate excavations kept turning up on the black market. In this light modern historiographers caution that Budge's *Rise and Progress of Assyriology*, although long considered the most reliable, as well as the earliest rendering of the development of early Assyriology, is to be read with caution, especially as regards to references to Rassam and Layard. See Mogens Trolle Larsen, *The Conquest of Assyria*, 263-264, 303 and 355-356. See also Julian Reade, "Hormuzd Rassam and His Discoveries," *Iraq* 55 (1993): 39-62; and Julian Reade's introduction to Rassam's excavations and archival discoveries represented by his Babylonian Collection in the British Museum (Introduction to *Tablets From Sippar* 1 [vol. 6 of *Catalogue of the Babylonian Tablets in the British* Museum; by Erle Leichty; London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1986], xiii-xxxvi).

[43] Edwards, *Memoirs of Libraries*, 1:14-16.

the moment of discovery and the absorption of new discoveries into the established historical literature is at the moment the rule rather than the exception. It should be added that a pervasive difficulty in motivating archaeologists towards the timely publication of archaeological reports has dogged the emerging science of archaeology from its inception to the present day.[44]

One of the first and most famous of the Mesopotamian collections discovered was the deposit of roughly 30,000 cuneiform tablets[45] uncovered on the Kuyunjik mound at Mosul (the site of ancient Nineveh), collectively referred to as the so-called "Library of Assurbanipal."[46] The British explorer, Austen Henry Layard (and later Rassam and Smith), excavated this collection of twenty to thirty thousand clay tablets from approximately a decade before the publication of Edwards' work until the end of the nineteenth-century. Early scholars established that this collection matured under the

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[44] In recent years, Hershel Shanks, editor of *Biblical Archaeology Review*, has been at the forefront of an active campaign to alter this state of affairs by raising awareness thereof and creating a firestorm in *Biblical Archaeology Review* and likeminded publications, not unlike what resulted in the 1991 publication of the Dead Sea Scrolls. See Hershel Shanks, "Archaeology's Dirty Secret," *BAR* 20, no. 5 (September/October 1994): 63; Hershel Shanks, "Biting the Hand that Feeds You," *BAR* 25, no. 6 (November/December 1999): 6, 64; as well as Hershel Shanks, ed., *Archaeology's Publication Problem* (2 vols.; Washington, D.C.: Biblical Archaeology Society, 1996 & 1999).

[45] See Ernst Weidner's calculated estimate in "Die Bibliothek Tiglatpilesers I," *AfO* 16 (1952): 197-198.

[46] The term "Library of Assurbanipal," is an inexact popular designation for a number of collections that originated in all probability from several find spots in and around the Kuyunjik mound at Nineveh. (See Giovanni B. Lanfranchi, "The Library at Nineveh," in *Capital Cities: Urban Planning and Spiritual Dimensions: Proccedings of the Symposium Held on May 27-29, 1996, Jerusalem, Israel* [ed. Joan Goodnick Westenholz; Bible Lands Museum Jerusalem Publications 2; Jerusalem: Bible Lands Museum, 1998], 149). This textual find is also associated with the K-numbers by which it was inventoried in the British Museum. Unfortunately K-numbers were in some cases assigned indiscriminately, as Julian Reade explains: "Sometimes tablets from different Assyrian sites may have been mixed together before reaching London. Sometimes K numbers were applied to inscribed objects regardless of provenance. And sometimes, it seems, pieces of inscribed clay acquired by the British Museum before about 1860 were stored and confused with the numerous Assyrian tablets which, though excavated in the 1850s, remained unnumbered until later" (Julian Reade, "Archaeology and the Kuyunjik Archives," in *Cuneiform Archives and Libraries: Papers Read at the 30e Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale in Leiden, 4-8 July 1983* [ed. Klaas R. Veenhof; Uitgaven van het Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut te Istanbul 52; Istanbul: Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut, 1986], 213). (See also in this regard, M. Cogan and H. Tadmor, "Ashurbanipal Texts in the Collection of the Oriental Institute, University of Chicago," *JCS* 40/1 [1988]: 84-96).

Nevertheless, as the label, "Library of Assurbanipal," is preferred in most of the publications surveyed in this chapter, it will be employed henceforth and qualified where and if necessary.

auspices of the Assyrian king, Assurbanipal (668 - ca. 630 B.C.E.) and was destroyed, along with the city of Nineveh, in 612 B.C.E.

Like the legendary founders of the Library of Alexandria, Assurbanipal attempted a universal collection of information.[47] The collections of Alexandria and Nineveh were probably the closest humankind would ever come to collecting all known information in one physical locality. Due to an accident of history that made the Nineveh discovery one of the first Mesopotamian collections to come to light, as well as this obvious corollary in universal collection policy between the legendary Alexandria and the reality of Nineveh, these two collections became the templates for library historians' understanding of

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[47] In the pseudepigraphal Letter of Aristeas (third century B.C.E. to first century C.E.) the author, a Jew from Alexandria, writes to his brother, Philocrates, regarding the efforts to translate the Jewish Law into Greek for the library of Ptolemy II. This fascinating account of the legendary origins of the Septuagint also includes a passage that is of import regarding the universal collection policy of the Library of Alexandria, as said to be executed by Demetrius of Phalerum, the librarian at this time: "On his appointment as keeper of the king's library, Demetrius of Phalerum undertook many different negotiations aimed at collecting, if possible, all the books in the world. By purchase and translation he brought to a successful conclusion, as far as lay in his power, the king's plan. We were present when the question was put to him, 'How many thousand books are there (in the royal library)?' His reply was, 'Over two hundred thousand, O King. I shall take urgent steps to increase in a short time the total to five hundred thousand'" (R.J.H. Shutt, "Letter of Aristeas (Third Century B.C. – First Century A.D.): A New Translation and Introduction," in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha: Expansions of the 'Old Testament' and Legends, Wisdom and Philosophical Literature, Prayers, Psalms and Odes, Fragments of Lost Judeo-Hellenistic Works* [ed. James H. Charlesworth; vol. 2 of *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, ed. James H. Charlesworth; New York: Doubleday, 1985], 12).

Conversely, in a letter, Assurbanipal stipulated his universal collection policy as follows: "Order of the king to Shadunu: I am well, may your heart be of good cheer. The day you see my letter, Shumâ, the son of Shumukina, Bêlêtir, his brother, Aplâ, the son of Arkatilâni, and such people. Of Borsippa as you know, take with you; and all the tablets that are in their houses and all the tablets laid up in the temple of Ezida seek out and collect the tablets for royal amulets (?) of the female chanters for the days of the month Nisan, the amulet of the chanting priests of the month Tashritu of the incantation series Bît-Sala', the amulet of the chanting priests for reckoning the day, the four amulets for the head of the royal bed, and favorable to the king, boxwood (?) cedar for the head of the royal bed. Incantation: 'May Ea and Marduk complete wisdom,' all the series that there are relating to war, together with their extra documents as many as there are, (the series) 'In battle a shaft shall not come near a man,' The series ... entering the palace spells, prayers stone inscriptions and those that are favorable for (my) royalty purification rites for the city. 'Turning the eyes,' although this is a trouble and whatever may be necessary in the palace, as much as there is and the rare tablets on your route, that are not found in Assyria, seek out and bring to me. Now I have sent to the shatam and the shaku officials. You shall put (these tablets) in your strong box. No one shall withhold tablets from you; and if there be any tablet or spell which I have failed to mention to you, and you perceive that it is good for my palace, search for it and get it and bring it to me" (Leroy Waterman, *Royal Correspondence of the Assyrian Empire: Translated into English, with a Transliteration of the Text and a Commentary* [4 vols.; Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1936], 4:212-215).

ancient libraries. The extraordinary features of the two collections were fundamental in shaping the early twentieth-century definition of an ancient library.

## 2.3 The Twentieth-Century Definition of Ancient Collections

The 1906 exposition by Morris Jastrow, entitled, "Did the Babylonian Temples have Libraries?"[48] was the first to deliberate over and formulate a definition for ancient libraries that went beyond the generic description of Justus Lipsius, namely, "A place in which books are kept."[49] Jastrow, having served as both university librarian and professor of Semitics at the University of Pennsylvania, was uniquely equipped for the set task of formulating a distinctive definition for the description of the ancient library.

Despite a century of scholarship and discovery, most modern library histories follow Jastrow's definition closely: in order to be defined as a *library*, an ancient collection has to be substantial enough in actual number of texts to equal or to exceed that of the Library of Assurbanipal. Secondly, it has to contain a predominance of "literary" material, that is, the collection has to be devoid of so-called administrative or documentary items such as letters, accounts, contracts, and so forth, that are often associated with archival material. In accordance with the universal collection policy of Assurbanipal and of the Library of Alexandria, it is further asserted that, to be recognized as a "true library," a collection has to have been gathered from various centres of learning. Finally, the existence of such a collection should have been prompted by "literature as an intellectual pleasure and stimulus."[50]

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[48] Jastrow, "Did the Babylonian Temples have Libraries?" 147-182.
[49] Lipsius, "A Brief Outline of the History of Libraries," 31-32.
[50] Jastrow, "Did the Babylonian Temples have Libraries?" 171.

When it is considered that, in 2001, Lionel Casson still observes that the Greeks were the first "... endowed with what was needed to bring (a library) into existence," based on the fact that they were, according to him, the first to hold the two major prerequisites - a "high level of literacy" and a so-called "abiding interest in intellectual endeavor" - Jastrow's persistent, century-old influence is clear.[51] Given the immense textual output by the inhabitants of the ancient Near East that followed their invention of

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[51] Casson, *Libraries in the Ancient World*, 17.

To establish conclusive statistics for literacy levels, not to mention an acceptable definition for functional ancient literacy, is highly problematic. Casson's assertion of higher literacy rates for the Greeks than the population of the ancient Near East is presumably based on the conclusions of William Harris, *Ancient Literacy* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University, 1989). Harris' work on Greek and Roman literacy sets the same variables that would be applicable to the ancient Near Eastern situation but ironically makes the reliability of any such comparison highly questionable. Statistics for the levels of ancient literacy is an extremely arbitrary process that takes societal and cultural factors into account, such as the existence of an extensive school system, levels of population density, the extent of the development of industry and trade, economic advancement, and so forth. Results may vary considerably based on the definition of literacy used by the scholars performing the study. Furthermore, given the preferential treatment bestowed by archaeologists in the past on city centres, palaces and temples, the representative nature of conclusions on levels of ancient literacy is muddled by the limited evidence for the literacy rates among the general population and under-represented groups such as slaves and women.

The main argument for a sudden rise in literacy levels among the Greeks – as opposed to presumed limited levels in earlier times - is the relative "simplicity" of the Greek alphabet that was assumed to have assisted the Greeks in bridging the gap from limited scribal literacy to a more all-encompassing level of literacy among the general populace (see Harris, *Ancient Literacy*, 331-332). W.F. Albright long held the opinion that the development of the Phoenician alphabet, and more specifically the Hebrew alphabet, would have granted the same easy access to the general population of Israel and the ancient Near East: "The 22 letter alphabet could be learned in a day or two by a bright student and in a week or two by the dullest; hence it could spread with great rapidity. I do not doubt for a moment that there were many urchins ... who could read and write as early as the time of the Judges, although I do not believe that the script was used for formal literature until later" (as quoted by Alan R. Millard, "The Practice of Writing in Ancient Israel," *BA* 35/4 [1972]: 98-111). Although one can certainly take issue with a number of aspects in this statement, Albright's legendary instinct – long ignored in this matter - that the existence of an alphabet, simple or not, implied higher levels of literacy than previously expected, was confirmed in November of 1999 (John N. Wilford, "Finds in Egypt Date Alphabet in Earlier Era," *New York Times*, Sunday, 14 November 1999, p. 1, 10). Scholars revealed the existence of two alphabetic rock inscriptions in the desert of southern Egypt. The two inscriptions pre-date proto-Sinaitic inscriptions and come from the period 2200-1800 B.C.E. They potentially prove that the development of the alphabet may have represented a movement to democratize the skill of writing in the ancient Near East, as they form part of graffiti left by western Asiatic couriers and mercenaries on the rock faces along the desert trade routes of Egypt.

On the topic of ancient Near Eastern literacy, see also P. Kyle McCarter, "The Early Diffusion of the Alphabet," *BA* 37/3 [1974]: 54-68; Alan R. Millard, "The Canaanite Linear Alphabet and Its Passage to the Greeks," *Kadmos* 15 [1976]: 130-144; John Baines and C. J. Eyre, "Four Notes on Literacy," *Göttinger Miszellen* 61 [1983]: 65-96; Jonas C. Greenfield, "'Because He/She Did not Know Letters': Remarks on a First Millennium C.E. Legal Expression," *JANESCU* 22 [1993]: 39-44; and the up to date bibliography of Alan R. Millard, *Reading and Writing in the Time of Jesus* [Washington Square, N.Y.: New York University, 2000]).

writing, this statement, left largely unchallenged in library circles, is a rather subjective response and difficult to support.. The emphasis on high levels of literacy among the general populace as a prerequisite for the existence of libraries follows the assumption first introduced by Edward Edwards that libraries by their very definition had to be "public" in nature.[52] That is, "true" libraries are democratic: publicly administered, free and accessible to all. This imposes on ancient collections a nineteenth-century conceptual burden that prompts the modern reader to imbue ancient deposits (particularly the Library of Assurbanipal and the Library of Alexandria) with qualities better associated with the nineteenth-century ideal of a public library than any approximation of an ancient textual collection. Any attempt to describe ancient libraries in this fashion is erroneous and ignores the historical reality that the idea of a public library is a nineteenth-century invention.[53] The establishment of public libraries in Roman times, often alluded to by classicists, is a myth, as access was restricted to the upper-class, male population.

Even so, the development of libraries is not dependent on accessibility *per se*, and Casson's absolute assumption that libraries develop only with the rise of ancient Greece is therefore erroneous. Such blanket statements feed the tendency for a prescriptive rather than descriptive definition of ancient collections. At most it will be conceded that, given the archaeological evidence for the existence of institutional libraries and an elite scribal class, one may conclude that widespread literacy is at most a prerequisite for the development of certain types of libraries (for example, the libraries of private citizens and

[52] Edwards is not the lone influence on the nineteenth-century development of an understanding of ancient libraries as essentially "public" in nature. Joachim Menant (*Découvertes Assyriennes; La Bibliothèque du Palais de Ninive* [Paris: E. Leroux, 1880]), one of the first to publish on the newly discovered Library of Assurbanipal, was also firmly convinced of the public nature of this library.

[53] "The establishment and growth of the public library may be viewed as part of the great social movement for the spread of knowledge among the poorer classes which took place in the late eighteenth century and the early years of the nineteenth century." See Minto, *A History of the Public Library Movement in Great Britain and Ireland*, 15.

public libraries). The absence of widespread literacy did not necessarily determine nor impede the emergence of libraries as a general phenomenon in the ancient Near East.

Yet, notwithstanding the numerous ancient Near Eastern collections discovered in the past two hundred years, the myth that "... all ancient collections of written records until the foundation of the Alexandrian library in the third century B.C.E. were essentially archives"[54] remains fixed. In some instances, this assertion was amended to allow for a single "Mesopotamian library," that is, the Library of Assurbanipal:[55] "This first library in history was established by Assurbanipal, King of Assyria ... Other deposits of clay tablets have been unearthed elsewhere in Mesopotamia, some older and even larger than Assurbanipal's collections, but these have been typical palace archives, rather than true libraries."[56]

To the present day, mainstream historians rarely acknowledge libraries older than Alexandria: "Libraries as a cultural institution were a Hellenistic phenomenon."[57] In most renditions of the beginnings of library history, the Library of Alexandria therefore arises like a legendary Venus from the primordial ocean of exclusively Greek culture, instantaneously mature and fully developed, to become both the progenitor and the object of Western scholarship. So ingrained is this predilection for tracing all library origins from Greek Alexandria, that it is often conveniently forgotten that, "... we possess more documentary data concerning the tiny Jewish colony set up in Elephantine than we do of

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[54] Hans Wellisch, "Ebla: the World's Oldest Library," *Journal of Library History* 16/3: 490.
[55] See, for example, A. Leo Oppenheim, *Ancient Mesopotamia: Portrait of a Dead Civilization*, 243-244; and H. Curtis Wright, "Assurbanipal," *ALA World Encyclopedia of Library and Information Services*: 59.
[56] Laura Arksey, "The Library of Assurbanipal, King of the World," 834.
[57] Yaacov Shavit, "The 'Qumran Library' in the Light of the Attitude Towards Books and Libraries in the Second Temple Period," in *Methods of Investigation of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Khirbet Qumran Site: Present Realities and Future Prospects; Conference Held in New York City on December 14-17, 1992* (ed. Michael O. Wise, Norman Golb, John J. Collins and Dennis G. Pardee; Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences 722; New York: New York Academy of Sciences, 1994), 302.

Western learning which at one time was housed in the library of Alexandria."[58] Elephantine was excavated on an island in the Nile at modern Aswan. This comparison by the Dead Sea Scrolls scholar, Fiorentino García Martínez, refers to the relatively small, but historically significant, stash of papyrus documents compiled during Persian rule in the fifth century B.C.E. García Martínez's remark lies at the root of this discussion: the evident detachment between the origins of libraries promoted in theoretical supposition by the histories of ancient libraries written in the past four hundred years and the discoveries of the ancient archaeological and historical realities that were made during the nineteenth and twentieth-centuries. This sense of detachment is further emphasized by the remarkable lack of synthesis between library history and the work of ancient Near Eastern scholarship in disciplines such as Assyriology, Egyptology, Biblical Studies, and so forth, to which I have already alluded. There is a persistent tardiness in the assimilation of new material and discoveries from ancient Near Eastern studies into library history, which lends datedness to all ideas, and a concomitant ignorance in ancient Near Eastern studies regarding the seminal work of library historians and archivists.

The result is problematic. First, despite the negation of libraries older than Alexandria, scholarly literature is rife with what the Assyriologists Klaas Veenhof and Simo Parpola euphemistically refer to as "inconsiderate"[59] treatment or as "arbitrariness"[60] in the use of terminology. The best example comes from no lesser source than the 15th edition of the *New Encyclopædia Britannica*, which asserts that, "The

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[58] Fiorentino García Martínez, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Translated: the Qumran Texts in English* (trans. W.G.E. Watson; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1994), li.
[59] Veenhof, "Cuneiform Archives: An Introduction," 4.
[60] Simo Parpola, "The Royal Archives of Nineveh," in *Cuneiform Archives and Libraries: Papers Read at the 30e Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale in Leiden, 4-8 July 1983* (ed. Klaas R. Veenhof; Uitgaven van het Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut te Istanbul 52; Istanbul: Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut, 1986), 224.

earliest libraries were archives ..."[61] (This assertion was dropped from later editions of the Encyclopaedia). Numerous permutations of the same inconsistency pervade the literature. The collections from Ebla, discovered in the 1970s in modern Syria, contain texts approximately 4,500 years old, thousands of years older than both Alexandria and those found in the Library of Assurbanipal. In Giovanni Pettinato's 1981 publication, *The Archives of Ebla*,[62] the phrase "library of Ebla" is used indiscriminately and intermingled with statements such as: "The recovery of a library immediately raises the question about archival criteria ..."[63] In the same vein the Assyriologist, Pinhas Artzi, refers to the "'library' of the Amarna archives."[64] This illogical interchangeability of terminology is particularly troubling, because textbooks and publications specializing in library history seldom acknowledge it. Even more disquieting is the unacceptable implication that archives are thus to be viewed as the evolutionary precursors to libraries and that they were of necessity cruder, more primitive, and less "cultural" or "literary" in nature. The exception is the work of Mogens Weitemeyer who, with his 1956 essay,[65] drew attention to the inconsistencies in usage. Unfortunately, although Weitemeyer's work enjoys the most prevalent mention in both library history and ancient Near Eastern sources, few scholars answered his challenge to refine the description of the various ancient Near

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[61] "Library," *The New Encyclopædia Britannica* 7:333.
[62] Giovanni Pettinato, *The Archives of Ebla: An Empire Inscribed in Clay* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1981).
[63] Pettinato, *The Archives of Ebla*, 48.
[64] Pinhas Artzi, "Observations on the 'Library' of the Amarna Archives," in *Cuneiform Archives and Libraries: Papers Read at the 30e Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale in Leiden, 4-8 July 1983* (ed. Klaas R. Veenhof; Uitgaven van het Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut te Istanbul 52; Istanbul: Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut, 1986), 210-212; and, more recently, Pinhas Artzi, "Studies in the Library of the Amarna Archive," in *Bar Ilan Studies in Assyriology: Dedicated to Pinhas Artzi* (ed. Jacob Klein and Aaron Skaist; Bar-Ilan Studies in Near Eastern Languages and Culture; Ramat Gan: Bar Ilan University, 1990), 139-156.
[65] Weitemeyer, "Archive and Library Technique in Ancient Mesopotamia," 217-238.

Eastern collections. And most are based solely on his English essay on technique, with little reference to the broader work on the subject that was only published in Danish.[66]

Instead, as the years following the Second World War also saw a rise in interest in social and economic history, the focus on textual deposits shifted to highlight the vast quantities of "non-literary" material[67] discovered since the beginning of the twentieth-century, most prominently, during excavations at various Ur III-sites.[68] Material that was hitherto deprecated as mere "laundry lists" now rose to prominence in Assyriology and an "archival approach" was introduced as a result:

> This development was stimulated by the improved knowledge of Sumerian – the language of most administrative records from the third millennium B.C. – and the discovery of important Akkadian archives in Mari, Kanish, Nuzi, Ugarit e.a. [*sic*]. Its effects can be observed in recent bibliographies of cuneiform studies, where titles using the words 'archives' and 'archival' have become rather numerous.[69]

This proved fertile ground for the reception of Ernst Posner's landmark, *Archives in the Ancient World*, published in 1972. In the absence of a companion volume for ancient libraries, it came as no surprise that, when the *Rencontre Assyriologique*

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[66] The exception is Simo Parpola, who does refer to *Babylonske og Assyriske Arkiver og Biblioteker*. See, for example, Parpola, "The Royal Archives of Nineveh," 236.

[67] A distinction between library and archival material based solely on content is a fallacy that is perpetuated to the present day. It gives rise to an uneasy dichotomy where a collection is often categorized as much by what it does not contain in terms of content, as in terms of what it includes. Ancient libraries are typically said to house "historical documents," that is, texts of a "literary" nature (epics and myths, wisdom literature, king-lists, royal inscriptions, religious material, and so forth, often duplicated and standardized), as well as school texts, omen texts, astronomical texts and codices. Word lists, that is, rudimentary bilingual or trilingual "dictionaries", are usually also considered "literary" in nature. By contrast the majority of textual material discovered falls in the second category, loosely referred to as "documentary" or "bureaucratic" material. That is, everything that is not considered "literary": "administrative" material, records of daily activities, inventory lists and stock tallies, tribute lists, census returns, oracle queries, contracts (marriages, adoptions, wills, and so forth) as well as other legal documents. See, for example, A. Leo Oppenheim, *Ancient Mesopotamia: Portrait of a Dead Civilization*, 14-30; Simo Parpola, "The Royal Archives of Nineveh," 224; as well as Ernst Posner's elaborately prescriptive list of archival documents that may be found in an ancient archive (*Archives in the Ancient World*, 3-4).

[68] See, for example, David McGuiness, "Archival Interrelationships During Ur III," *JANESCU* 13 (1981): 53-66.

[69] Klaas R. Veenhof, "Cuneiform Archives: An Introduction," 4.

*Internationale* in 1983 devoted their annual conference to cuneiform libraries and archives, the emphasis fell heavily on the latter. Klaas Veenhof, the editor of the conference volume, continued to contribute groundbreaking work on ancient collections.[70] But, because of the inconsistency in treatment of libraries older than Alexandria, it so happens that the assumption became fixed that ancient Near Eastern libraries were no more than "a special type of archives reserved for specific categories of texts and, probably, for their own circle of users."[71] By contrast, ancient archives were now elevated and subjected to serious scrutiny by the ancient Near Eastern scholarly community. Veenhof, reliant on the Dutch archival tradition represented by Jacobus van der Gouw,[72] as well as Muller, Feith and Fruin,[73] came to the conclusion that ancient archives fit best into the category of the so-called "working archive":

> We (Assyriologists) use "archives" as a designation of what archival science calls a "fonds d'archives", that is "the total of records accumulated during the time a particular task was performed by an institution or person", to which some would like to add "and still present with those who made them out or used them". These conditions are met by many cuneiform archives, which were normally used and kept growing until the very moment they stopped, usually in consequence of some catastrophe. The time of abandonment or destruction normally can be determined from the dates of the latest records. The location of many "tablet rooms", moreover, indicates that their "archives" were used and served practical purposes. We find them near the entrance of a palace for registering what is entering or leaving, near a court or audience room for consultation, near or in a workshop, kitchen or storehouse for

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[70] See also Klaas R. Veenhof's inaugural address as professor at the University of Leiden: *Spijkerschriftarchieven*; as well as Klaas R. Veenhof, "Libraries and Archives," *OEANE* 3:351-357.
[71] Klaas R. Veenhof, *Cuneiform Archives and Libraries*, 305.
[72] Jacobus L. van der Gouw, *Archiefwetenschap* (The Hague: Albani, 1973).
[73] S. Muller, J.A. Feith and R. Fruin, *Manual for the Arrangement and Description of Archives: Drawn up by Direction of the Netherlands Association of Archivists* (trans. of the 2nd ed. by Arthur H. Leavitt; New York: H.W. Wilson Company, 1940; reissue, New York: H.W. Wilson Company, 1968).

checking the movements of goods, the consumption and the production, and for taking stock.[74]

Veenhof readily acknowledged that this definition excluded two features included in the conventional understanding of ancient collections of an archival nature. First, the "accepted meaning" of "a collection or repository of records no longer in use but preserved for their historical value and stored separately,"[75] the permanent collection. Veenhof holds the opinion that this type of collection was rare for ancient Mesopotamia and the rest of the ancient world, and it's exclusion from the abovementioned definition is therefore dismissed as of negligible consequence. Secondly, the above definition has to contend with the conundrum that the Dutch definition "... requires that they (archives) stem from administrative bodies or their officials, and that the records were made out, used and preserved *ex officio*."[76] This prerequisite immediately excluded a large body of material originating from private individuals and homes, which, in the published literature, are referred to as "private archives."

Because of the inherent inconsistencies in accommodating all known textual deposits in the ancient Near East within the definition of either *library* or *archive*, and because of the vagueness in the definition of ancient collections referred to previously, an ever-present emphasis on the contents of the collection as single-most important distinctive quality emerged. Mogens Weitemeyer perpetuated this concept, evident in Jastrow's initial definition, most forcefully. There is no better illustration of the convoluted intricacies to which this gives rise than the work of Olof Pedersén. His

[74] Klaas R. Veenhof, "Cuneiform Archives: An Introduction," 7-8.
[75] Klaas R. Veenhof, "Cuneiform Archives: An Introduction," 7.
[76] Klaas R. Veenhof, "Cuneiform Archives: An Introduction," 9. Muller, Feith and Fruin stipulate: "An archival collection is the whole of the written documents, drawings and printed matter, officially received or produced by an administrative body or one of its officials, in so far as these documents were intended to remain in the custody of that body or of that official" (*Manual for the Arrangement and Description of Archives*, 13).

*Archives and Libraries in the Ancient Near East: 1500-300 B.C.*, published in 1998, represents the upsurge in interest in ancient collection development among ancient Near Eastern scholars, that developed in conjunction with or was inspired by Veenhof's work. And, it should be pointed out, the following critique of Pedersén's distinction between archives and libraries should in no manner detract from the high esteem in which this work is held by the present author.

Pedersén's book is of remarkable academic range and of great scholarly import. It fills a much-needed void in our understanding of ancient collections. Unfortunately, it has one obvious deficiency. He follows Weitemeyer and defines the ancient collections broadly in terms of contents: "Archives are collections of documents and libraries are collections of literary texts."[77] But, because no such distinction seems indigenous to the ancient textual deposits under discussion, he designates numerous ancient collections as "archive with library" or "library with archive," which effectively eradicates any attempt at distinction. One of the few, and evidently anomalous, examples of an ancient grouping of texts that, under this definition would be regarded as a *library* or *libraries*, is the Dead Sea Scrolls; that is, if the Copper Scroll and 4QMMT are disregarded as representative of so-called "documentary" or administrative material. Few collections are ever completely devoid of one or the other contentual grouping. The pre-eminent ancient library, the Library of Assurbanipal, would certainly not qualify. A substantial percentage of the so-called "Library" consisted of "administrative material."[78] As representative of current

[77] Olof Pedersén, *Archives and Libraries in the Ancient Near East: 1500-300 B.C.*, 3.
[78] See Simo Parpola, "The Royal Archives of Nineveh," 223-236.

usage, this indicates clear inadequacies in our understanding and definition of ancient libraries and archives.[79]

Unwittingly, Pedersén proves that a simple distinction based on the contents of collections is inadequate. In this he is not alone. Most archival handbooks include a section pertaining to the differences between libraries and archives, and it is clearly evident from these discussions that a distinction is not that easily made. Within this context, in an essay entitled, "Wisdom, Knowledge, Information and Data: Transformation and Convergence in Archives and Libraries in the Western World,"[80] two respected Canadian archivists, Cynthia Durance and Hugh Taylor, came to the same conclusion. As a result, they suggested that user perception and usage should be considered as important as the actual contents of the collection: "It is entirely possible, and not infrequent, that one person's archives is another person's library," and vice versa.[81] Notwithstanding Durance and Taylor's suggestion, library historians, when confronted with antiquity, continue to favour a more generalized approach in order to circumvent the difficulties of closer definition, as indicated by Jastrow, Weitemeyer and Veenhof.

The resolute popularity of the traditional approach to ancient collections is best represented by the work of Elmer Johnson and Michael Harris in the various editions of the *History of Libraries in the Western World*.[82] This is because of the contemporary

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[79] For full review, see Jaqueline du Toit, review of O. Pedersén, *Archives and Libraries in the Ancient Near East: 1500-300 B.C.*, *ARC* 27 (1999): 223-225.
[80] Cynthia J. Durance and Hugh A. Taylor, "Wisdom, Knowledge, Information and Data: Transformation and Convergence in Archives and Libraries in the Western World," *Alexandria* 4/1 (1992): 37-61.
[81] Durance and Taylor, "Wisdom, Knowledge, Information and Data," 44.
[82] See Elmer D. Johnson, *A History of Libraries in the Western World* (New York: Scarecrow, 1965); Elmer D. Johnson, *History of Libraries in the Western World* (2nd ed. Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow. 1970); Elmer D. Johnson and Michael H. Harris, *History of Libraries in the Western World* (3rd rev. ed.; Metuchen, N.J.:

nature of the latest edition of this work, but also results from the fact that, over three decades and four editions, the following definition has seen no change or revision: "A library is a collection of graphic materials arranged for relatively easy use, cared for by an individual or individuals familiar with that arrangement, and accessible to at least a limited number of persons. This definition includes early religious and governmental archives."[83] Additionally, this portrayal "assumes" that "the distinction between a library and an archive is relatively modern, and for historical purposes the two can be considered together..."[84] This approach has very little appeal to ancient Near Eastern scholars, indicating, as Durrance and Taylor suggested, that ancient textual deposits cannot be artificially lumped together in a homogenous and amorphous group referred to as pre-Alexandrian "prototypes" or the like.

The library/archive delineatory dichotomy, created for the description of ancient collections, is completely reliant on the presence or absence of certain types of documents. This approach includes all discovered textual deposits within the binary confines of the library/archive definition and gives little to no recognition to user intent outside the confines of this definition. As such, the greatest disadvantage to this state of affairs, hitherto not addressed by the published literature, is that it negates the existence of a complete subset of ancient textual deposits: rubble heaps of discarded material often used as landfill and in building projects; texts hidden away or deposited on purpose in times of adversity or for religious purposes; genizas; the collections excluded by Veenhof's favoured archival definition, "a collection or repository of records no longer in

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Scarecrow, 1976); and Michael H. Harris, *History of Libraries in the Western World* (4th ed.; Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow, 1995).

[83] Michael H. Harris, *History of Libraries in the Western World*, 3.

[84] Michael H. Harris, *History of Libraries in the Western World*, 3.

use but preserved for their historical value and stored separately"; and so forth. These deposits, depending on their contents, may well answer to the traditional definition of *library* or *archive*, but clearly did not function as such within their historical context, at point of discovery. Nevertheless, without careful delineation of terminological intent, it has to be cautioned that many deposits, upon discovery and in the academic literature, are labelled *archive* or *library*, notwithstanding the original intent of the user or the nature of the deposit.

But there is an added source of confusion: ancient text accumulations, often dispersed after discovery and reconstituted in a new environment in various museums or university libraries or archives, may rightfully answer to a different category of "library" or "archive" within the modern context.

This point is best illustrated by one of many similar examples: when Stefan Reif, in his latest work on the Cairo Geniza, refers to the geniza documents in the Cambridge University Collection as a "Jewish archive," the reference is evidently to the modern use to which the discovered geniza documents have been reconstituted. Within its original context the geniza at no time served as an archive. Yet, as the first paragraph of his introduction illustrate, this may not always be as clearly stated and can often lead to misinterpretation:

> Over seven hundred years ago, ... a Jewish community known throughout the Islamic empire for its social and political stability, as well as its economic and cultural achievements, had already been flourishing on the Nile for two hundred and fifty years. The community was that of old Cairo and, almost without realizing it, the officials of this significant Jewish settlement were

> beginning to build up an archive that was destined to achieve scholarly immortality as the Cairo Genizah.[85]

In conclusion, it should also be pointed out that the traditional boundaries of the library/archive binary definition for ancient deposits are stationary and do not as a rule provide for the responsiveness of the textual deposit in relation to the community in which it existed. Little reference is therefore made to the possibility that the type and function of a collection may have changed over time in response to the community of users in which it was found.

## 2.4 Conclusion

> Near Eastern collections were of a specific nature that answered to the needs of the civilization of which they were part. They ceased to exist when that civilization came to an end; they were not the seed which engendered the libraries with their far wider horizons that were to arise in the world of Greece and Rome. Nevertheless they deserve honorable mention in the historical record.[86]

It would have pleased Ernest Cushing Richardson to know that his tireless work in aid of the recognition of ancient libraries and archives was not in vain. It may also have amused him that the continued interest in their terminological distinction, nature and function, is not engendered by library history that affords it a century later but an "honorable mention."

As the following chapters will indicate, the interest in the nature of text collections and adjunct deposits, have become central to a diverse range of academic pursuits. The still unresolved difference in terminological distinction and the evident hesitancy in

[85] Stefan C. Reif, *A Jewish Archive From Old Cairo: The History of Cambridge University's Genizah Collection* (Culture and Civilisation in the Middle East; Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 2000), 1.
[86] Lionel Casson, *Libraries in the Ancient World*, 15.

including adjunct textual deposits into the broader discussion have become crucial to Richardson's central concern: the biblical text itself. The following chapters will endeavour to illuminate the organization and use of ancient and medieval textual collections in its various forms by addressing simultaneously the greatest threat to the study of ancient textual deposits: not the threat of denial, but the threat of denied relevance.

# Chapter 3

# "An Imperceptible Dialogue": Canon, Temple and Library

> Until then I had thought each book spoke of the things, human or divine, that lied outside books. Now I realized that not infrequently books speak of books: it is as if they spoke among themselves. In the light of this reflection, the library seemed all the more disturbing to me. It was then the place of a long, centuries-old murmuring, an imperceptible dialogue between one parchment and another, a living thing, a receptacle of powers not to be ruled by a human mind, a treasure of secrets emanated by many minds, surviving the death of those who had produced them or had been their conveyors.[1]

## 3.1 Introduction

The existence of substantial religious textual deposits in ancient temples and sanctuaries is a *sine qua non* in contemporary academic literature. After all, as often stated, the word *bible* is in itself testimony to the underlying meaning: a library or collection of books. Yet, the implications of this more literal application of the term are rarely accorded their full weight, notwithstanding the fact that, from the very first textual discoveries in ancient sanctuaries, the character of religious collections in ancient Near Eastern temples was a major sticking point in the academic discourse of the time. The seriousness of what would later euphemistically be referred to as "arbitrariness" in the use

[1] Umberto Eco, *The Name of the Rose* (trans. William Weaver; New York: Warner Books, 1984), 342-343.

of terminology was obscured by the more pressing juxtaposition of adherence to strict scientific methodology versus the increasing popularization of the discoveries and the emergence of archaeology as a budding science.

## 3.2 Tracing the Development of a Concept: "Temple Library"

The tension between popular appeal and scholarly dictate was inevitable from the moment Claudius Rich was immortalized by Lord Byron in *Don Juan*.[2] Even before George Smith's 1872 discovery of the flood narrative on the eleventh tablet of the Gilgamesh Epic, the early explorers were aware of the biblical appeal of the discoveries in Mesopotamia.[3] In 1846, his friend, Charles Alison, the Oriental Secretary at Constantinople, urged Layard to consider:

> The interest about your stones is very great, I hear - and if you can as I before said attach a biblical importance to your discoveries you will come the

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[2] Claudius Rich worked for the East India Company in Baghdad. Seton Lloyd describes his travels and his resultant memoirs as a twofold stimulus: it stirred public interest and created the "initial impulse" for the nascent archaeology of Mesopotamia. A first version of Rich's memoirs appeared in the Viennese journal *Mine de l'Orient* in 1812 and later became the book, *Memoir on the Ruins of Babylon*. A second memoir, *Second Memoir on Babylon*, was published in 1818. These memoirs form the basis for the reference to Rich in Byron's poem. The passage in *Don Juan*, Canto V, 62, reads:

> Because they can't, find out the very spot
> Of that same Babel, or because they won't,
> (Though Claudius Rich, Esquire, some bricks has got
> And written lately two memoirs upon't)

For a complete perspective on Rich and his role in Mesopotamian exploration, see Seton Lloyd, *Foundations in the Dust: The Story of Mesopotamian Exploration* (rev. and enl. ed.; New York: Thames and Hudson, 1980), 7-72; see also Claudius J. Rich, *Memoir on the Ruins of Babylon* (3rd ed.; London, 1818) and Claudius J. Rich, *Second Memoir on Babylon: Containing an Inquiry into the Correspondence between the Ancient Descriptions of Babylon and the Remains still Visible: Suggested by the "Remarks" of Major Rennell in the Archæologia* (London, 1818).

For a broad retrospective on the influence and impression of Assyria and Assyriology on the West, see A.R. George, "Assyria and the Western World" (in *Assyria 1995: Proceedings of the 10th Anniversary Symposium of the Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, Helsinki, September 7-11, 1995* [ed. S. Parpola and R.M. Whiting; Helsinki: Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 1997], 69-75), as well as A. Kirk Grayson, "The Resurrection of Ashur: A History of Assyrian Studies" (in *Assyria 1995: Proceedings of the 10th Anniversary Symposium of the Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, Helsinki, September 7-11, 1995* [ed. S. Parpola and R.M. Whiting; Helsinki: Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 1997], 105-114).

[3] Smith's subsequent discoveries are described in: *Assyrian Discoveries: An Account of Explorations and Discoveries on the Site of Nineveh, During 1873 and 1874* (New York: Scribner, Armstrong & Co., 1875).

> complete dodge over this world of fools and dreamers; you can get some religious fellow to inspire you with the necessary cant, for which I won't think a bit the worse for you.[4]

Although it is certainly not suggested that religious devotion had no role to play in the agenda of the explorers and the exploration societies that were to come, it has to be pointed out, as Moorey has suggested, that, "It is not easy in such circumstances to distinguish the relative roles of piety and disinterested scholarship among the pioneers."[5]

The resultant flood of publications reflects the same uncomfortable fusion of scholarship and popular appeal in both content and readership. It is necessary to qualify this statement very carefully. It would simply be too easy to imply Machiavellian intent on the part of either the excavators or their financial partners. Although there is very little doubt that scholarship and popular appeal proved uneasy cohorts, to imply that the excavators themselves were motivated solely by treasure hunting would be wrong. Aage Westenholz points out that it is evident that the early archaeologists at Nippur, for example, were well aware of and quite frustrated by the resultant methodological inconsistency apparent in how they were excavating, as opposed to how it should be done. Time constraints and financial dictates by the committee of the University Museum of Pennsylvania resulted in what Westenholz refers to as a "treasure-hunting manner" of

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[4] H.W.F. Saggs, *Assyriology and the Study of the Old Testament: An Inaugural Lecture Delivered at University College, Cardiff, Tuesday, December 3rd, 1968* (Cardiff: University of Wales, 1969), 10-11. This passage is cited and discussed in further detail by P.R.S. Moorey, *A Century of Biblical Archaeology* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster/John Knox, 1991), 3.

[5] Moorey (*A Century of Biblical Archaeology*, 3) elaborates further: "Some, like Edward Robinson, were explicit about their motivation, inaugurating a long tradition of active American investigators trained in biblical studies and theology. To others, primarily in England and France, the biblical relevance of their discoveries was largely a matter of indifference or fortunate accident, which brought financial support and academic interest otherwise unlikely to be available . . . The critical importance of this connection in raising public support for field work is reflected in the terms of reference of many of the early societies created to promote and sustain research in Palestine and adjacent regions. Birch's suggestion in 1870 that the first society anywhere created specifically to 'investigate and systematize the Antiquities of the ancient and mighty empires and primeval peoples whose records are centred around the venerable pages of the Bible' should be known as The Society of Biblical Archaeology was 'a stroke of genius, for it appealed not only to philologists, but to theologians of all shades of thought'."

excavation, that is, to dig specifically for "exportable finds" rather than following a systematic approach. But making the burgeoning museums and/or their financial backers the guilty parties is also fraught with difficulty, despite the fact that their policies resulted in circumstances where the success or failure of each expedition was judged solely in terms of the objects it produced:

> The desire of the committee to secure tablets and other artefacts as Museum objects was certainly misguided from a purely archaeological point of view, but it was not all that unreasonable. They were building a museum ... They knew that at least half of the finds, for which they paid so much, would be retained by the Turks, in accordance with the law. But more important than that, their idea was that the Museum should serve the general public for enlightenment and education. For that purpose it was imperative to have real objects of art and authentic records of ancient history on exhibit right there, not just books with plans and sketches of ruined buildings and strata in some far-away land of fantasy. Their idea was that the results of the expedition should benefit not only the narrow circle of specialists but also the large number of laymen who, like the subscribers themselves, were educated and interested enough to take an active part in the advancement of science.[6]

One of the first great successes in the fusion of popular appeal and scholarship was Austen Henry Layard's *Nineveh and its Remains*. It became an instant bestseller, which, as the author proudly pointed out, placed it "side by side" with the popular recipe book of the day, *Mrs. Rundell's Cookery*,[7] which gives one some indication of the general appeal

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[6] Aage Westenholz, "The Early Excavators of Nippur," in *Nippur at the Centennial: Papers Read at the 35e Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, Philadelphia, 1988* (ed. Maria deJong Ellis; Occasional Publications of the Samuel Noah Kramer Fund 14; Philadelphia: University Museum, 1992), 292-293.

[7] In a letter to Mitford, dated 22 March 1850, Layard writes from Mosul: "I had very little idea of publishing when I returned to Europe after my Nineveh explorations, but my friends pressed the thing so much, the Trustees adding their request, and Murray was so kind, that I *nolens volens* felt bound to rush into print. I can assure you that I did so tremblingly, and had very great doubts indeed as to my probable success. But the time was favourable, the subject interested all parties, and there were no books in the market owing to the state of political matters at the time – three very material elements in success. In every way the most sanguine expectations of my friends (I will not say my own, for I had none) have been

of his work. The inherent incompatibility of the still developing parameters for a growing science in its infancy, on the one hand, and the interest of the religious public as well as potential patrons, on the other, came to a head in the wake of the publication of Hermann Hilprecht's *Explorations in Bible Lands During the 19th Century.*[8] This was by far not the only publication of this nature, but it is significant because it embroiled the author in a fierce debacle of accusation and counter-accusation referred to in the literature as the "Nippur Controversy," better known as the "Peters-Hilprecht Controversy."[9]

Nippur[10] is an ancient Mesopotamian cult centre situated approximately 180 kilometres southwest of Baghdad. The site was first occupied during the Ubaid period (Ubaid 2- or Hajji Muhammed-sherds, ca. 5000 B.C.E., were found)[11] and rose to

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surpassed. Of notoriety I have plenty, and the very liberal arrangement of my publishers has enabled me to realise a *very handsome* sum. Nearly 8000 copies were sold in the year – a new edition is in the press, and Murray anticipates a continual steady demand for the book, which will place it side by side with Mrs Rundell's Cookery ..." See Austen Henry Layard, *Autobiography and Letters from his Childhood until his Appointment as H.M. Ambassador at Madrid* (ed. William N. Bruce; 2 vols.; London: John Murray, 1903), 2:191.

[8] Hermann V. Hilprecht, *Explorations in Bible Lands During the 19th Century* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1903).

[9] The Peters-Hilprecht Controversy result from statements made by Hilprecht regarding the discovery of a "temple library" at Nippur in *Explorations in Bible Lands*, as well as in a lesser known publication: Hermann Hilprecht, *Die Ausgrabungen der Universität von Pennsylvania im Bêl-Tempel zu Nippur* (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1903). Peters questioned the validity of Hilprecht's statements and the provenance of his examples. After Hilprecht was cleared of most of the charges brought against him by John P. Peters and others, he proceeded to publish the entire body of documentation related to the three year long controversy. See Hermann V. Hilprecht, ed., *The So-Called Peters-Hilprecht Controversy, Part I: Proceedings of the Committee Appointed by the Board of Trustees of the University of Pennsylvania to Act as Court of Inquiry & Part II: Supplemental Documents, Evidence and Statement* (Philadelphia: A.J. Holman, 1908).

[10] For a cursory description of Nippur and the archaeological history of the site, see Richard L. Zettler, "Nippur," *OEANE* 4:148-152. See also the conference volume of the 35th *Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale*: Maria deJong Ellis, ed., *Nippur at the Centennial: Papers Read at the 35e Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, Philadelphia, 1988* (Occasional Publications of the Samuel Noah Kramer Fund 14; Philadelphia: University Museum, 1992); and for additional background, Richard L. Zettler, *The Ur III Temple of Inanna at Nippur: The Operation and Organization of Urban Religious Institutions in Mesopotamia in the Late Third Millennium B.C.* (Berliner Beiträge zum Vorderen Orient 11; Berlin: Reimer, 1992).

[11] McGuire Gibson, "Patterns of Occupation at Nippur," in *Nippur at the Centennial: Papers Read at the 35e Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, Philadelphia, 1988* (ed. Maria deJong Ellis; Occasional Publications of the Samuel Noah Kramer Fund 14; Philadelphia: University Museum, 1992), 36. See also the section on the early history of Nippur in Steven W. Cole, *Nippur in Late Assyrian Times: c. 755-612 BC* (State Archives of Assyria Studies 4; Helsinki: The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 1996), 7-12.

prominence as central to the worship of the supreme deity of the Sumerian pantheon, Enlil, and his consort, Ninlil. This in itself granted the city theological supremacy in the ancient Near Eastern ideology from the second half of the third millennium B.C.E. through most of the second millennium B.C.E. Changes in the flow pattern of the Euphrates by the late second millennium B.C.E., or early in the first millennium B.C.E., resulted in the gradual abandonment of Nippur, which experienced limited occupation between the late-thirteenth and mid-eighth centuries B.C.E. This changed when the Euphrates altered its course yet again.

But it was the political rise of Babylon, rather than Nippur's changing fortunes as such that would ultimately produce an equal rise in the theological importance of Marduk, with a resultant displacement of Enlil as central figure.[12] In its role as central shrine, as well as important political centre,[13] Nippur proved to be one of the most valuable sources of textual material related to Sumerian literature and culture. The ancient city has been the subject of archaeological excavation since the mid-nineteenth-century, starting with a short stint in 1851 by Austen Henry Layard. It is, however, the University of Pennsylvania's first excavations at this site in the latter part of the nineteenth-century

[12] See W.G. Lambert, "Nippur in Ancient Ideology," in *Nippur at the Centennial: Papers Read at the 35e Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, Philadelphia, 1988* (ed. Maria deJong Ellis; Occasional Publications of the Samuel Noah Kramer Fund 14; Philadelphia: University Museum, 1992), 119-126.

[13] It is incorrect to claim that Nippur embodied an early form of centralized political predominance in the region. Nevertheless, it did function as a point of congregation for the purposes of legal decision-making and education in ancient Sumer. Stephen Lieberman thus describes Nippur's dual importance as resulting from its inherent association as a place of both heavenly and earthly assembly: a "site of decisions, whether human or divine" (Stephen J. Lieberman, "Nippur: City of Decisions," in *Nippur at the Centennial: Papers Read at the 35e Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, Philadelphia, 1988* [ed. Maria deJong Ellis; Occasional Publications of the Samuel Noah Kramer Fund 14; Philadelphia: University Museum, 1992], 127-136). See also Steven W. Cole: "According to the tradition preserved in the Sumerian composition known as the 'History of Tummal,' royal patronage of the holy city of Nippur commenced as early as 2700 BC during the first dynasties of Kish, Uruk and Ur and continued afterwards in an unbroken tradition for almost one thousand years. By the middle of the twenty-fourth century BC, a king's possession of Nippur, and with it his claim of Enlil's call to kingship, provided the basis for *de jure* political hegemony, however ephemeral, over the plain of the twin rivers" (*Nippur in Late Assyrian Times: c. 755-612 BC*, 7). For a translation of the "Tummal Inscription," see Samuel N. Kramer, *The Sumerians: Their History, Culture, and Character* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1963), 46-49.

(1888 to 1900)[14] that are of particular interest for the purposes of this discussion. And even more important are the figures associated with the University and its excavations at the time: Morris Jastrow (1861-1921), John Peters (1852-1921) and Hermann Hilprecht (1859-1925).[15] Jastrow was the son of the celebrated Marcus Jastrow, and, significantly, Morris Jastrow held the position as university librarian at the University of Pennsylvania, while he also served as Professor of Semitics and later as chair of the department. Jastrow would serve the University of Pennsylvania with distinction until his death in 1921.

John Peters was, in the words of Cyrus Gordon, "The man who catapulted the University of Pennsylvania into the forefront of Near Eastern centers on the world scene ... not until the discoveries at Nippur did Penn become famous on the world scene as an intellectual center."[16] Peters earmarked Nippur for what would prove to be the first American archaeological expedition in the Near East. As fundraiser, Peters had few equals. He also led the first two expeditions. Furthermore, it was Peters who invited Hermann Hilprecht, a German Assyriologist and journalist appointed to report specifically on discoveries in biblical archaeology, to join the expedition. In fact, as Semitist, Assyriologist, and archaeologist, Hilprecht was in many respects far better equipped than Peters to lead the project.

Retrospect has been kind to Hermann Hilprecht, who is hailed for his vehement criticism of the archaeological methodology employed at Nippur and for his ingenious interpretation of finds in the field:

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[14] The University of Pennsylvania conducted four expeditions at Nippur: in the winter of 1889; from January to May of 1890; from 1893 to 1896; and from the winter of 1899, until the spring of 1900.
[15] For more elaborate bibliographical information on Jastrow, Peters and Hilprecht, respectively, see Jacob Rotschild and Jack Riemer, "Jastrow," *EncJud* 9:1296-1298; Richard L. Zettler, "Peters, John Punnett," *OEANE* 4:302-303; and Richard L. Zettler, "Hilprecht, Hermann Vollrat," *OEANE* 3:26-27.
[16] Cyrus H. Gordon, *The Pennsylvania Tradition of Semitics: A Century of Near Eastern and Biblical Studies at the University of Pennsylvania* (Biblical Scholarship in North America 13; Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars, 1986), 9-10.

> Professor Hilprecht, the first incumbent of the Clark Chair in Assyriology, played a leading role in publishing the Nippur finds, assisted by his staff and students ... Hilprecht also brought in a galaxy of Assyriologists and archaeologists over the years from Europe. Among them were Stephen Langdon, Arno Poebel (who later formulated a Sumerian grammar in 1923), C. Leonard Woolley (who later headed the epoch-making joint expeditions of the University Museum and British Museum at Ur), and Arthur Ungnad (one of the "greats" in Assyriology and a master of the whole gamut of Semitic languages). The University of Pennsylvania soon became an outstanding training center for young Assyriologist-Semitists under the tutelage of Jastrow and Hilprecht.[17]

By contrast, John P. Peters is depicted as a visionary for initiating the Nippur Expedition, but with little long-term influence on resultant scholarship. He is described as follows:

> Preoccupied with the budgetary aspects of the dig, he gave more attention to recovering impressive artefacts that would attract large financial donations than to observing the standards of scientific method. Peters's [*sic*] inability to maintain cordial relations with either his colleagues or his hired laborers exacerbated a tense situation, leading to a minor mutiny.[18]

Peters would later leave the University of Pennsylvania to eventually become rector of St. Michael's Church in New York City in 1893. Hilprecht became his successor as Scientific Director at Nippur.

The great textual finds made by the European scholars of that time should be considered the prime motivation for this first American archaeological expedition to the Near East, as the opening lines of Peters' account of the first two campaigns proclaims: "England and France have done a noble work of exploration in Assyria and Babylonia. It

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[17] Cyrus H. Gordon, *The Pennsylvania Tradition of Semitics*, 10.
[18] Philip J. King, *American Archaeology in the Mideast: A History of the American Schools of Oriental Research* (Philadelphia: American Schools of Oriental Research, 1983), 12.

is time for America to do her part."[19] The discovery of the great Library of Assurbanipal had brought fame to Layard, Rawlinson, Rassam and Smith, and later also Budge, King and Thompson. It significantly raised the profile of the British Museum as a result, in the same way that the Louvre benefited from the expeditions undertaken by Emile Botta, Victor Place, Ernest de Sarzec, and others. Additionally, George Smith had just "rediscovered" the Flood Narrative of the Gilgamesh Epic in the recesses of the British Museum, and the importance of the finds for the Bible became all the more significant. National pride thus had an important role to play in the fortunes of the emergent museums and excavations were the primary means by which these museums were stocked.[20] Thus Nippur became the realization of, "the dream of America's future role in unearthing the cities of Mesopotamia *and* (my emphasis) their archives."[21]

The Peters-Hilprecht Controversy was therefore all the more significant in light of the embodiment of scientific discovery within the confines of national pride and endowment. Particularly, as the controversy was the direct result of a schism that

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[19] John P. Peters, *Nippur, Or Explorations and Adventures on the Euphrates: The Narrative of the University of Pennsylvania Expedition to Babylonia in the Years 1888-90* (2 vols.; New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1899), 1:1.

[20] See Gwendolyn Wright, ed., *The Formation of National Collections of Art and Archaeology* (Studies in the History of Art (Washington, D.C.) 47; Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 1996); Daniel J. Sherman and Irit Rogoff, eds., *Museum Culture: Histories, Discourses, Spectacles* (Media and Society 6; Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1994); and Edward Miller, *That Noble Cabinet: A History of The British Museum* (London: Deutsch, 1973).

[21] Cyrus H. Gordon, *The Pennsylvania Tradition of Semitics*, 29.

Fifty years later, the Director and Principal Librarian of the British Museum, Sir Frederic Kenyon, would attest to the success of the North American vision in the establishment of museums. In his important booklet on the history of libraries and museums, he pointed to the United States as the place where "the technique of the museum has reached its highest level." Kenyon elaborated: "The spread of museums has coincided in time with that of our own country, but with greater space, more liberal pecuniary support, and wider public interest, it has attained a scale with which no other country can compete. ... Though they came late into the field of research in classical lands and in the Nearer East, they have taken a foremost part in excavation during the last generation." Kenyon goes on to name the Museum of the University of Pennsylvania with other North American Museums (the Metoropolitan Museum of Art; the American Museum of Natural History; the Boston Museum of Fine Art; the Field Museum of Natural History at Chicago; and the museums "in Canada, in Toronto") as "among the great museums of the world" (Frederic G. Kenyon, *Libraries and Museums* (Benn's Sixpenny Library 100; London: Ernest Benn, 1930), 64-65.

developed between the two principals in response to Hilprecht's publication and interpretation of findings from the excavations at Nippur. This dispute inevitably transcended the boundaries of an academic disagreement. It was by all accounts inordinately personal from the start and eventually polarized scholars into one camp or the other. As a result it should be noted that, to this day, it is very difficult to find a neutral rendering of the nature and origins of the Peters-Hilprecht Controversy or of the two principals involved.[22]

The controversy came to the fore when John P. Peters went public in a Philadelphia newspaper interview on the 19th of March, 1905, with certain allegations against Hilprecht.[23] By this time, Peters had already taken a position in New York and was no longer associated with the University of Pennsylvania. He summarized his accusations to Provost Harrison of the University of Pennsylvania, asserting he could prove that some objects Hilprecht claimed to have found in the newly discovered Nippur temple library were falsely attributed to that location. Therefore, any claims to the existence of a temple library had to be cast in doubt. This in turn prompted Peters' request for an examination of the "control and publication" of the material in question, thereby implying that Hilprecht's scholarship on any matter is not to be trusted.[24]

Given his own experiences with regard to the Nippur expeditions and his past relationship with Hilprecht, John Peters' accusations were particularly poignant. As mentioned before, Peters was Professor of Hebrew at the University of Pennsylvania

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[22] For a comprehensive discussion of the controversy and its impact on Semitic scholarship, see Paul Ritterband and Harold Wechsler's, "A Message to Lushtamar: The Hilprecht Controversy and Semitic Scholarship in America," *History of Higher Education Annual* 1 (1981): 5-41.

[23] In the Philadelphia *Press*. Hilprecht wrote a letter, dated March 22, 1905, to Peters in response to this newspaper report. Peters summarized his accusations in a follow-up letter addressed to Provost Harrison, on March 24, 1905 (Hermann Hilprecht, *The So-Called Peters-Hilprecht Controversy*, 3-6).

[24] See John Peters' letter to Charles C. Harrison (Hermann Hilprecht, *The So-Called Peters-Hilprecht Controversy*, 4-6).

when he became a partner in the venture to establish the Americans as a force in the area of Mesopotamian excavation, heretofore dominated by the French and the British.[25] He found a staunch ally in Provost William Pepper, who saw this as a means by which the University could gain international standing and importance. And Peters later imbued this vision with biblical overtones, as Ritterband and Wechsler explain:

> John Peters ... recalled Pepper's enthusiasm for a suggestion that the University sponsor an archaeological expedition to the Near East. Such a venture "would be made to appeal mightily to men's imaginations," and could serve as leverage for further growth. A museum could be erected to house the treasures unearthed, the library could be augmented, and so on. "He would reach out into this field and that, and build a real University on great lines," Peters wrote. "It was the vision of a prophet alike in breadth and scope and fervor."[26]

The Nippur expeditions were financed by subscriptions from wealthy patrons in Philadelphia and were overseen by a committee consisting of subscribers and university officials. This committee, not the archaeologists in the field or the nature of the finds, set the agenda for the excavations.[27] Peters himself led the first two expeditions to Nippur, in 1888-1889 and 1889-1890.[28] Two subsequent expeditions, in 1893-1896 and 1899-1900, were led by John H. Haynes, with Hilprecht acting as "Scientific Director" for approximately ten weeks in 1900.[29] At the beginning of that year, Haynes, under orders to dig in this area by his financial sponsors and apparently by Hilprecht, discovered more

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[25] For the historical background, see the section on the Wolfe and Nippur Expeditions in Philip J. King, *American Archaeology in the Mideast*, 11-13.
[26] Paul Ritterband and Harold Wechsler, "A Message to Lushtamar," 8-9.
[27] Age Westenholz, "The Early Excavators of Nippur," 291-293.
[28] The first two expeditions were described in John P. Peters, *Nippur, Or Explorations and Adventures on the Euphrates: The Narrative of the University of Pennsylvania Expedition to Babylonia in the Years 1888-90* (2 vols.; New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1899).
[29] See Morris Jastrow, "Did the Babylonian Temples have Libraries?" *JAOS* 27 (1906): 154.

than 17,000 tablets in an area known as "Tablet Hill." Peters described the location of "Tablet Hill," alternatively referred to as, Mound No. V, as follows:

> At the southeastern extremity of the Nippur mounds lies an isolated hill of triangular shape, estimated to cover an area of about thirteen acres. At its highest point, at the northwestern extremity, this hill rises about forty-five feet above plain level, having an average height of from twenty to twenty five feet. It is on the eastern side of the depression of the Shatt-en-Nil, which divides the mounds of Nippur into two parts, the same side on which the temple lies. It is separated from the temple – the next hill to the north – by a depression which seems to be an arm of the Shatt-en-Nil, and bears locally the same designation. This hill is designated as V. in my reports and in my *Nippur*..., the numbers indicating the order in which excavations were commenced, and designated IV in Hilprecht's latest publications, although in his earlier publications he followed my numbering. It is also called 'Tablet Hill.'[30]

Upon being informed of Haynes' discovery at this site, Hermann Hilprecht proclaimed the find of the "Temple Library of Nippur *par excellence*."[31]

Considerable inconsistency exists in the accounts as to whether any significant finds of tablets were made at the same site during earlier expeditions - Peters claimed with great conviction that the "greater part of the tablets" was discovered during the first campaign from 1888 to 1889.[32] Scholars also strongly criticized Hilprecht for claiming to have *found* the temple library when he had in fact not physically joined the dig at the time of the purported discovery by Haynes earlier in the year. (As previously mentioned, Hilprecht joined the expedition at the beginning of March of 1900). Nevertheless, Hilprecht maintained that, as he directed Haynes to dig in the vicinity of Tablet Hill, he

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[30] John Peters, "The Nippur Library," *JAOS* 26 (1905): 145. See also Clarence Fisher's plan of the site on page 146 of the same publication.
[31] Hermann Hilprecht, *The So-Called Peters-Hilprecht Controversy*, 283.
[32] John Peters, "The Nippur Library," 145.

could legitimately claim to have discovered the "Temple Library of Nippur" in December of 1899 and January of 1900.[33]

After the publication of *Explorations in Bible Lands During the 19th Century*, Peters accused Hilprecht of falsely attributing finds mentioned in his book to the so-called "temple library" at Nippur that did not in fact originate at that site.[34] As noted before, in his crusade against Hilprecht, Peters publicly courted the press, and more importantly, the scholarly community. Thereupon a much-incensed Hilprecht requested an inquiry from the University of Pennsylvania, and he was later essentially cleared of all charges. Nonetheless, "public and private agitation" against Hilprecht continued: an open letter signed by sixteen prominent American Orientalists was published in the October, 1907, issue of *The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures*. It demanded an

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[33] For a discussion of the criticism regarding Hilprecht's claims at discovery and Hilprecht's response, see Hermann Hilprecht, *The So-Called Peters-Hilprecht Controversy*, 283-285.

[34] See Hermann Hilprecht, *Explorations in Bible Lands During the 19th Century*, 508-532, for the discussion of the discoveries of the *temple library* at Nippur. Morris Jastrow ("Did the Babylonian Temples have Libraries?" 158-159) best summarized Peters' evidence against Hilprecht in this regard, and the consequences thereof: "Coming to the accounts of the 'Library' in Hermann Hilprecht's *Explorations in Bible Lands* ... Dr. Peters has shown in his paper how in order, apparently, to justify his earlier announcements, Dr. Hilprecht adopted a course for which it is difficult to find a suitable term. Of ten tablets and objects introduced by him in the three publications in question in his account of what was found on the site of the 'Library' *not a single one* actually came from the Library. One – a multiplication table – was found by Dr. Peters in April, 1890, after the work on mound 5 had been closed and at a considerable distance from the 'Library site,' and two were excavated during the third expedition, when (as Hilprecht himself states) the 'Library' site was not touched; four were found during the fourth campaign, but *before* the 'Library' site was touched, i.e., before January, 1900, and have therefore nothing to do with the 'Library,' while three were not excavated at Nippur at all but were purchased at Bagdad [*sic*], one - an astronomical tablet – in January, 1889, *before* any of the excavations of the University had begun; a second – a letter with the address 'To Lushtamar' – on July, 1889, by Mr. Noorian; the third – a multiplication table, - also purchased by Mr. Noorian in 1889. Be it noted that in the accounts in which in no less than three publications these ten objects and tablets are described he is speaking *exclusively* of the finds made during the fourth campaign on the 'Library' site, i.e., in January and February, 1900. Until, therefore, some satisfactory explanation for such methods is forthcoming, scholars are forced to maintain their present skeptical [*sic*] attitude towards further statements about the 'Library' when unsupported by evidence."

Apart from the aforementioned newspaper account, Peters brought his accusations to the scholarly community in the form of a paper read at the American Oriental Society meeting in Springfield, Massachusetts, on April 27, 1905. The paper was published in the *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, as: "The Nippur Library," 145-164.

explanation from Hilprecht.[35] Additionally, a resolution was passed at a meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature and Exegesis, held in Philadelphia in December of 1907, echoing the earlier publication of the American scholars. In a touchingly personal letter, Hilprecht thereupon asked that the private proceedings of the Board of Trustees' inquiry into the matter be made public in order to clear his name.[36] His request was granted, and Hermann Hilprecht published a compilation of the proceedings as *The So-Called Peters-Hilprecht Controversy.* Unfortunately, the damage was done, for Hilprecht personally, it was a hollow victory. By 1910, Hilprecht's scholarly career was at an end, and, as for his legacy: "the very mention of his name is more likely to conjure up recollections of the controversy than of his important contributions to learning and to the Pennsylvania tradition."[37] The significance of the controversy for the study of ancient textual deposits was even more overwhelming, as Cyrus Gordon explained: "Peters contrived a case against Hilprecht. Tablets had been found in Nippur, though few had been made

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[35] The letter to Hilprecht reads: "Dear Sir: we, the undersigned, feel that the recent controversy in the matter of the Nippur expeditions has been left in a state which allows the gravest imputations upon the integrity of American scholarship to rest uncleared. We believe that this condition of things is a high degree detrimental to the progress of Oriental learning in this country. A full and frank statement of the facts, so far as they bear upon your activity at Nippur and your publications relating to the same, would be exceedingly desirable." The full weight and severity of this request is best reflected in the important standing of the signatories to this letter, and the influential nature of their affiliated institutions: Charles R. Lanman (Harvard), Francis Brown (Union Theological Seminary), Maurice Bloomfield (Johns Hopkins), Richard Gottheil (Columbia), Charles Torrey (Yale), Robert Francis Harper (University of Chicago), Hans Oertel (Yale), George F, Moore (Harvard), E. Washburn Hopkins (Yale), Crawford Toy (Harvard), James Richard Jewett (University of Chicago), William Hayes Ward (no university affiliation), Paul Haupt (Johns Hopkins), Daniel Gilman (Johns Hopkins), A. V. Williams Jackson (Columbia), and John Williams White (Harvard) ("The Hilprecht Case," *AJSL* 24 [1907]: 92-93).

[36] On the 6th of January 1908, Hilprecht writes to the Board of the Trustees of the University of Pennsylvania: "... I respectfully submit that it is my conviction that the report of your Committee, as made public in 1905, has not been generally accepted as satisfactory, because your proceedings were conducted in private and you have not made public the 'pleadings' and testimony upon which it rests. I am further convinced that our absolute silence in the face of the continued attacks against me, and through me against the University, is producing increasingly serious injury to the reputation of the University, as I know it is doing to my reputation as a scholar and a man, and I feel that the suffering and constant mental strain to which I have been for more than two years subjected, by reason of the continued malicious attacks and insinuations against, me, cannot be longer endured by me in silence with a preservation of my self-respect" (Hermann Hilprecht, *The So-Called Peters-Hilprecht Controversy*, v-vi).

[37] Cyrus H. Gordon, *The Pennsylvania Tradition of Semitics*, 32.

available. Hilprecht had an Assyriologist's estimate of the situation; the rest of the world, including Peters, did not."[38] As far as the "temple library" was concerned,

> His critics, headed by Peters, accused him of gross distortion. How right Hilprecht was is now obvious. The literary tablets from Nippur are the cornerstone of recovering the great Sumerian poetic tradition ... Hilprecht knew this from his first hand familiarity with the tablets. Peters and others pounced on the few 'illustrative' tablets as the basis for branding Hilprecht's claims as false and for discrediting him as a scholar in the newspapers as well as in academic circles.[39]

Despite the negative bearing it had on Hilprecht's reputation as a scholar, the controversy did have one positive outcome: it drew attention to the need for circumspection in reporting about all archaeological finds – even in popular literature. Unfortunately, the spectacular nature of this dispute obscured the important, if indirect, outcome: if the provenance of the texts referred to by Hilprecht was questionable, then by default the very existence of a *temple library*, so vociferously extolled by Hilprecht, had to be questioned as well.

In his immediate grasp of the issues at hand, and perhaps because of his involvement with the university library, Morris Jastrow was the one person who realized the underlying repercussions of the controversy while it was still playing itself out. In 1906, during the height of the whole debate, which lasted from 1905 to 1908, Jastrow published an article in the *Journal of the American Oriental Society* entitled: "Did the Babylonian Temples have Libraries?" While the Controversy put the emphasis on

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[38] Cyrus H. Gordon, *The Pennsylvania Tradition of Semitics*, 30.

[39] Cyrus H. Gordon, *The Pennsylvania Tradition of Semitics*, 30. What Gordon's statement does not reflect, is the serious long-term effect of Hilprecht's laxity in archaeological reporting. McGuire Gibson ("Patterns of Occupation at Nippur," 37), who became director of the University of Chicago's Nippur excavations in 1972, summarily dismissed Hilprecht's *Explorations in Bible Lands* out of hand: "... Hermann Hilprecht's archaeological notes and especially his major interpretative publication must be used with great skepticism and caution; they can be relied on only when buttressed by corroborating evidence."

Hilprecht's scientific methodology, or lack thereof, Jastrow underscored a fundamental dichotomy that needed to be resolved: "... the existence or non-existence of a 'Temple Library' at Nippur" and, by extension, elsewhere in the ancient Near East.[40] At this point, it is important to mention that, although he "'refused' to 'accuse'" Hilprecht, Jastrow did agree to "testify against him" at the inquiry.[41] It is therefore no great surprise that the article he published on the subject responded in a decidedly negative fashion to the question posed in the title.

Jastrow's conclusion, but also his reasoning, and even his wording, would have a far-reaching effect on the understanding of ancient religious collections by both scholars of the ancient Near East and library history alike. His conclusion, in short, was that:

> ... the Babylonian temples do not give evidence of having contained extensive literary collections; ... on the contrary, the number of texts they contained, being in general limited to those used in the worship of the deity to whom the temple was sacred, appears to have been comparatively small, precisely as in the Egyptian temples - altogether too small in extent and range to warrant the use of the term 'literary.' For the present, therefore, ... the term 'Library' should be restricted to the collection made by Ashurbanapal [*sic*]. At all events, a promiscuous use of the term 'Temple Library,' to describe the contents of the temple archives in Babylonia, is to be discountenanced, not only as unwarranted, but as positively misleading, and as tending to create unnecessary and unjustifiable confusion.[42]

Thus Morris Jastrow established the parameters of what would become the traditionally recognized qualities of an ancient library: predominance of *literary* material;

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[40] Morris Jastrow, "Did the Babylonian Temples have Libraries?" 159.
[41] Cyrus H. Gordon, *The Pennsylvania Tradition of Semitics*, 32. Jastrow's negative stance regarding Hilprecht is clearly evident from his essay on the subject. The article is liberally scattered with adjectives such as "misleading" and phrases such as "if Dr. Hilprecht is to be trusted," in reference to the description of the discovery of the "temple library" at Nippur. See, for example, "Did the Babylonian Temples have Libraries?" 155, 156.
[42] Morris Jastrow, "Did the Babylonian Temples have Libraries?" 182.

great number and size;[43] and collected for the exact purposes of cultural and intellectual advancement. In a later work,[44] Jastrow added to his prerequisites for an ancient library by excluding Nippur on the basis that, "... it is doubtful whether any ruler of Nippur conceived the idea of collecting for the temple of Nippur the extant literature originating in the various centres of the Euphrates Valley which would have expanded the temple archive into a real library, such as Ashurbanapal [*sic*] gathered in his palace at Nineveh." From this it is clear that by 1915, when this statement was made, Jastrow had determined that only libraries with a universal collection policy warranted the label "true library."[45]

This understanding of the nature of temple libraries or, alternatively, religious collections of texts situated in a sanctuary or temple, would continue, with some minor adjustments, to the present day. Despite significant discoveries since, the influence of Jastrow's view of religious textual collections prevailed in scholars' understanding of more recent discoveries, of which the Dead Sea Scrolls are possibly the best-known

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[43] It is unclear what Jastrow considered to be the exact number of tablets needed to constitute an "extensive literary collection" that would warrant the designation "library," especially when A. A. Kampman, in referring to Hilprecht's *temple library*, indicates a number of 23,000 "literary" tablets for this collection: "Volgens Hilprecht ontpopte zich deze heuvel als de *Tablet Hill*: 23.000 tabletten van overwegend literairen inhoud werden in een gebouw gevonden, dat speciaal er voor was ingericht" (Translation: "According to Hilprecht, this mound revealed itself as *Tablet Hill*: 23,000 tablets of a predominantly literary nature were found in a building specially adapted for this purpose," A. A. Kampman, *Archieven en Bibliotheken in het Oude Nabije Oosten* [Antwerp: Schoten-Antwerp, 1942], 28).

Compare with this the breakdown of the approximately 30,000 tablets from the Assurbanipal Library, of which approximately 5,500 have been identified as "bureaucratic" or "archival" in nature, and the "extensive literary collection of Assurbanipal" amounts to more or less 24,500 entities. For the breakdown, see Simo Parpola, "The Royal Archives of Nineveh," in *Cuneiform Archives and Libraries: Papers Read at the 30e Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale in Leiden, 4-8 July 1983* (ed. Klaas R. Veenhof; Uitgaven van het Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut te Istanbul 52; Istanbul: Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut, 1986), 224; as well as Giovanni B. Lanfranchi, "The Library at Nineveh," in *Capital Cities: Urban Planning and Spiritual Dimensions: Proccedings of the Symposium Held on May 27-29, 1996, Jerusalem, Israel* (ed. Joan Goodnick Westenholz; Bible Lands Museum Jerusalem Publications 2; Jerusalem: Bible Lands Museum, 1998), 148.

[44] Morris Jastrow, *The Civilization of Babylonia and Assyria: Its Remains, Language, History, Religion, Commerce, Law, Art, and Literature* (1915; reissued, New York: Benjamin Blom, 1971), 46-47.

[45] The idea of universal collection of information will be addressed in Chapter 5 of this dissertation.

example. In 1992, taking issue primarily with Norman Golb,[46] Yaacov Shavit asked, "Were there libraries in Jerusalem or in other Jewish cities, as there were in many Hellenistic cities as well as in the pagan temples in the ancient and the Hellenistic-Roman world?" His conclusion was in the negative: "Libraries as a cultural institution were a Hellenistic phenomenon."[47]

Shavit's conclusion finds reverberation in the work of the majority of scholars. It is primarily the result, as noted before, of the image and effect of the Alexandrian Library on Western learning. Alexandria has become the mainstay of any broad-ranging

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[46] Norman Golb expounded on his alternate theory of Dead Sea Scroll origins from the beginning of the 1980s. He argues that the order of discovery influenced the interpretation of the nature of the textual deposits at the Dead Sea. As far as he is concerned, the hoard of documents in the eleven caves near the Dead Sea, at Masada, Jericho, and other places in the Judean Wilderness, were the remains of any number of libraries, originating in Jerusalem, and smuggled out of the capital during the last years of upheaval before the final Roman destruction of the city in 70 C.E. Golb suggests that inhabitants, aware of their dire circumstances, hid away valuables and books in and around Jerusalem, from the fall of Galilee in November of 67 C.E. (that is, after the destruction of the archives in Jerusalem, as reported by Josephus) until 70 C.E. In this respect Golb relies on Josephus who relates the existence of underground passages out of the city that were in use during the siege. The Copper Scroll (3Q15) is cited as contemporary and practical evidence for the practice of hiding scrolls and other valuables. Golb postulates that the Jewish escapees would have followed the natural system of wadis from Jerusalem to the Dead Sea that would, among others, have led them to the caves near Wadi Qumran. Thus Golb attempts to address one of the most peculiar incongruities of the Dead Sea Scrolls, the virtual absence of material that could be described as of an administrative nature – material that archaeologists may presume to find if the cache of scrolls represented a relatively self-sustaining community in the nearby settlement of Khirbet Qumran: "The reason no substantive autographs of literary works but only scribal copies have been found at Qumran is that the writings came from *libraries*, with some personal items of their owners – e.g., phylacteries and a few documentary records – hurriedly thrown in ... It is important to note that the official archives of Jerusalem were destroyed in a fire set by the Jewish insurgents in A.D. 66 during the interfactional strife raging there at that time, described by Josephus in vivid detail. Because of the loss of these archival records, virtually no documentary texts of the years immediately before A.D. 70 survived, with the exception of the several scraps that have turned up in the finds of Cave 4. Only remnants of the libraries and collections of books that evidently abounded in the city have been found in any number in the Judaean Wilderness; these texts show, conversely, that in antiquity, libraries existed among the Palestinian Jews in the same way as among inhabitants of other parts of the Mediterranean world" (Norman Golb, *Who Wrote the Dead Sea Scrolls? The Search for the Secret of Qumran* [London: Michael O'Mara, 1995], 147-149).

See also, Norman Golb, "The Problem of Origin and Identification of Dead Sea Scrolls," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 124 (February 1980): 1-24; Norman Golb, "Who Hid the Dead Sea Scrolls?" *BA* 48/2 (1985): 68-82; Norman Golb, "Khirbet Qumran and the Manuscripts of the Judaean Wilderness: Observations on the Logic of their Investigation," *JNES* 49/2 (1990): 103-114; and the already mentioned, *Who Wrote the Dead Sea Scrolls?* published in 1995.

[47] Yaacov Shavit, "The 'Qumran Library' in the Light of the Attitude Towards Books and Libraries in the Second Temple Period," in *Methods of Investigation of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Khirbet Qumran Site: Present Realities and Future Prospects; Conference Held in New York City on December 14-17, 1992.* (ed. Michael O. Wise, Norman Golb, John J. Collins and Dennis G. Pardee; Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences 722; New York: New York Academy of Sciences, 1994), 302.

discussion of the topic. Thus, even when earlier libraries are acknowledged to have existed, as in Sidney Jackson's description of libraries in the West, the contribution of the ancient Near East is scuttled under the caption "Before Alexandria."[48] Furthermore, Alexandria, within the context of the history of libraries, is widely understood to be a distinctly Greek construct, as the library historian, James Thompson, asserts: "The world's first great libraries, like the world's first great literature, were a product of the Greek genius."[49] In some cases this statement is amended – as mentioned before - in keeping with the opinion of Jastrow and others, to include a single "Mesopotamian library." This institution was described by Laura Arksey: "This first library in history was established by Assurbanipal, King of Assyria ... Other deposits of clay tablets have been unearthed elsewhere in Mesopotamia, some older and even larger than Assurbanipal's collections, but these have been typical palace archives, rather than true libraries."[50] Note that this updated description of Assurbanipal's library concedes what Jastrow could not, namely, the existence of collections of texts larger than that found at Nineveh. A hundred years after Nippur, size alone cannot function as the single determinative factor of a collection's designation as *library* or not. Neither can a distinction based solely on content, as suggested by Weitemeyer and Pedersén, among others.

The Peters-Hilprecht Controversy thus acted as vehicle for the creation of the definitive influence on the definition of ancient libraries in the twentieth-century:

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[48] Sydney L. Jackson, *Libraries and Librarianship in the West: A Brief History* (McGraw Hill Series in Library Education; New York: McGraw Hill, 1974), 1-9.
[49] James W. Thompson, *Ancient Libraries* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California, 1940; repr., Hamden, Conn.: Archon, 1962), 17. This is the notion that De Vleeschauwer reacted against in his important, "Origins of the Mouseion of Alexandria" (in *Towards a Theory of Librarianship: Papers in Honor of Jesse Hauk Shera* [ed. Conrad H. Rawski; Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow, 1973], 87-113). See also Steven B. Shubert, "The Oriental Origins of the Alexandrian Library," *Libri* 43/2 (1993): 142-172.
[50] Laura Arksey, "The Library of Assurbanipal, King of the World," *Wilson Library Bulletin* 51 (1977): 834.

Jastrow's "Did the Babylonian Temples have Libraries?" As added consequence, textual deposits that could be distinguished from other groupings of texts because of the locations of their finds (as opposed to size or contents) rose to pre-eminence in the literature. The weakness inherent in typologies based on a single determinative factor has already received attention in the survey of the literature, in Chapter 2. Nevertheless, it has to be conceded that this does not negate the very real existence of innumerable textual deposits found in similar locations and with evident similarities in size, content, function, patronage and possible readership. Because the ancient temple library was the agent for Jastrow's delineation of the nature of the ancient library, these collections are of particular import in any general discussion of the definition and nature of ancient textual deposits. Additionally, temple libraries hold the advantage of direct and indirect mention in accompanying carefully transmitted religious traditions that may be used to elaborate the understanding of this particular kind of ancient textual deposit and thereby elucidate the nature of ancient textual collections as a whole.

## 3.3 Canonization and the Temple Library

In library history, traditional descriptions of the development of ancient collections are closely associated with temples as the repositories of religious and non-religious information. That is, "the library was either wholly or partly an adjunct to the temple school."[51] The pre-World War II understanding of the development of writing and, by extension, the inception of libraries, is indelibly linked to ancient temples and to their functionaries. In the years after the Second World War, emphasis moved away from

[51] Ernest A. Savage, *The Story of Libraries and Book-Collecting* (Bibliography and Reference Series 246; New York: E.P. Dutton, 1909[?]; repr., New York: Burt Franklin, 1969), 2.

temples as the breeding-ground for the development of writing and of libraries, to a more utilitarian, pragmatic understanding often linked to archival practice. It was postulated that writing developed as a simple and direct response to a practical need for economic and bureaucratic record keeping, rather than the generally "elevated" earlier proposition of the preservation of culture and religion. The temple economy, viewed as central to commerce in the ancient Near East because of it's association with the sanctuary, nonetheless guaranteed that the temple remained essential to the discussion of the formation of textual collections in the latter half of the twentieth-century. Ernest Savage's familiar description of the origin of the first libraries is representative of the earlier, traditional view:

> In primitive communities the priest or holy man would naturally be the first to lay claim to knowledge other than that necessary to sustain life. He would teach, and would find it necessary to transmit his teaching, either to the memory of his elected successor, or by recording it after the invention of written signs. ... Hence we might expect the earliest libraries to comprise only records of ecclesiastical mysteries or religious doctrines, and of historic events, preserved in or near sanctuaries. The evidence bears out this expectation very consistently. Moses, we are told, was directed to preserve the divine law in the ark. In ancient Egypt libraries were attached to temples. Diodorus of Sicily tells us how Egyptian priests 'had in their sacred books, transmitted from the olden time ... written description of their kings.' Among the Babylonian and Roman records were preserved in temples; the Greeks, we are told, 'preserved the most ancient traditions' in or near sanctuaries. It will be seen how this theory of the origin of libraries is borne out in the accounts we can give of the ancient collections.[52]

[52] Ernest A. Savage, *The Story of Libraries and Book-Collecting*, 1-2.

Savage's depiction was based on a duality of proof. First, his own and his contemporaries' supposition of the cardinal role of the temple in the origins of writing and libraries was informed by substantial numbers of textual deposits discovered within the precincts of ancient temples and sanctuaries in the Near East since the mid-nineteenth-century. Second, the major book religions that developed in this region provided a substantial tradition based on the existence of a core standardized textual corpus: the tablets deposited by Moses in the ark; numerous apocryphal and pseudepigraphal accounts of so-called *antediluvian* libraries established by biblical figures such as Adam, Enoch, Shem and the like;[53] as well as the assumption of a heavenly *urtext* or *ur*-library, if you will, as prime directive for the creation of the world and the regulation of religious practice for Judaism, Islam and, to a lesser extent, Christianity.[54] In the words of Ernest Cushing Richardson: "The Biblical story of course, and the Biblical story of libraries ... extends from the creation, which is by the 'Word,' to the last Judgment, which, according to the account, is based on a collection of books."[55]

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[53] In citing colophons from texts dating to the early and late second millennium B.C.E., W. G. Lambert ("Ancestors, Authors, and Canonicity," *JCS* 11 [1957], 9) indicated that this belief in antediluvian precursors extended to Mesopotamia: "There is a Babylonian conception which is implicit in the colophons just cited and which is stated plainly by Berossus: that the sum of the revealed knowledge was given once and for all by the antediluvian sages. This is a remarkable parallel to the rabbinic view that God's revelation in its entirety is contained in the Torah." See also Chapter 5 of this dissertation.

[54] The so-called "libraries of the gods" described by Ernest Cushing Richardson in his *Beginnings of Libraries* ([Princeton: Princeton University, 1914], 27): "The oldest of all alleged libraries are the libraries of the gods. Almost all the great god families, Indian, Egyptian, Babylonian, Persian, Greek and Scandinavian, had their own book-collections, so it is said. According to several religions there were book-collections before the creation of man; the Talmud has it that there was one before the creation of the world, ... and the Koran maintains that such a collection co-existed from eternity with the uncreated God."

[55] Ernest Cushing Richardson, *Biblical Libraries: A Sketch of Library History from 3400 B.C. to A.D. 150.* (Princeton: Princeton University, 1914), 39. For a comprehensive discussion of the superimposition of a text or collections of texts on and in the world, see Hans Blumenberg, *Die Lesbarkeit der Welt* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1981).

### 3.3.1 The Sippar Temple Library Discovery

As the twentieth-century progressed, the view of temples as primary custodians to the cultural and religious growth within the ancient community had to be tempered, as it emerged that the overwhelming majority of texts discovered in ancient temples were of an administrative or economic nature. This development, informed by Jastrow's seminal definition of the ancient textual collection, matured by the middle of the twentieth-century in the writings of Weitemeyer and his contemporaries. Morris Jastrow's insistence on substantial numbers of texts and a *literary* character for "true libraries" acted as principal inhibitor to the consideration of temple deposits, namely those collections often limited in size and excluded on the basis of content, in the broader context of the description of the use and nature of ancient Near Eastern textual deposits.

So definitive was Jastrow's negation of the existence of "temple libraries," that it was only fairly recently that the temple library surfaced again as a possible typological entity within ancient Near Eastern studies. Klaas Veenhof is singular in his attempt to define a *temple library* - as opposed to ancient libraries in general. In his definition, Veenhof is strongly reminiscent of Pedersén. According to Veenhof, a temple library is a collection situated in a sanctuary and "without an admixture of archival texts."[56] *Archival texts* are presumably to be understood as primary documents: administrative and/or economic material and letters. Adhering to this definition, Veenhof reaches the conclusion that "the closest approximation of a temple library ... was discovered in 1986 in room 355 of the Shamash temple in Sippar (c. 500 BCE)."[57] In turn, Veenhof's earlier description in his "Cuneiform Archives: An Introduction," of a "library room" in the

[56] Klaas R. Veenhof, "Libraries and Archives," *OEANE* 3:356.
[57] Veenhof, "Libraries and Archives," 3:356.

Nabû temple in Khorsabad, was the definitive aid to the discoverers of the Neo-Babylonian temple library at Sippar in their initial efforts to categorize their new discovery. In his earlier work, Veenhof suggested the architectural dimensions of an ancient *library room* by describing a room discovered in the temple at Khorsabad: "... a wall with three rows of small, square niches (ca. 25-30 cms. square and ca. 40-50 cms. deep) for storage of tablets as in a huge honey-comb."[58] He compared this with similar features in room 61 of Sennacherib's palace in Nineveh and in the "scribal office" of the North-Western palace at Kalhu. Whether Veenhof had a *temple* library specifically in mind is doubtful given the range in location for his other examples. Furthermore, he did not venture into a definition of the nature and functioning of the room he described. Nevertheless, Al-Rawi and George would interpret Veenhof's description as prescriptive confirmation for their own definitive typology of the nature of the collection they discovered at Sippar: "The identification of chamber 5 as a 'library room' is taken as proven by Veenhof ... The discovery of the Sippar library vindicates this interpretation, and establishes a 'type' for the ancient Mesopotamia [*sic*] library ..."[59]

Veenhof then responded with his aforementioned conclusion, in 1997, of a solitary example of an ancient Near Eastern temple library: Sippar. This exceedingly limited conclusion rings true only if it is assumed that Veenhof understood that a temple library could only be definitively identified and distinguished from other types of ancient collections when it is found *in situ* and undisturbed, as was the case for the temple library discovered in 1986 at Sippar:

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[58] Klaas R. Veenhof, "Cuneiform Archives: An Introduction," in *Cuneiform Archives and Libraries: Papers Read at the 30e Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale in Leiden, 4-8 July 1983* (ed. Klaas R. Veenhof; Uitgaven van het Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut te Istanbul 52; Istanbul: Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut, 1986), 13.

[59] F.N.H. Al-Rawi and A.R. George, "Tablets from the Sippar Library. II. Tablet II of the Babylonian Creation Epic," *Iraq* 52 (1990): 149.

> On entering the library, whose walls are preserved up to 1.5 m or more, and whose floor is at the same level as that of the adjacent room and of stamped bricks of Nabu-na'id laid in the room next to that, one finds oneself in a small room about 1.5 m wide and 1 m deep. The doorway is 80 cm wide. In the two walls to left and right, and the back wall facing one, are a series of niches built out from the mud-brick walls. The niches are *c.* 17 cm high and *c.* 30 cm wide, arranged in rows one above the other. In each of the two side walls are four ranks of niches, and in the back wall six. There are three levels of niches completely preserved; and a fourth level above them, probably the top one, damaged at the left side but preserved at the right and back. This top level is more or less at the same height as the present surface. Thus it is reckoned that there were originally 56 niches in all. The lowest level of niches is *c.* 35 cm above the floor. Each niche is *c.* 70 cm deep; and shelves and partitions are mud-brick, but reeds are plastered inside as an upper lining, forming a roughly semicircular, rather than rectangular, shape in the interior of the niche. In these the tablets were stacked on their long sides like books, two or three rows deep, up to 60 per niche. Counting from the left, niches 1, 2 and 3 of the top level ... and 2 of the second level, have been cleared so far, yielding 182 tablets and fragments, including some from the uppermost (fourth) level (damaged at this point). It is estimated that more than 2,000 tablets were stored in the library.[60]

Restrictions imposed by *in situ* discovery, such as at Sippar, add an additional consideration to the definition of ancient collections and reasonably imply that only deposits discovered in recent years, excavated under strict archaeological control, are to be regarded in a definition of ancient collections. Any deposit disturbed in ancient times, either during the period of final destruction or before, will have to be excluded for the purposes of the establishment of a definition for the ancient collection type.

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[60] "Excavations in Iraq, 1985-86," *Iraq* 49 (1987): 248-249.

To reiterate: there is no shortage of collections to be found within the confines of ancient temples. The challenge lies not in a lack of examples of temple collections, but in the restrictions placed upon the scholarly community by limitations in information regarding provenance, *in situ* discovery, and potential users. The Sippar discovery is an exception to the rule. The room in which the collection was housed seemed to have escaped notice by Rassam during his initial excavations at the site in 1881 and 1882. The archaeologists of the University of Baghdad, under the direction of Dr. Walid al-Jadir, thus discovered this representative ancient Near Eastern collection intact during the 1985-1986-season.[61]

Information is limited regarding the size of the collection, but the contents proved invaluable in an attempt to establish its nature.[62] To the apparent disappointment of the excited archaeologists, Sippar reflected a curious lack of "new" literary material for the Neo-Babylonian Period.[63] As was quickly pointed out, this was not a novel occurrence.

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[61] For the initial announcement of discovery, see Walid al-Jadir, "Une Bibliothèque et Ses Tablettes," *Archéologia* 224 (May 1987): 18-27. In "Excavations in Iraq, 1985-86," 248-249, it is described as follows: "The expedition returned to the É-babbar to extend the area worked on in 1984. Debris of Scheil's and Rassam's excavations was cleared out until in January 1986 the excavators found themselves in a room beyond which Rassam had not penetrated. It seems Rassam had probably picked up one or two tablets in this room, where a few more were recently found also. Leading off this room, unsuspected by Rassam, there has now been discovered a small Neo-Babylonian library with its tablets still ranged on their shelves."

[62] See Walid al-Jadir, "Une Bibliothèque et Ses Tablettes," 18-27.

[63] The library's dating is due partly to the existence of an economic text in the collection that includes the date of the first year of Cambyses (529 B.C.E.). See "Excavations in Iraq, 1985-1986," 249.

The "Neo-Babylonian" period refers to the supremacy of the Neo-Babylonian empire from the rule of Nabopolassar to that of Nabonidus (ca. 626 – 539 B.C.E.): "The period of the Neo-Babylonian empire was a stable one, during which the economic affairs of the temples in Babylonia prospered and expanded. The temples, which were important economic institutions at that period, owned land and herds in the countryside and an elementary manufacturing industry in the cities. According to their royal inscriptions the Neo-Babylonian kings Nabopolassar, Nebuchadnezzar II and Nabonidus restored and built temples, (re-)-established offerings in the temples and performed digging for the irrigation works" (A.C.V.M. Bongenaar, *The Neo-Babylonian Ebabbar Temple at Sippar: Its Administration and Its Prosopography* [Uitgaven van het Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut te Istanbul 80; Istanbul: Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut, 1997], 1).

Erica Reiner, in referring to the tablets discovered at Sultantepe,[64] articulated the general state of affairs in discoveries of the period best:

> ... to our regret, Sultantepe did not and could not bring us information that could not be had from the other major collections. Rather, the collection is a representative sampling of Mesopotamian literature, and the novelties it offers are due to the fortunate but accidental circumstance of their preservation. Texts that have come down to us in such fragmentary state that they had to remain unidentified in their extant copies from Nineveh and Assur can now be assigned, owing to their better preserved duplicates from Sultantepe.[65]

From the start, archaeologists at Sippar expected to find extensive reproduction of already known material in the holdings of the collection. The colophons indicated that the texts represented copies of originals derived from Babylon, Nippur, Sippar, Agade and other ancient Near Eastern centres of learning. The scholars involved seemed to relate this circumstance with wistful resignation: nothing was found that could not be had from the major collections already discovered. The value of the discovery may therefore be said to be reduced to, "... the novelties it offers ... due to the fortunate but accidental circumstance of their preservation."[66] Significantly, this condition raises the possibility that we already have the greater part of the Babylonian literary heritage at our disposal.

### 3.3.2 William Hallo meets Nahum Sarna

This was the state of affairs in a significant number of ancient Near Eastern collections, as observed by Nahum Sarna at the beginning of the 1970s. Sarna described

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[64] Reiner's article (Erica Reiner, "Fortune-Telling in Mesopotamia," *JNES* 19 [1960]: 23-35) appeared in response to the publication of O. R. Gurney and J. J. Finkelstein, *The Sultantepe Tablets I* (Occasional Publications of the British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara 3; London: The British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara, 1957).

[65] Erica Reiner, "Fortune-Telling in Mesopotamia," 23-24.

[66] F.N.H. Al-Rawi and A.R. George, "Tablets from the Sippar Library. II. Tablet II of the Babylonian Creation Epic," 149.

this phenomenon as "secular" canonization: "(It) manifested itself in the emergence of a recognized corpus of classical literature and in the tendency to produce a standardized text, a fixed arrangement of content and an established sequence in which the works were to be read and studied."[67] This is a phenomenon Sarna credited William Hallo for first investigating in detail,[68] but it is important to note that what Sarna described here was more than "literary stabilization," that is, the assiduous preservation of old material in its traditional form, combined with restrictions on the inclusion of new material.[69] Sarna's observation encompasses far more than the process of creation, adaptation and canonization described by William Hallo to have occurred in at least four periodic cycles for Sumerian and Akkadian bodies of literature.[70] Sarna is consciously describing the canonization process as "mutually complementary" to the development of ancient libraries.

Approximately twenty years after the first publication of his article, "The Order of the Books," Sarna presented a paper on "Ancient Libraries and the Ordering of the

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[67] Nahum M. Sarna, "The Order of the Books," in *Studies in Jewish Bibliography, History and Literature in Honor of I. Edward Kiev* (ed. C. Berlin; New York: Ktav, 1971), 409.

[68] Nahum Sarna refers to the significant output by William Hallo on the subject. See, for example, William W. Hallo, "Contributions to Neo-Sumerian," *HUCA* 29 (1958): 69-108; William W. Hallo, "New Viewpoints on Cuneiform Literature," *IEJ* 12 (1962): 13-26; William W. Hallo, "On the Antiquity of Sumerian Literature," *JAOS* 83 (1963): 167-176; and William W. Hallo, "Individual Prayer in Sumerian: The Continuity of a Tradition," *JAOS* 88 (1968): 71-89.

[69] See Francesca Rochberg-Halton, "Canonicity in Cuneiform Texts," *JCS* 36 (1984): 127. See also Stephen J. Lieberman's discussion and agreement with Rochberg-Halton pertaining to "canonicity" in cuneiform literature. It should be noted that Lieberman was of the opinion that the application of the term "canon" is inappropriate to the context of cuneiform literature. His dissent in this matter was based on the prevalent one-sidedness of the application of the terms "canonical" or "official" to denote cuneiform literature: "The terms 'canonical' and 'official' can be used to refer to two different, but related, aspects of a text: the accuracy of its content, and the nature of the text as a whole. Recent Assyriological use of the terms has tended to refer to the constant contents of a text, its textual invariance, rather than to some consideration of which texts were standard. Ancient cuneiform scholars had interest in both of these questions" ("Canonical and Official Cuneiform Texts: Towards an Understanding of Assurbanipal's Personal Tablet Collection," in *Lingering Over Words: Studies in Ancient Near Eastern Literature in Honor of William L. Moran* [ed. Tzvi Abusch, John Huehnergard and Piotr Steinkeller; Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars, 1990], 331).

[70] William W. Hallo, "Toward a History of Sumerian Literature," in *Sumerological Studies in Honor of Thorkild Jacobsen on His Seventieth Birthday: June 7, 1974* (ed. Stephen J. Lieberman; Assyriological Studies 20; Chicago: University of Chicago, 1976), 181-203.

Biblical Books" at the Library of Congress' Center of the Book and elaborated on his previous suggestion.[71] Thus he became one of only a small number of scholars to make an explicit connection between an organized, sequentially significant list in canon formation and the practical implications of these observations for often off-hand scholarly references to temple libraries. Sarna's inference was not new, but he nevertheless realized and accounted for the implications of an association between canonization and libraries not previously acknowledged: "It must ... be taken for granted that in the libraries of the Jerusalem Temple and of the schools and synagogues throughout Palestine in that era, the established ... library techniques and bibliographic practices of the Mesopotamian and Hellenistic worlds were fully operative."[72] Furthermore, by using the Hebrew Bible as example, Sarna asserted:

> The Hebrew Bible, as is well known, has always had a tripartite division ... These three corpora would have been stored in the libraries, each in its proper section. ...The tannaitic lists for the Prophets and Hagiographa constitute, in effect, the shelflistings of the libraries and schools of Jewish Palestine in the second century C.E. What the criteria were that determined that particular order within each corpus must remain the subject of a different study.[73]

The evolution of such a recommended limited, fixed, core religious collection, duplicated to several locations, would be a phenomenon exclusive to libraries. Multiple copies of the same document found in more than one collection are an anathema within the parameters of any understanding of an archival collection. Archives are primarily

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[71] Nahum M. Sarna, *Ancient Libraries and the Ordering of the Biblical Books: A Lecture Presented at the Library of Congress, March 6, 1989, by Nahum M. Sarna* (The Center for the Book Viewpoint Series 25; Washington: Library of Congress, 1989).
[72] Nahum M. Sarna, *Ancient Libraries and the Ordering of the Biblical Books*, 20-21.
[73] Nahum M. Sarna, *Ancient Libraries and the Ordering of the Biblical Books*, 21.

constructed from primary documents, and thus every individual collection, by its very nature, should prove to be unique and without duplicate.[74]

Al-Rawi and George thus raised a very important point in their discussion of the Sippar temple library that has not received much attention in the debates pertaining to the nature of ancient collections: that is, the presumption of the presence of a certain number of specific texts within a deposit at the moment of discovery. And Nahum Sarna, in turn, suggested the best-known example of a similar ancient core collection or library: the arranged collection of books that we today call the *Hebrew Bible*. In his words, "It might be said, in fact, that the Biblical codices, when they finally emerged, simply reflected and preserved the order and shelving and cataloging current in the ancient Jewish libraries."[75]

Sarna broached his conjecture of a functional origin for the biblical canonization process in acknowledged response to William Hallo's evaluation of the phenomenon of canonicity within Assyriology. But, there is a distinct difference between Sarna's application of *canonization* and its appropriation, at the time, within Assyriology. Sarna utilized the term to denote not only the standardization of the individual texts, but, more importantly, the formation of an organic unit as representative of the canonized, authoritative, library: the whole, as it were, elevated in importance far above that of the sum of the individual parts. In turn, *canonization* was introduced into Assyriology to indicate the end-result of a literary standardization process most evident in individual Old Babylonian texts received, transmitted and copied during the Kassite (late second

[74] Duplication of material and broad distribution thereof, is inherent to the nature of libraries. Archival arrangement stresses by contrast the value and uniqueness of the original, the primary document, and may even allow for the destruction of extant copies if the original is found to be in good order. (See James M. O'Toole, "On the Idea of Uniqueness," *American* Archivist 57 (1994): 632-658; and S. Muller, J.A. Feith and R. Fruin, *Manual for the Arrangement and Description of Archives: Drawn up by Direction of the Netherlands Association of Archivists* [trans. Arthur H. Leavitt; 2nd ed.; New York: H.W. Wilson Company, 1968], 96-97).

[75] Nahum M. Sarna, "The Order of the Books," 411.

millennium B.C.E.) period in temple schools. These texts were the final outcome of a process of transmission and preservation whereby the Old Babylonian literary corpus was standardized and duplicated by the scribes of later schools.[76] Thus, the term is applied to the "form" and "status" of individual texts, as opposed to a "defined corpus of texts."[77]

William Hallo became responsible for the introduction of a tripartite "typological classification" that cross-referenced the matters of archival and/or library development with canonicity in cuneiform literature, as Hallo explained: "It cuts across linguistic boundaries because the underlying conditions of literary productivity were the same wherever clay and reed were the basic writing materials."[78] Thus Hallo classified cuneiform literature into three types: archives, monuments and the school curricula. He based his classificatory distinction solely on the nature of the individual texts and their development. In Hallo's depiction the author or writer's intent overshadows all other considerations in typological determination.

*Archival texts* are the oldest of the three types of record distinguished by Hallo and the most numerous. They were created to establish a physical record of the routine, everyday contractual and economic obligations of the individual and society.[79] After

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[76] For the introduction of the term "canon" into Assyriology by Rawlinson and the later re-appropriation of the term by Benno Landsberger and his students, as by Falkenstein and Von Soden, Finkel and Hallo, see Victor A. Hurowitz, "Canon and Canonization in Mesopotamia - Assyriological Models or Ancient Realities?" in *The Bible and Its World* (division A of *Proceedings of the Twelfth World Congress of Jewish Studies, Jerusalem, July 29-August 5, 1997*, ed. Ron Margolin; Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 1999), 1-12. See also the detailed discussion of "canonicity" in Miguel Civil, ed., *Materials for the Sumerian Lexicon XIV: Ea A=nâqu, Aa A=nâqu, with their Forerunners and Related Texts* (collaborators Margaret W. Green and Wilfred G. Lambert; Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1979), 168-170.

[77] Victor A. Hurowitz, "Canon and Canonization in Mesopotamia," 3.

[78] See, for example, William W. Hallo, "Toward a History of Sumerian Literature," 181-203; William W. Hallo and William Kelly Simpson, *The Ancient Near East: A History* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1971), 154-158; and William W. Hallo, "The Concept of Canonicity in Cuneiform and Biblical Literature: A Comparative Appraisal," in *The Biblical Canon in Comparative Perspective* (ed. K. Lawson Younger, William W. Hallo and Bernard F. Batto; vol. 4 of *Scripture in Context*; Ancient Near Eastern Texts and Studies 11; Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen, 1991), 1-19.

[79] William W. Hallo and William Kelly Simpson, *The Ancient Near East: A History*, 155.

creation, these texts would be deposited in an archival holding for future reference. The utilitarian life cycle of these "archives" is posited to have been no more than a few generations, though the physical durability of the clay texts far outlasted their practical usefulness (in the eyes of their creators). Nevertheless, these records seemed to have functioned within Hallo's typological scheme only insofar as they remained true to the function intended by their original creators and no more.

*Monumental texts* reflected the author or writer's intention at long-term preservation through the creation of multiple copies (for example, royal building inscriptions on clay nails and bricks), or by the use of a different, more resilient writing material such as stone (for example, seals, foundation deposits, votive inscriptions on precious objects, plaques to life-size statues and boundary stones).[80] Interestingly enough, as Hallo noted, many of these monumental texts, despite the creator's intention of long-term survival, seem to have been aimed at a highly restricted audience that often did not include the contemporaries of the creators of the texts: "They include most of the so-called historical inscriptions of the kings of all periods – although in the native view these royal inscriptions were essentially building records, and their historical information was, strictly speaking, incidental. They were clearly intended for the information of later rebuilders and were usually concealed from contemporaneous eyes by the masonry of the building."[81]

The third typological subsection is analogous to A. Leo Oppenheim's "stream of tradition"[82] and refers to texts generated in an ancient school environment. Hallo opts for

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[80] William W. Hallo and William Kelly Simpson, *The Ancient Near East: A History*, 155-156.
[81] William W. Hallo and William Kelly Simpson, *The Ancient Near East: A History*, 155.
[82] "... that is, what can loosely be termed the corpus of literary texts maintained, controlled, and carefully kept alive by a tradition served by successive generations of learned and well-trained scribes" (A. Leo

the term *canonical texts* as a substitute, because the term "school texts" traditionally denotes the exercises undertaken by the scribal students in the schools. Although they share the same environment, Hallo's canonical texts far exceed this application of the term. *Canonical texts* are the end-result of a process of transmission by "limited" duplication[83] and further dissemination in the school environment. It is important to note that these texts were not the result of a process of passive transmission of a normative tradition but rather involved the active participation of scribes in the adaptation of the transmitted corpus:

> ... in the process of copying such texts each new generation of scribes gradually modernized, adapted, selected, and finally fixed them in a prescribed textual form governing such matters as their division into *iškaru* (books – literally, "series"), *pirsu* (sections, or subseries), *tuppu* (chapters – literally, "tablet"), and *šumu* (verses – literally, "name") and the sequence of these. Thus, for all practical purposes, they developed into a literary canon, and may best be designated as literary or, better as *canonical texts*.[84]

Hallo's *canonical texts* thus represent the end-result of a process of standardization of individual texts. The authors of Hallo's *archival texts* and *monumental texts* had ultimate control over the intentional use of the created texts. This is not true for the third category. Canonical texts here described *became*, but were not originally *created as*, the scribal curriculum. And a particular section of this "curriculum," identified by Hallo as Sumerian and later Akkadian literary works such as the Atrahasis legend, Sumerian proverbs from the Old Babylonian period, and so forth, "... can be better described in the

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Oppenheim, *Ancient Mesopotamia: Portrait of a Dead Civilization* [rev. ed. completed by Erica Reiner; Chicago: University of Chicago, 1977], 13).

[83] Hallo's usage of the term "limited" is dubious. It is unclear whether he applies this as counterpoint to a wider distribution of the texts in his category "monumental texts," or whether this refers to a deliberate effort on the part of the copyists to limit the number of copies transmitted or preserved.

[84] William W. Hallo and William Kelly Simpson, *The Ancient Near East: A History*, 156.

context not of scribal education but of religious literature and of higher learning."[85] It should be noted that Hallo does not make the leap from this observation to posit the existence of canonical texts within a *collective* framework. That is, as libraries within a religious environment such as a temple or temple school. Hallo seems to be unnecessarily hampered by his initial typological assumption of the supremacy of author's intent in the ultimate fate of the text. This does not sit well with any discussion of canon, as J. Z. Smith best explains: "The history of canon is not primarily one of transmission, but of reception."[86]

Hallo's "The Concept of Canonicity in Cuneiform and Biblical Literature,"[87] brings the discussion full circle. Here he uses Sarna as a premise to make the leap from a discussion of Mesopotamian canonization to the deliberation of the biblical canon. But still Hallo shies away from the implication of the transference of his understanding of the "canonization" of individual texts of the Mesopotamian textual corpus to that of collections of texts, as would be the case for the biblical canon.

It seems that Hallo's hesitation in making this conceptual leap may be partly due to his deliberate inclusion of quantity as parameter in his description of the duplication for both the *monumental* and *canonical* categories. An added hesitancy is born from the work of Sid Leiman[88] and Menahem Haran,[89] which suggest a fixed order of books far more

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[85] William W. Hallo and William Kelly Simpson, *The Ancient Near East: A History*, 157-158.
[86] J. Z. Smith, "Canons, Catalogues and Classics," in *Canonization and Decanonization: Papers Presented to the International Conference of the Leiden Institute for the Study of Religions (LISOR), Held at Leiden: 9-10 January 1997* (ed. A. van der Kooij and K. van der Toorn; Studies in the History of Religions 82; Leiden: Brill, 1998), 299.
[87] William W. Hallo, "The Concept of Canonicity in Cuneiform and Biblical Literature: A Comparative Appraisal," 1-19.
[88] Sid A. Leiman, *The Canonization of Hebrew Scripture: The Talmudic and Midrashic Evidence* (Transactions of the Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences 47; Hamden, Conn.: Archon, 1976).
[89] See, for example, Menahem Haran, "Book Scrolls in Israel in Pre-Exilic Times," *JJS* 33 (1982): 161-173; "Book-Scrolls at the Beginning of the Second Temple Period: The Transition from Papyrus to Skins," *HUCA* 54 (1983): 111-122; "Book Scrolls in Eastern and Western Jewish Communities from Qumran to the

dependent on the practicality of fitting more than one biblical book on a scroll than any other consideration for biblical canon formation. But Menahem Haran, in turn wrestling with the existence of libraries in early Judaism, does not negate the existence of such institutions on the basis of his earlier work; rather he turns to quantity as primary obstacle for Sarna's suggestion of early Jewish libraries (that is, prior to the geonic period). Yet again Jastrow looms large in the background when Haran asserts:

> The library of Assurbanipal in Nineveh held some 25,000 clay tablets. In Alexandria's library, which seems to have grown continually, the number of books may have risen from 100,000 to about 700,000... Even if these figures are only a rough contemporary estimate, it is clear that the vast libraries of the ancient Near East and the Hellenistic world were altogether on a different scale in comparison with the twenty-two or twenty-four biblical books.[90]

### 3.3.3 How Many Books Constitute a Library? The Egyptian Premise

To determine the nature of a textual collection solely based on the number of entities in the collection is unacceptable. It reduces the standing of an important societal institution to purely quantitative measures. Nevertheless, as quantity proved to be such a driving force in the demarcation of the ancient library, and particularly the temple library, quantity shall be discussed in this segment.

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High Middle Ages," *HUCA* 56 (1985): 21-62; "Book-Size and the Device of Catch-Lines in the Biblical Canon," *JJS* 36 (1985): 1-11; and "Book-Size and the Thematic Cycles in the Pentateuch," in *Die Hebräische Bibel und Ihre Zweifache Nachgeschichte: Festschrift für Rolf Rendtorff zum 65. Geburtstag* (ed. Erhard Blum, Christian Macholz and Ekkehard W. Stegemann; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1990), 165-176.

[90] Menahem Haran, "Archives, Libraries, and the Order of the Biblical Books," *JANESCU* 22 (1993), 59-60.

To return to Morris Jastrow: as mentioned, his conclusion favoured the negation of Babylonian temple libraries, but he retained a curious reference to Egypt that warrants further note:

> ... the Babylonian temples do not give evidence of having contained extensive literary collections; ...on the contrary, the number of texts they contained, being in general limited to those used in the worship of the deity to whom the temple was sacred, appears to have been comparatively small, precisely as in the Egyptian temples - altogether too small in extent and range to warrant the use of the term 'literary.'[91]

Egypt, before the inception of the Library of Alexandria, has long posed a rich source for general discussions on ancient literacy, scribal activity, wisdom and the development of libraries.[92] In fact, James Westfall Thompson posited that, "We must look to the temples of ancient Egypt for the first libraries ..."[93] Given the scarcity of evidence and the fragile nature of the writing material, Thompson supported his statement through the numerous references to literature from temple libraries and references to Egyptian temple libraries themselves in the later writings of the Greeks: Herodotus, Plato, Diodorus, Plutarch, Iamblichus, and so forth.

But it is the Egyptologist, Jan Assmann, in his article, "Der Tempel der Ägyptischen Spätzeit als Kanonisierung Kultureller Identität," who rather elegantly

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[91] Morris Jastrow, "Did the Babylonian Temples have Libraries?" 182.

[92] Ernest Cushing Richardson was one of the first to discuss ancient libraries in Egypt, see *Some Old Egyptian Librarians* (New York: Scribner's, 1911). But see also, for example, the excellent contribution to the subject by J.A. Sperry, "Egyptian Libraries: A Survey of the Evidence," *Libri* 7 (1957): 145-155; as well as John Baines, "Literacy and Ancient Egyptian Society," *Man* 18 (1983): 572-599; Günter Burkard, "Bibliotheken im Alten Ägypten," *Bibliothek Forschung und Praxis* 4 (1980): 79-115; H. Te Velde, "Scribes and Literacy in Ancient Egypt," in *Scripta Signa Vocis: Studies About Scripts, Scriptures, Scribes and Languages in the Near East: Presented to J.H. Hospers by His Pupils, Colleagues and Friends* (ed. H.L.J. Vanstiphout et al. Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 1986), 253-264; and the important contribution made by the Egyptologist, R.J. Williams: "Scribal Training in Ancient Egypt," *JAOS* 92 (1972): 214-221; R.J. Williams, "The Sages of Ancient Egypt in the Light of Recent Scholarship," *JAOS* 101 (1981): 1-19; R.J. Williams, "The Sage in Egyptian Literature," in *The Sage in Israel and the Ancient Near East* (ed. John G. Gammie and Leo G. Perdue; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 19-30.

[93] James W. Thompson, *Ancient Libraries*, 1.

makes the argument for the existence and nature of Egyptian temple libraries.[94] Within the confines of a discussion of the nature of "temple" and "canon," Assmann argues that conceptually the temple becomes the physical representation of the religious canon, and he does not shy away from extrapolating his conclusions to Judaism and Islam:

> Der Tempel ist nichts anderes als die dreidimensionale und monumentale Umsetzung eines Buchs, das alle Kennzeichen eines Kanons aufweist: es ist (wie der Koran) eine "vom Himmel gefallene" Offenbarung, und es darf an ihm (wie and der Torah) "nichts hinzugefügt und nichts weggenommen werden." ... Das Buch liegt dem Temple zugrunde, und der Tempel verwahrt es wiederum, zusammen mit anderen Büchern, in seiner Bibliothek. Buch und Tempel - soviel jedenfalls ist deutlich – gehen hier eine sehr enge und sehr spezifische Verbindung ein.[95]

Assmann evidently understands canonization as lodged firmly within the architectural, epigraphic, cultic ánd ethical precincts of the Egyptian temple library. *Canonization*, for Assmann, transcends the history of the transmission and standardization of an individual text to incorporate the greater metaphysical interrelatedness with other similarly preserved texts within a sacral environment. The canon is both generated and dictated by the temple. Moreover, Assmann postulates such a canon as severely restricted to a fixed number of just forty-two books. The number and sequence is represented in the ceremonial procession of the Egyptian priests,[96] as Clement

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[94] Jan Assmann, "Der Tempel der Ägyptischen Spätzeit als Kanonisierung Kultureller Identität," in *The Heritage of Ancient Egypt: Studies in Honour of Erik Iversen* (ed. Jürgen Osing and Erland K. Nielsen; CNI Publications 13; Copenhagen: University of Copenhagen, 1992), 9-25.

[95] Jan Assmann, "Der Tempel der Ägyptischen Spätzeit als Kanonisierung Kultureller Identität," 9-10.

[96] For a discussion of the importance of the procession as integral to every major Egyptian religious feast, see Jan Assmann, *Moses the Egyptian: The Memory of Egypt in Western Monotheism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard, 1997), 26; as well as Jan Assmann, "Das Ägyptische Prozessionsfest," in *Das Fest und das Heilige: Religiöse Kontrapunkte zur Alltagswelt* (ed. Jan Assmann and Theo Sundermeier; Studien zum Verstehen Fremder Religionen 1; Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, 1991), 105-122.

of Alexandria (ca. 150-215 C.E.) described in Book VI, Chapter 4, of his *Strōmateis*, otherwise known as the *Miscellanies*:

> For first advances the Singer, bearing some one of the symbols of music. For they say that he must learn two of the books of Hermes, the one of which contains the hymns of the gods, the second the regulations of the king's life. And after the Singer advances the Astrologer, with a horologe in his hand, and a palm, the symbols of astrology. He must have the astrological books of Hermes, which are four in number, always in his mouth. Of these, one is about the order of the fixed stars that are visible, and another about the conjunctions and luminous appearances of the sun and moon; and the rest respecting their risings. Next in order advances the sacred Scribe, with wings on his head, and in his hand a book and rule, in which were writing ink and the reed, with which they write. And he must be acquainted with what are called hieroglyphics, and know about cosmography and geography, the position of the sun and moon, and about the five planets; also the description of Egypt, and the chart of the Nile; and the description of the equipment of the priests and of the places consecrated to them, and about the measures and the things in use in the sacred rites. Then the Stole-keeper follows those previously mentioned, with the cubit of justice and the cup of libations. He is acquainted with all points called Pædeutic (relating to training) and Moschophatic (sacrificial). There are also ten books which relate to the honour paid by them to their gods, and containing the Egyptian worship; as that relating to sacrifices, first-fruits, hymns, prayers, processions, festivals, and the like. And behind all walks the Prophet, with the water-vase carried

> openly in his arms; who is followed by those who carry the issue of loaves. He, as being the governor of the temple, learns the ten books called 'Hieratic'; and they contain all about the laws, and the gods, and the whole of the training of the priests. For the Prophet is, among the Egyptians, also over the distribution of the revenues. There are then forty-two books of Hermes indispensably necessary; of which the six-and-thirty containing the whole philosophy of the Egyptians are learned by the forementioned personages; and the other six, which are medical, by the Pastophoroi (image-bearers), - treating of the structure of the body, and of diseases, and instruments, and medicines, and about the eyes, and the last about women.[97]

Scholars are in agreement that Clement's description had legitimate Egyptian origins. Most probably this passage is based on a lost work written by the Egyptian priest, Chaeremon, in the first-century C.E.[98]

It is therefore evident not only that the Egyptian temple library holdings did prove decidedly restricted in number but that these restrictions do not in any way pose a problem for the recognition of such a canonized list as representative of a legitimate ancient *library*.[99] The number, forty-two, referred to by Clement of Alexandria in relation to the temple procession, may have had added symbolic significance, and it is possible

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[97] Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, eds., *The Writings of Clement of Alexandria* (vol. 2 of *Ante-Nicene Christian Library: Translations of The Writings of the Fathers Down To A.D. 325*; trans. William Wilson; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1882), 323-324. For more detailed information on Clement of Alexandria, see John Ferguson's, *Clement of Alexandria* (TWAS 289; New York: Twayne, 1974).

[98] Bernard Lang, "The 'Writings': A Hellenistic Literary Canon in the Hebrew Bible," in *Canonization and Decanonization: Papers Presented to the International Conference of the Leiden Institute for the Study of Religions (LISOR), Held at Leiden: 9-10 January 1997* (ed. A. van der Kooij and K. van der Toorn; Studies in the History of Religions 82; Leiden: Brill, 1998), 46. See also Garth Fowden, *The Egyptian Hermes: A Historical Approach to the Late Pagan Mind* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge, 1986), 54-55, 58.

[99] The limited number of texts in the temple collection prompts Assmann to describe it alternatively as a "core library" or "reference library" ("Kern- und Arbeitsbibliothek"). Thereby distinguishing the temple library from the all-encompassing nature of the libraries of Assurbanipal and Alexandria. See Jan Assmann, *Religion un Kulturelles Gedächtnis: Zehn Studien* [Munich: Beck, 2000], 91-96.

that this may have informed the fixed number of twenty-two or twenty-four canonized books of the Jewish canon:[100] "Rabbinical tradition was aware of the fact that the number of sacred books corresponds to the number of the twenty-four priestly courses serving at the Temple. Presumably, the Hebrew priests were also the custodians of the sacred scriptures, as were the priests of ancient Egypt."[101]

### 3.3.4 A "Temple Library" in Jerusalem

The abovementioned beckons the question: Where were such *libraries* to be located? Scholars of Wisdom literature have always speculated as to the existence of schools and libraries within the premises of the Jerusalem temple, as seemed to be the case for ancient Egypt.[102] André Lemaire suggests that the 2 Kings 22 account[103] of the discovery of the Book of the Law by the high priest Hilkiah in the temple, "... could well

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[100] The earliest reference to twenty-four books originates from the pseudepigraphal Fourth Book of Ezra 14:44-46: "So during the forty days ninety-four books were written. And when the forty days were ended, the Most High spoke to me, saying, 'Make public the twenty-four books that you wrote first and let the worthy and the unworthy read them'" (B. M. Metzger, "The Fourth Book of Ezra [Late First Century A.D.] with the Four Additional Chapters: A New Translation and Introduction," in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha: Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments* [ed. James H. Charlesworth; vol. 1 of *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, ed. James H. Charlesworth; New York: Doubleday, 1985], 555).

[101] Bernard Lang, "The 'Writings,'" 44.

[102] See, for example, Victor Hurowitz, *I Have Built You an Exalted House: Temple Building in the Bible in Light of Mesopotamian and Northwest Semitic Writings* (JSOTSup 115; JSOT/ASOR Monograph Series 5; Sheffield: JSOT, 1992), 252; and André Lemaire, "The Sage in School and Temple," in *The Sage in Israel and the Ancient Near East* (ed. John G. Gammie and Leo G. Perdue; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 165-181. For a summary of possible allusions (not necessarily direct reference) to schools and a school tradition in the Hebrew Bible, see André Lemaire's *Les Écoles et la Formation de la Bible dans L'Ancien Israël* (Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis 39; Fribourg: Editions Universitaires, 1981), 34-45. See also R. N. Whybray, *The Intellectual Tradition in the Old Testament* (BZAW 135; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1974); and E. W. Heaton, *The School Tradition of the Old Testament: The Bampton Lectures for 1994* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994). Note also Friedemann W. Golka's concerns with the evidence for tenth century schools ("Die Israelitische Weisheitschule oder 'Des Kaisers Neue Kleider,'" *VT* 33 [1983], 257-270) and the even more skeptical work of David W. Jamieson-Drake, *Scribes and Schools in Monarchic Judah: A Socio-Archaeological Approach* (JSOTSup 109; SWBA 9; Sheffield: Almond, 1991) and Philip R. Davies, *Scribes and Schools: The Canonization of the Hebrew Scriptures* (Library of Ancient Israel; Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 1998), but see also Chapter 5 for a complete discussion of the ambivalent reception received by Jamieson-Drake from the scholarly community.

[103] 2 Kings 22 is highly problematic and controversial in terms of historicity and exact dating and the account is therefore only mentioned in passing as related to Lemaire's observations.

hint at such a library in a room of the Jerusalem temple where archives and literary texts would be stored."[104] The existence of such a locality within the temple compound is further hinted at by an account in Jeremiah 36: "Then read Baruch in the book the words of Jeremiah in the house of the Lord, in the chamber (בלשכת) of Gemariah the son of Shaphan the scribe, in the higher court, at the entry of the new gate of the Lord's house, in the ears of all the people" (Jer 36:10 KJV). Lemaire proposes: "Whatever the precise meaning of the word *liškâ*, which could well have indicated a room open on one side with benches along the other three walls..., this was clearly a place convenient for public reading within the temple enclosure. One may note that, later on, Jeremiah's scroll was temporarily deposited in another room of the same type: the *liškâ* of Elishama the scribe (Jer 36:20)."[105]

Within a different context, a recent consideration of the mishnaic usage of the term *kitvei ha-qodesh* (the Hebrew equivalent for the Greek *hagiographa*), may also throw light on the possible existence and nature of a temple library. Barry Levy argues that the Hebrew term may originally have carried the meaning *temple writings*, as the term can quite legitimately be translated as "the writings of the Holy One" or "the writings of the sanctuary." Levy is therefore of the opinion that, "Possible connections with the etymology of the Greek term *hagiographa* (which also could mean 'temple writings,' not only 'holy writings') require further consideration."[106] Although Levy does not elaborate on this, the inference is clear: the Hagiographa may be the Greek equivalent of a Hebrew term that was used to refer to the collection of books stored in the Temple in

[104] Note, yet again, the inconsistency in the use of terminology, see André Lemaire, "The Sage in School and Temple," 176. See also Viktor Burr's discussion of library and archive related activities in the Hebrew Bible, and these passages in particular, in Viktor Burr, *Bibliothekarische Notizen zum Alten Testament* (Kleine Schriften 6; Bonn: H. Bouvier, 1969), 17-22.
[105] André Lemaire, "The Sage in School and Temple," 177.
[106] B. Barry Levy, *Fixing God's Torah* (New York: Oxford University, 2001), 12-13.

Jerusalem. It was later adopted to denote the third section of the Biblical books and may therefore be indicative of the original provenance of these books, as well as a possible motive for their inclusion in the canon of the Hebrew Bible.[107]

Therefore, despite the initial examples of the widespread negation of the existence of ancient Near Eastern libraries in the more practical archaeological and historical literature, particular fields of religious interest have emerged in the last few decades that have turned this limited understanding on its head. The first includes all endeavours related to the formulation of a hypothesis for the origins of the Dead Sea Scroll collection, in particular Norman Golb and the proponents of a Jerusalem Temple Library. Others involve recent discussions regarding the process by which religious texts are canonized. Research into the development of a wisdom tradition within the broader ancient Near Eastern context has also suggested proof for the existence of ancient temple libraries.

One specific account in the Second Book of Maccabees has proved particularly significant in the discussion of a Jerusalem Temple Library, as well as the canonization of the Bible. It relates an instance more than a century before the destruction of the Second Temple by the Romans in 70 C.E., when religious documents probably closely associated with the temple, were hidden during the Maccabean Revolt and afterwards successfully retrieved:

> ... it was also recorded, both in the archives and in the Memoirs of Nehemiah, how he founded a library and made a collection of the books dealing with the kings and the prophets, the writings of David and the letters of the kings on the subject of offerings. In the same way Judas made a complete collection of

[107] Note in this respect also the work of Naphtali Wieder, "'Sanctuary' as a Metaphor for Scripture," *JJS* 8 (1957): 165-175, especially as it relates to Assmann's earlier discussed assertions of the interrelationship between the physical temple or sanctuary and the documents.

the books dispersed in the late war, and these we still have. If you need any of them, send someone to fetch copies for you (2 Macc 2:13-14 JB).

Scholars interested in the process of the canonization of the Hebrew Bible often quote this account of the survival of religious material. Hence the word *canon* in contemporary academic literature is regularly replaced by "inventory list" or "catalogue."[108] In this scholarly context, there is a noticeable absence of any questions regarding the existence of religious text collections in ancient temples and sanctuaries. It is taken as a matter of course, but what exactly such libraries would have entailed, is frustratingly ill defined.

Moreover, Philip Davies in his *In Search of 'Ancient Israel'*[109] use the above excerpt from the Second Book of Maccabees to indicate the formation of such a core collection of religious texts in the Jerusalem Temple. Here the character of the suggested temple library of Jerusalem shows significant agreement with the description given for the Temple Library at Sippar. In this Davies is not alone; Beckwith, Van der Kooij, and Lang hint at the same,[110] indicating the strong possibility that the Hasmoneans were responsible for re-assembling scrolls that survived the Maccabean Revolt (presumably in hiding). Thus, the third division of the biblical canon, at the very least, may be said to represent what scrolls survived the Revolt[111] and were then disseminated as representative

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[108] See, for example, J. Z. Smith, "Canons, Catalogues and Classics," 295-311.
[109] Philip R. Davies, *In Search of 'Ancient Israel,'* (JSOTSup 148; Sheffield: JSOT, 1992), 157-161.
[110] Roger T. Beckwith, *The Old Testament Canon of the New Testament Church and its Background in Early Judaism* (London: SPCK, 1985); Roger T. Beckwith, "Formation of the Hebrew Bible," in *Mikra: Text, Translation, Reading and Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity* (ed. Martin Jan Mulder; The Literature of the Jewish People in the Period of the Second Temple and the Talmud 1; Assen/Maastricht: Van Gorcum, 1990), 39-86; Arie van der Kooij, "The Canonization of Ancient Books Kept in the Temple of Jerusalem," in *Canonization and Decanonization: Papers Presented to the International Conference of the Leiden Institute for the Study of Religions (LISOR), Held at Leiden: 9-10 January 1997* (ed. A. van der Kooij and K. van der Toorn; Studies in the History of Religions 82; Leiden: Brill, 1998), 17-40; Bernard Lang, "The 'Writings,'" 41-65.
[111] Davies, because of revisionist leanings, will argue that the "survival" of the Revolt is a fiction propagated by the Hasmoneans who created the text corpus to solidify their hold on power: "Here we can

of the official Temple Library. Hasmonean ownership of these scrolls thus also proved a form of legitimization for the new regime.

Philip Davies takes this postulation one step further by marrying the ideas of canonization within a temple library-setting with more secular and Machiavellian intent by the Hasmoneans, the so-called "Hasmonean Initiative".[112] "The Hasmonaean temple library of Jewish/Judaean books is the obvious moment for such a definitive corpus to be established and indeed to remain as the definitive corpus. What is 'in' the Jewish 'scriptures' can henceforth mean what is housed as such in the temple library."[113] Again, whether one agrees with Davies' revisionist approach to the biblical literature[114] and/or whether the political aspirations of the Hasmoneans could possibly have been the sole determinative factor in establishing a closed canon, is not relevant for the present discussion. What is important to note is the change of language that signals a change in approach to what is in fact Jastrow's question posed a century earlier within a different academic environment.

## 3.4 Conclusion

Thus it seems as though the study of the canonization process has proven far more fruitful in answering the initial question posed by Jastrow, than a more fundamental approach to the subject at hand.

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see important implications for canonizing: a political regime that has a need and a motive for *political canonizing*, which means the promotion of certain texts in the life of Judah ... Under the Hasmoneans, then, emerges a 'Judaism' that needs a 'canon'" (Philip R. Davies, *Scribes and Schools*, 72).

[112] See Philip Davies's comments on the "Hasmonean Initiative" (*Scribes and Schools*, 174).

[113] Philip Davies, *In Search of 'Ancient Israel,'* 159.

[114] Philip Davies and the revisionist position on ancient archives and libraries will receive in-depth treatment in Chapter 5.

Scholars of canonization did not have to incorporate preconceived notions of size and content. These are the very notions introduced by Jastrow and his followers that so hampered the development of more sophisticated definitions of ancient archives and libraries. The proponents for the existence of a strictly regulated and ordered core collection of religious texts in, or associated with, a temple environment, as an explanation for the emergence of a canon, proved valuable in tracing the existence of ancient temple libraries.

Thus, after a century, Jastrow's reasoning is turned on its head. Instead of a plea that, " ... a promiscuous use of the term 'Temple Library' to describe the contents of the temple archives in Babylonia, is to be discountenanced, not only as unwarranted, but as positively misleading, and as tending to create unnecessary and unjustifiable confusion,"[115] this chapter urges the opposite. Jastrow can be answered in the positive. Temple libraries did exist and were prevalent in the ancient Near East, but the character and nature of these collections differ considerably from the expectations traditionally associated with the ideal of the "ancient library" as typified by the Library of Assurbanipal or the Library of Alexandria. This also implies the adoption of a more circumspect approach to the application of the terms *library* and *archive*. In this respect, Morris Jastrow did indeed foresee a central concern for future scholars, and Hermann Hilprecht may have introduced the answer. That is, to define ancient textual deposits in terms of smaller, modest and far more prevalent collections rather than to use as our standard the two most glaring exceptions to the general rule.

Libraries in the ancient Near East are amply represented by the canonization of the literary corpus. The Temple Library discovered at Sippar proves the existence of such

[115] Morris Jastrow, "Did the Babylonian Temples Have Libraries?" 182.

libraries within the confines of an ancient sanctuary as the most likely setting.[116] The formation and nature of these collections are therefore often imbued with religious meaning and intent, hence the element of divine inspiration often imparted on such collections of texts. In size these collections tended to be modest: in the hundreds for the library at Sippar, even smaller quantities for Egypt and for the religious corpus of the Hebrew Bible.[117]

Where canonization resulted in a final closing of the canon, something that Hallo suspects never happened for cuneiform literature, the eventual number may also have become predetermined and instilled with symbolic meaning. The limited dimension of these libraries facilitated the duplication and dissemination of the fixed corpus to a number of locations in the Near East. Hence the resultant expectation of the discovery of set duplicates in different locations dating from the same period of time in Mesopotamian history. The distribution of the set corpus may also be responsible for an eventual disassociation of the collection from a specific temple setting.[118] The corpus itself,

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[116] Possible remnants of such libraries are attested, for example, by a small deposit in Temple 16 at Hattuša; Area M I of the temple excavations at Emar; the Neo-Assyrian deposit unearthed in the southwestern courtyard of the Aššur temple; the secondary remains of a temple deposit in the Nabû temple south of the main entrance of the citadel, at Nimrud; and so forth. Colophons also attest to the existence of a library in the Nabû temple south of the North Palace at Nineveh. See Olof Pedersén (*Archives and Libraries in the Ancient Near East: 1500-300 B.C.* [Bethesda, Md.: CDL, 1998]), for more examples.

[117] "Aus der Form und Struktur eines Kanons ist alle Beliebigkeit ausgeschlossen. Die 42 Gaue oder Körperteile und die 22 bzw. 24 Buchstaben sind Symbole der Ganzheit, Weltformeln, wenn man so will. Indem der Kanon diese Weltformel verwirklicht, wird er zur Welt in Buchform. Die hebräische Bibel zeigt alle Züge einer solchen 'hochnotwendigen' Kern- und Arbeitsbibliothek. Sie is viel eher eine Bibliothek als ein Buch. In der kanonischen Endgestalt beschränkt sie sich auf drei Abeitlungen: Tora, Propheten und Schriften (in antiklimaktischer Folge). Man hat den Eindruck, daß sich mit der hebräischen Bibel die Bibliothek einer Textgemeinschaft gegen die Bibliotheken anderer Textgemeinschaften durchgesetzt hat" (Jan Assmann, *Religion un Kulturelles Gedächtnis*, 95).

[118] Note in this regard Thomas C. Römer's suggestion of the substitution of the "book" for the temple in post-exilic times: "Transformations in Deuteronomistic and Biblical Historiography: On 'Book-Finding' and other Literary Strategies," *ZAW* 109 (1997): 5; and Thomas C. Römer, "Du Temple au Livre: L'Idéologie de la Centralisation dans L'Historiographie Deutéronomiste," in *Rethinking the Foundations: Historiography in the Ancient World and in the Bible, Essays in Honour of John Van Seters* (ed. Steven L. McKenzie and Thomas Römer; BZAW 294; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2000), 207-225.

however, retained religious meaning as sacred object in and of itself, as was most certainly the case for the Hebrew Bible.

# Chapter 4

# The Assignment of Meaning:

# Archives and Adjunct Textual Deposits

> It would be wrong to take a cavalier attitude towards the riches accumulated by Assyriologists during their first century as some type of diploma of self-satisfaction. These people are historians, and honest historians are too much aware of the extreme disproportion between the little that is preserved from the past and the infinite density of the past itself, to ever feel satisfied. What is the use of these two or three million pieces of archeological debris and nick-knacks and of written pieces in reconstructing the history of three millennia and of a prehistory that is even more enormous, involving the lives of hundreds of thousands of people?[1]

## 4.1 Archives

### 4.1.1 Introduction

The twofold distinction of *library* versus *archive* for ancient texts denotes the dual features of a traditional approach to textual deposits that emerged with Léon Heuzey's announcement in 1894 of the discovery of approximately 30,000 documents of an "administrative" nature at Telloh, by the French vice-consul at Basra, Ernest de Sarzec.[2]

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[1] Jean Bottéro, *Mesopotamia: Writing, Reasoning, and the Gods* (trans. Zainab Bahrani and Marc Van De Mieroop; Chicago: University of Chicago, 1992), 51.

[2] The find at Telloh was accompanied by a simultaneous saturation of the black market in Baghdad of an almost equal number of tablets surreptitiously procured, ostensibly from the same excavation site, as described by Tom Jones: "The clandestine finds of natives ... were soon dumped on the market and dispersed to the winds after 'an archaeologist at that time resident in Baghdad' told the dealers that 'the inscriptions on them were not historical, but were chiefly accounts ...' This identification of the nature of

These documents differed so markedly in content from the literary and/or historical perception attached to the archetypal ancient library, the Library of Assurbanipal, it begged a more discriminatory demarcation of future textual units. Thus a distinction was born that is otherwise and probably most famously described by A. Leo Oppenheim:

> First, there is the large number of tablets that belong to what I will call the stream of the tradition - that is, what can loosely be termed the corpus of literary texts maintained, controlled, and carefully kept alive by a tradition served by successive generations of learned and well-trained scribes. Second, there is the mass of texts of all descriptions, united by the fact that they were used to record the day-to-day activities of the Babylonians and Assyrians. Both streams, of course, run side by side; each has only limited contact with the other.[3]

It is significant to note that Oppenheim formulated his dichotomy of textual distinction in response to a self-posed question: "What can these tablets possibly mean to us, of a late and alien civilization, to whom they were not meant to speak?"[4] *Meaning*, or the assignment of meaning for an ancient paradigm within a contemporary context, may therefore be construed to be a key element, as well as the source, of the ancient library-archive dualism for the contemporary scholar. It is also significant to note that most early

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the tablets, while perfectly correct, was not made without intended malice, for the 'archaeologist' was Henri Pognon, the lifelong enemy of Léon Heuzey" (Tom B. Jones, "Sumerian Administrative Documents: An Essay," in *Sumerological Studies in Honor of Thorkild Jacobsen on His Seventieth Birthday: June 7, 1974* [ed. Stephen J. Lieberman; AS 20; Chicago: University of Chicago, 1976], 41-42).

The discoveries at Telloh represented the first excavated evidence for the Sumerian civilization. Approximately 40,000 tablets were discovered by the beginning of the twentieth-century. Most date to the Ur III period. See R. J. Matthews, "Girsu and Lagash," *OEANE* 2:406-409. For a synopsis of the nature and importance of the Third Dynasty of Ur (ca. 2112-2004 B.C.E.), as well as for additional bibliographic references on the topic, see Amélie Kuhrt, *The Ancient Near East c. 3000-330 BC* (2 vols.; Routledge History of the Ancient World; London: Routledge, 1995), 1:56-73. See also N. Schneider, "Die Urkundenbehälter von Ur III und ihre Archivalische Systematik," *Or* 9 (1940): 1-16.

[3] A. Leo Oppenheim, *Ancient Mesopotamia: Portrait of a Dead Civilization* (rev. ed. completed by Erica Reiner; Chicago: University of Chicago, 1977), 13. Note that the present application of Oppenheim's distinction is heavily reliant on the previous chapter's premise that the process of canonization in cuneiform literature is to be understood to have occurred as concomitant to the development of libraries. The alternate grouping can therefore by default be associated with archives and archive keeping, as indeed Oppenheim's further elaboration seems to suggest.

[4] A. Leo Oppenheim, *Ancient Mesopotamia*, 12-13.

twentieth-century scholars were openly dismissive of the newly discovered texts as laden with any such potential meaning. This despite the acknowledged reality that Oppenheim's latter category soon far outnumbered the former in numeric yields. Herman Hilprecht, in typically opinionated fashion, articulated the scholarly stance at the time, coincidentally, specifically as regards to Telloh. After doling out severe criticism for perceived laxity in security that allowed for alleged extensive illicit excavation at the site, Hilprecht observed with notable relish:

> A large number of the stolen tablets are still in the hands of the antiquity dealers. At first greedily bought by the latter in the sure expectation of an extraordinary gain, this archaeological contraband began recently to disappoint them, the comparatively uninteresting and monotonous contents of the average clay tablets from Tellô [*sic*] offering too little attraction to most of the Assyriological students.[5]

The impression of the diminished importance of these "dull records" or "laundry lists" *vis-à-vis* their "literary" counterparts was augmented by the soon-to-be discovered abundance of Ur III records at Girsu, Umma and Drehem, and so forth, and sprung, according to Veenhof, directly from scholars' inherent inclination to focus on the individual text as historical record, rather than the organic unit of texts discovered together.[6]

Thus, based on the emphatic importance placed on content, the individual text, rather than a collective entity, became paramount in category placement. Of the two categories, *archives* were by far the larger and, as the latter of the two entities created for

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[5] Hermann V. Hilprecht, *Explorations in Bible Lands During the 19th Century* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1903), 248; see also Tom B. Jones, "Sumerian Administrative Documents: An Essay," 42.

[6] "De aandacht was aanvankelijk sterk geconcentreerd op de vaak enkele tekst als historisch document in engere zin" (Klaas R. Veenhof, *Spijkerschriftarchieven: Rede Uitgesproken Bij De Aanvaarding van het Ambt van Gewoon Hoogleraar in De Talen en Geschiedenis van Babylonië en Assyrië aan de Rijksuniversiteit te Leiden op 4 Juni 1982* [Leiden: Brill, 1982], 7-8.

typifying ancient textual deposits, have also become the indiscriminate holdall for every text considered "non-literary" in nature and content. To quote a recent summation of ancient collections by Black and Tait: "Almost any group of documents excavated together can be called an 'archive,' on a broad definition of the word."[7]

This brings the added disadvantage that interrelatedness between textual entities held minimal influence over the assignment of typological distinction. These ill-defined categories were further complicated by Weitemeyer's discriminatory emphasis on "technique,"[8] which is of necessity interminably intertwined with and determined by the "physical characteristics" of the ancient collections. The consequence of this is that, more often than not, distinctions in applying the labels "library" and "archive" are based on an attempted differentiation in the management of collections. Weitemeyer's "techniques" are depicted as detailed descriptions of "physical characteristics": types of writing material, tablet and scroll size, methods of storage and shelving, labelling, and the like.[9] Ernst Posner's *Archives in the Ancient World* provided the definitive abridgement and final legitimization of this approach:

> In surveying its (clay tablet archives) development, our emphasis will be on the problems of physical preservation, storage, and use of archival materials.

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[7] J.A. Black and W. J. Tait, "Archives and Libraries in the Ancient Near East," *CANE* 4:2197-2209.
[8] Mogens Weitemeyer, "Archive and Library Technique in Ancient Mesopotamia," *Libri* 6/3 (1956): 217-238.
[9] The great sway Weitemeyer's methodological perspective still holds is indicated by the fact that John N. Postgate ("Middle Assyrian Tablets: The Instruments of Bureaucracy," *AoF* 18 [1986]: 10) returns to this approach, even after acknowledgement of the emphasis on interrelatedness between textual units encouraged by the work of Veenhof and the 30th *Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale*: "Historians of ancient Mesopotamia are fortunate in the flood of light that is often shed on its social and economic affairs by commercial, legal and administrative records. In using this information it is always advisable to bear in mind the nature of the records themselves: cuneiformists are gradually realizing the importance of studying whole archives, but this article will stress the necessity of examining the actual tablets, which are, as it were, the lens through which our illumination must pass, to enable us to make allowances for the distortions and variations of focus which are surely present. It is not sufficient to consider only the words written on each tablet: its physical appearance (shape, sealing, arrangement of the inscription, etc.) also conveyed a message of its own ..." See also another contemporary example of the emphasis placed on this approach by Black and Tait, "Archives and Libraries in the Ancient Near East," 4:2199-2202.

> ...Our aim, then, is to discuss the record-keeping techniques of all the areas that used the clay tablet ... as the principal medium for recording and imparting information. This broad approach appears not only expedient but also legitimate, first of all because methods of communication and consequently techniques of preserving the products of the communication process depend on the physical makeup of the medium used, as does its survival.[10]

For Posner, the definitive common denominator for ancient Near Eastern archives in Mesopotamia, Elam, Urartu, Anatolia and southern Syria, as well as Crete and Mycenaean Greece,[11] was the physical characteristic, the writing medium, and, in particular, it's durability as representative of the ideal of successful archival preservation methodology in practice: "To the archivist, certainly, this concept of a clay tablet civilization, although broader and more diffused... seems justified because the physical nature of the writing medium is the fundamental element that determines the genesis, the organization, and the preservation of archival material."[12]

Thus Posner established a decidedly pragmatic and deceptively simple, undemanding base for future discussion of ancient archives. It should not be considered accidental that the 30th *Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale* and Klaas Veenhof's two landmark discussions of ancient Near Eastern collections distinguished the "archives" in

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[10] Ernst Posner, *Archives in the Ancient World* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University, 1972), 16.

[11] Egypt is excluded and separately discussed, ostensibly because of a difference in writing material. But Posner is not entirely consistent in his self-imposed distinction, as he chose to discuss the tablets of El Amarna in his chapter on "Pharaonic Egypt," rather than the chapter on "Clay Tablet Archives" (See Ernst Posner, *Archives in the Ancient World*, 12-90).

[12] Ernst Posner, *Archives in the Ancient World*, 18.

The discovery of the vast cuneiform repositories seem to fulfill the ostensibly impossible utopian ideal of permanent archival retention and preservation of the societal memory, as explained by David Bearman ("Archival Methods," *Archives and Museum Informatics Technical Report* 3/1 [1989]: 17): "When archivists determine that records possess evidential or informational value sufficient to warrant their archival retention, they designate them as 'permanent' or of 'enduring value' and accession them. They tell themselves, their institutions and their donors, that they intend to keep such records forever. Nevertheless, they must recognize that the recorded memory is a material manifestation of the past, and as a material manifestation it will need to be stored and it will undergo material decay."

their titles exclusively by writing medium, in favour of geographical, linguistic, disciplinary, methodological or historical labels.[13]

### 4.1.2 The Dutch *Manual*, Archival Theory and Original Order

This blanket, indiscriminate approach to ancient archives developed at a time when archival science was dominated by the worldwide diffusion of the principles of archival arrangement and description, articulated by the archival theory of the Dutch Association of Archivists' *Manual for the Arrangement and Description of Archives*.[14] The *Manual* both defined prospective archivists' interpretation of the "archival collection"[15] and provided them with one hundred regulatory archival principles or "rules," based on the two fundamental tenets of archival theory: the principles of *provenance* and *original order*; or, as Brothman preferred, the two principles that determine the archival "Edenic order."[16]

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[13] See Klaas R. Veenhof, *Spijkerschriftarchieven*; Klaas R. Veenhof, "Cuneiform Archives: An Introduction," in *Cuneiform Archives and Libraries: Papers Read at the 30e Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale in Leiden, 4-8 July 1983* (ed. Klaas R. Veenhof; Uitgaven van het Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut te Istanbul 52; Istanbul: Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut, 1986), 1-36; and Klaas R. Veenhof, ed., *Cuneiform Archives and Libraries: Papers Read at the 30e Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, Leiden, 4-8 July 1983* (Uitgaven van het Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut te Istanbul 52; Istanbul: Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut, 1986).

Compare this titular distinction, for example, with Olof Pedersén's joint geographical and historical demarcation in: *Archives and Libraries in the Ancient Near East: 1500-300 B.C.* (Bethesda, Md.: CDL, 1998).

[14] S. Muller, J.A. Feith and R. Fruin, *Manual for the Arrangement and Description of Archives: Drawn up by Direction of the Netherlands Association of Archivists* (trans. of the 2nd ed. by Arthur H. Leavitt; New York: H.W. Wilson Company, 1940; reissue, New York: H.W. Wilson Company, 1968). For biographical background on the authors of the *Manual*, a description of the *Manual*'s origins, as well as the history of the founding of the Society of Dutch Archivists, see Eric Ketelaar, "Muller, Feith and Fruin," *Archives et Bibliotèques de Belgique* 57 (1986): 255-268.

[15] Rule 1: "An archival collection is the whole of the written documents, drawings and printed matter, officially received or produced by an administrative body or one of its officials, in so far as these documents were intended to remain in the custody of that body or of that official" (Muller, Feith and Fruin, *Manual for the Arrangement and Description of Archives*, 13-18).

[16] Brien Brothman, "Orders of Value: Probing the Theoretical Terms of Archival Practice," *Archivaria* 32 (1991): 83. The normative approach followed by the Dutch *Manual*, as evidenced by the codified "rules," is credited as the standardizing mechanism that acted as formal impetus for the "professionalization" of Dutch

As such, the principles intertwine to govern archival arrangement and description. The principle of provenance demands the arrangement and preservation of records in accordance with the source of the records, while original order governs the imperative that records should be retained in the order originally designed by said source.[17] Of the two, the latter is considered sacrosanct: "They believed that by so respecting the arrangement of original record-keeping systems, the all-important archival activity of elucidating the administrative context in which the records are originally created could be much facilitated."[18] *Original order* (the Dutch "principle of respect for archival structure" first elucidated by Theodoor van Riemsdijk) and provenance are wedded in the idea of the archives as organic entity and regulated by a responsive organic order denoted by the concept *respect des fonds*: "Original order is the internal dimension of respect des fonds and '... focuses upon the maintenance of the internal arrangement of ... records.' This is in contrast to provenance, which is the external dimension of respect des fonds and is concerned with maintaining the integrity of records creators and the contextual evidence associated therewith."[19] *Fonds* is an alternate archival denotation for "archival

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archivists as a body and by extension, the profession as a whole. As always, the normative codification of standards can also be considered as inhibiting to the development of archival theory, as suggested by Eric Ketelaar ("Archival Theory and the Dutch Manual," *Archivaria* 41 [1996]: 31-40).

Rules 8 and 16 best formulate the principles of *provenance* and *original order*, respectively. Rule 8: "The various archival collections placed in a depository must be kept carefully separate. If there are several copies of a document, a study should be made to see in which collection each copy belongs" (Muller, Feith and Fruin, *Manual for the Arrangement and Description of Archives*, 33-35); and Rule 16: "The system of arrangement must be based on the original organization of the archival collection, which in the main corresponds to the organization of the administrative body that produced it" (Muller, Feith and Fruin, *Manual for the Arrangement and Description of Archives*, 52-59). See also Terry Cook's discussion of the *Manual* in: "What is Past is Prologue: A History of Archival Ideas Since 1898, and the Future Paradigm Shift," *Archivaria* 43 (1997): 20-22.

[17] See T. R. Schellenberg, *The Management of Archives* [Columbia University Studies in Library Service 14; New York: Columbia University, 1965], 90-105.

[18] Terry Cook, "What is Past is Prologue: A History of Archival Ideas Since 1898, and the Future Paradigm Shift," 21. See also Frank Boles, "Disrespecting Original Order," *American Archivist* 45 (1982): 26-32.

[19] Dan Zelenyj, "Linchpin Imperilled: The Functional Interpretation of Series and the Principle of Respect des Fonds," *Archivaria* 42 (1996), 130.

collection"[20] and *respect des fonds* thus embodies the ultimate deference exhibited by the archivist for the integrity of archival collections.[21] The potential value of these archival principles for ancient Near Eastern Studies, as well as the management of ancient collections in museums and private collections, is self-evident. Veenhof eagerly adopted the descriptive potential of what he referred to as the "archival approach." But it has to be cautioned that, in tracing the adaptation of archival theory for Assyriology, the scholar has to take note of the fact that in the Netherlands, the principle of provenance is governed most strongly by the joint value of original order, a proviso not always as

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[20] In terms of functional archival science, Ketelaar ("Archival Theory and the Dutch Manual," 37) adds: "A *fonds* is a whole, a historically determined structure, a fabric of relationships and context." Cook ("The Concept of the Archival Fonds in the Post-Custodial Era: Theory, Problems and Solutions," *Archivaria* 35 [1993]: 24-37) elaborates further: "The fonds, ... should be viewed primarily as 'an intellectual construct.' ... The fonds is thus the conceptual 'whole' that reflects an organic process in which a records creator produces or accumulates series of records which themselves exhibit a natural unity based on shared function, activity, form or use." It should be pointed out that Leavitt translated the original concept of "fonds" or "fonds d'archives" from the Dutch "archief" (singular), as "archival collection" in the English translation of the Dutch Manual: "... *archief*, (is) a noun used in the singular, as are related words in various other European languages. ... As the word 'archive,' in the singular, has not come into general use in this sense in English, the expression 'archival collection' is used in this translation to render the idea of an organic archival whole. ... Neither 'group' nor 'collection' should, of course, here be taken in the sense of things brought together by collectors; the definition itself precludes this" (Muller, Feith and Fruin, *Manual for the Arrangement and Description of Archives*, 13).

[21] Muller, Feith and Fruin, *Manual for the Arrangement and Description of Archives*, 34. To understand the true value of the principles laid down by the *Manual*, it is important to relate the classificatory alternatives that developed, especially in the United States, during the nineteenth-century. These alternatives were strongly influenced by classification schemes propagated by libraries. It included chronological sequencing, subject schemes, an "administrative classification" scheme, a "historical classification" scheme, as well as combinations such as the "geographic-chronologic" scheme developed in the Library of Congress by 1897 and perpetuated in the New York Public Library, as well as in state and federal archives and military records from World War I: "In the application of the scheme, records of the Navy Department were placed in area and subject classes without regard to their administrative origins. While it thus destroyed evidence on the provenance of records in official activity, the scheme seemingly had the approval of the historical profession and was abandoned only very recently" (T. R. Schellenberg, *The Management of Archives*, 40). This implied a complete disregard for provenance and original order, and the repercussions are adequately illustrated by T. R. Schellenberg (*The Management of Archives*, 39): "The chronologic-geographic scheme represents the extreme opposite of the archival principle by which records are kept according to their provenance, and led to the practice of tearing manuscript collections apart – a practice that has immeasurably retarded the development of an effective control over the documentary resources of the nation [the United States]." The detriment of such artificially imposed classificatory schemes not only for the description, but also for the management of ancient records, is self-evident.

For a history of the gradual acceptance of the principle of provenance as integral to archival practice in the United States, as well as for the slow recognition of the principle by curators of private papers, see T.R. Schellenberg (*The Management of Archives*, 41-45).

strongly emphasized in a more generalized application of either the principles of provenance or *respect des fonds*: "That is, that not only every document should be restored to the archive group to which it originally belonged, but *within* that archive group *to its original place*. This is a consequence of the respect for the original order, for the original archival structure."[22] Hence the Dutch equivalent *herkomstbeginsel*, coined as translation of the German *Provenienzprinzip*.

As mentioned before, the present interest in the archival categorization of ancient texts emerged after the Second World War, when an emphasis on socio-economic history prompted a reconsideration of the bureaucratic textual corpora of the ancient Near East. By this time, the Director of the State Archives and Archival School at Marburg, Johannes Papritz, depicts the exponential growth in the number of ancient Near Eastern textual finds as a "flood" and estimates that by the time of his writing in 1959, the number of discovered cuneiform tablets equalled close to 400,000.[23] Of this number, a large percentage fell into the category of bureaucratic or economic texts by then discovered in important ancient Near Eastern centres such as Mari, Nippur, Sippar, Ugarit, Kanesh and Nuzi, to name but a few. This cumulative bounty of texts coincided with a spate of publications suggesting the particular usefulness of archival theory and archives management for the study and management of ancient collections. As mentioned before, archival theory entered Assyriology in a guise most prominently derived from the Dutch

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[22] Eric Ketelaar, "Muller, Feith and Fruin," 262.

[23] Johannes Papritz ("Archive in Altmesopotamien: Theorie und Tatsachen," *Archivalische Zeitschrift* 55 [1959]: 11-12): "Die Archäologen haben in Mesopotamien seit etwa 100 Jahren eine steigende Flut von Tontafelfunden zu Tage gefördert: heute mögen es schon mehr als 400 000 sein!" Papritz continues to list the major finds at the time, with estimates of the number of tablets found at each site. A. A. Kampman (*Archieven en Bibliotheken in het Oude Nabije Oosten* [Antwerp: Schoten-Antwerp, 1942], 17) confirmed a number between 350,000 and 400,000 clay tablets discovered by 1940. See also A. Pohl ("Bibliotheken und Archive im Alten Orient," *Or* 25 [1956]: 105-109) for a description of the number and state of affairs regarding the major finds known to Assyriologists by the mid-1950s.

*Manual for the Arrangement and Description of Archives.* Although it is accepted that many modern archival principles are of German and French origin, they were first codified and universally disseminated by the Dutch *Manual*, published in 1898: "Because it was the first, and because it reached many archivists through French, German, English, Italian, Portuguese, Chinese and other translations."[24] The *Manual* was first published in translation in the United States in 1940, and it became the medium for thoughts on archival theory that was thereafter strongly advocated as instrument for the management and description of an ever-increasing number of prospective ancient collections. Given the prominence of the Dutch *Manual*, it should come as no surprise that Dutch, Belgian and Scandinavian scholars were at the forefront of this movement. In 1942, the Belgian A. A. Kampman's *Archieven en Bibliotheken in het Oude Nabije Oosten*[25] was published. The work was based on a paper read at the Sixth Flemish Congress on Book and Library Problems, on March 31st, 1940. Kampman was noted to be jointly proficient in the fields of Assyriology and librarianship and thus supremely qualified to lobby for an archival approach to ancient collections. He was joined in his endeavours by the Belgian, Godefroy Goossens, who became a strong advocate for the "archival approach" in ancient Near Eastern studies, most notably in "Introduction à l'archivéconomie de l'Asie Antérieure."[26] Goossens was a qualified Assyriologist, but spent a significant part of his

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[24] Terry Cook, "What is Past is Prologue: A History of Archival Ideas Since 1898, and the Future Paradigm Shift," 19. See also Michel Duchein, "The History of European Archives and the Development of the Archival Profession in Europe," *American Archivist* 55 (1992): 14-24; as well as Marjorie Rabe Barritt, "Coming to America: Dutch *Archivistiek* and American Archival Practice," *Archival Issues* 18 (1993), 43-54.

[25] A. A. Kampman, *Archieven en Bibliotheken in het Oude Nabije Oosten* (Antwerp: Schoten-Antwerp, 1942). At the time of publication, Kampman was the conservator/librarian of the Dutch Institute for the Near East at the University of Leiden.

[26] Godefroy Goossens, "Introduction à l'archivéconomie de l'Asie Antérieure," *RA* 46 (1952): 98-107. See also Goossens' application of the former publication's suggestions, in: Godefroy Goossens, "Classement des Archives Royales de Mari," *RA* 46 (1952): 137-154.

professional career as archivist in Malines, Belgium: "The *Manual*, Goossens felt, stated the principles that could easily be applied to the field of Assyriology. Referring to paragraph 22 of that treatise, he stated: 'For Assyriology this means that first of all the tablets must be studied according to their place of discovery.'"[27] Thus the principle of provenance was suggested as instrument in the management of ancient Near Eastern studies, in accordance with Rule 70: "The determining factor for the position of the description of an archival collection in the general inventory of the depository is the nature of that collection in relation to the other sections of the inventory, not the circumstance that it was taken over through a particular administrative body."[28] At the same time, the principle of provenance laid bare the most glaring inadequacies in the description and management of ancient collections and simultaneously proved potentially the most useful because of the practical and contextual nature of its understanding. The implementation of provenance relies on the societal context of the archival unit rather than on the nature or content of individual entities within the unit: a classic example of the organic whole of the collection surpassing the sum of the parts. It is based on a "*practical* understanding" of the organization or society within which the collection was initially created. These ancient organizations or societal structures are the origin for the creation and usage of information. Thus acceptance of the principle of provenance inevitably necessitates a broader outlook on the description and management of

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[27] Ernst Posner, *Archives in the Ancient World*, 15.

Rule 22 reads: "No volume, file or bundle may be broken up so long as the motive which led to its being put together is not known" (Muller, Feith and Fruin, *Manual for the Arrangement and Description of Archives*, 73-75).

[28] Muller, Feith and Fruin, *Manual for the Arrangement and Description of Archives*, 160-162.

collections, based on a study of ancient society's creation, use and discarding of information.[29]

In this regard, the understanding of the term "provenance" has seen an adjustment in recent times in the light of a functional rather than a descriptive approach to archives, an adjustment that had already come to light by the time Veenhof incorporates the "archival approach" into his study of cuneiform collections:

> ... only by a functional interpretation of the context surrounding the creation of documents, can one understand the integrity of the *fonds* and the functions of the archival documents in their original context. The form and function of the record are determined by the business functions that led to their creation. Therefore, before we can appraise or use records, we have to analyze and appraise the business functions... 'appraise the records creators, instead of appraising the records only.'[30]

It is this perspective on *fonds* that governs Klaas Veenhof's suggested acceptance of the "archival approach" as applicable to the description of all ancient textual deposits, no matter the terminological distinction (as he considers libraries a direct derivative of archives and therefore incorporated under the umbrella of "archives"). For Veenhof the value of the archival approach is patently obvious:

> Reconstructing and studying archives is probably the best way of systematically recovering the administration of the past, according to its scope, intentions, procedures, and techniques. Archives of the various institutions are the primary evidence of bureaucratic control over persons, goods and transactions and their analysis may show how, by whom and for what purposes information was gathered and used. Archives allow statistical approaches which may reveal patterns relating to times, places, persons,

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[29] For a discussion of the principle of provenance, see David A. Bearman and Richard H. Lytle, "The Power of the Principle of Provenance," *Archivaria* 21 (1985-1986): 14-27.
[30] Ketelaar, "Archival Theory and the Dutch Manual," 36-37.

quantities and procedures, which frequently cannot be deduced from single documents and public inscriptions.[31]

Note here that "technique" does not play the prominent role assigned to it in the previous study by Mogens Weitemeyer.

### 4.1.3 Weitemeyer, Veenhof and the Description of Ancient Archives

When Weitemeyer first published "Archive and Library Technique in Ancient Mesopotamia" in the mid-1950s he introduced into the Assyriological vocabulary a perception of ancient archives in many respects not dissimilar from the traditional approach to libraries, namely, that ancient archives were the result of a three-stage developmental process from a proto-collection or more rudimentary ("primitive") collection type late in the fourth millennium B.C.E., or at the beginning of the third millennium B.C.E., soon after the development of writing.[32] Weitemeyer associated the first stage in archival development most closely with "store-rooms," from whence archives developed to the more "evolved" variety evidenced in the Ur III period, and a

[31] Veenhof, *Cuneiform Archives and Libraries*, 305.

[32] An alternate variation on this approach proposes an archival development earlier than the development of writing. An early proponent of a so-called "archives before writing"-approach is Ernest Cushing Richardson (in Richardson's case the term "libraries before writing" would be the most appropriate). See in particular his table of contents for *Beginnings of Libraries* that includes entries such as: "memory libraries," "pictorial object libraries," "mnemonic object libraries," and so forth. Although Richardson understands the development of writing to be advantageous to the "evolution of record keeping," it is not understood as the *terminus a quo* for the development of record keeping: "The very first rudiments of record keeping were doubtless developed in the animal mind long before it learned expression to other animals and are to be found in the results recorded in its very structure, of its reactions to its environment" (Ernest Cushing Richardson, *Beginnings of Libraries* [Princeton: Princeton University, 1914], 61-62). The choice of the term "evolutionary" to describe this approach to the development of ancient collections is therefore a very deliberate one and indicates the debt to Darwin on the part of the early proponents.

third juncture in development demonstrated, according to Weitemeyer, at Mari: "... the last big archives of cuneiform tablets."[33]

Weitemeyer's approach proved limited in its descriptive and contextual usefulness. If Ur III, or most probably Mari, was the cusp of ancient archive keeping technique, it left Weitemeyer, as he himself acknowledged, unable to account for the collections of later antiquity (such as the records of El Amarna [fourteenth-century B.C.E.], the textual deposits at Erech dated to the Seleucid Period, and the records from Persepolis [ca. 492-458 B.C.E.]), within his aforementioned framework.[34] It should also be noted that the later discovery of, (to use Weitemeyer's terminology) highly evolved record keeping techniques at Ebla, played havoc with this approach. But, as the textual discoveries at Ebla dates to the mid-1970s, Weitemeyer did not have to account for the supposed early period of development in archive keeping represented by this discovery.[35]

The highly influential nature of Weitemeyer's approach for the description of ancient textual deposits will receive further attention in the latter part of this chapter. For the present, it is sufficient to make a distinction between an evolutionary approach,

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[33] Mogens Weitemeyer, "Archive and Library Technique in Ancient Mesopotamia," 224. Note how size is still, by the middle of the twentieth-century, regarded as crucial indicator of the importance and maturity of the ancient collection.

The ancient city of Mari was discovered at Tell Hariri (on the border of Syria and Iraq) in 1933. The first excavations at the site took place under the direction of André Parrot and the National Museums of France. 2,500 tablets were unearthed in the first year of excavation, with thousands of texts discovered since. Jean-Claude Margueron is the most recent director of excavations at Mari. The particular cache referred to by Weitemeyer was discovered in the palace of Zimrilim, dated to range over approximately two generations that overlaps with the reign of Zimrilim (ca. 1775-1761 B.C.E.). For a general background on Mari and the textual discoveries at this site, as well as additional bibliographic references, see Jean-Claude Margueron's "Mari," *OEANE* 3:413-417; as well as Michaël Guichard, "Mari Texts," *OEANE* 3:419-421.

[34] Mogens Weitemeyer, "Archive and Library Technique in Ancient Mesopotamia," 224.

[35] Ebla (known in modern parlance as Tell Mardikh) was discovered in Syria, approximately 60 km south of Aleppo. The excavations commenced in 1964, under the auspices of the Italian Archaeological Expedition of the University of Rome, with Paolo Matthiae acting as director. The Royal Palace G and the textual deposits found there, is dated to the peak in the city's existence, ca. 2400-2300 B.C.E. For a summarized account of the archaeological history of the site and the Ebla texts in particular, see Paolo Matthiae, "Ebla," *OEANE* 2:180-183; as well as Alphonso Archi, "Ebla Texts," *OEANE* 2:184-186. The discovery of the "archives" is also popularly recounted in the admittedly dated publication of Giovanni Pettinato, *The Archives of Ebla: An Empire Inscribed in Clay* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1981).

considered by Weitemeyer, and the "archival approach," first encouraged by Godefroy Goossens, which would find its most significant proponent in Klaas Veenhof. It should be cautioned that the "archival approach" proposed by Veenhof is an adjustment of the more universal understanding of the methodology and is influenced most particularly by the Dutch interpretation, as will be demonstrated further on in this discussion.

The truly revolutionary aspect of Klaas Veenhof's contribution to the study of ancient collections is imbedded in his endorsement and resultant peculiar interpretation of the "archival approach." It should be emphasized that Veenhof concerned himself exclusively with the consideration of this approach for the *description* and study of ancient collections. His contribution is to be found in his apt realization that the approach is mutually beneficial to textual deposits irrespective of terminological distinction. What Veenhof does not suggest, but what this dissertation strongly encourages, is that the "archival approach," as methodological construct, is as valuable, if not more so, for the management, arrangement, and description of these collections in museums, archives and libraries. It allows for an overarching uniformity in descriptive practice associated with textual corpora that was not possible under Weitemeyer's assumption of a strict segregation of descriptive practices for ancient libraries and ancient archives.[36]

By contrast, the contextualization of archives within the societal and historic setting, as advocated by the "archival approach," suggested an altered appraisal of the character and nature of archives. Instead of an inevitable sequential development from primitive to mature, archives (and other deliberately accumulated bodies of texts, such as

[36] As indicated earlier in this chapter, Weitemeyer's argument of distinction between ancient archives and libraries is based on the sole premise of a distinction in "technique" between these two institutional entities, as his conclusion clearly reveals: "The task we set ourselves was to examine whether a special library technique could be recognized ... Further, we wanted to elucidate the difference between archive and library technique, and we certainly found a conspicuous dissimilarity" (Mogens Weitemeyer, "Archive and Library Technique in Ancient Mesopotamia," 233).

libraries, as well as accidental accumulations of texts) may thus be conceived to be responsive, organic entities dependent for their nature, function and existence on the society or institution within which they are created. A *fonds* is thus portrayed as an entirely malleable entity in keeping with the demands of its creators. Archives in this understanding of the word are not dependent on internal developmental procedures or "techniques" for their character, but on external influences, primarily the creator(s), the process of creation and the environment and circumstances within which they are created.[37] Such thinking allows for a view of archives and archive keeping as a procedure, rather than a static conclusion.

Hence it could be argued that adaptations in the nature of the collection within the lifetime of the archives are to be expected, even assumed, in accordance with changes in the demands of the creator, as the highly individualized process of creation continues for as long as the archive is in use.

This process has hitherto found its most practical illustration in a well-known description of retrieval practices at Mari. In a frequently referred to discussion of the function of ancient archive keeping, Jack Sasson detected a curious inconsistency in

[37] This adjusted emphasis on the archives as created entity, additionally raises the issue of the dual existence of private and public archives. Veenhof ("Cuneiform Archives: An Introduction," 9-10) rightly points out that under the Dutch interpretation, archives, per definition, "... stem from administrative bodies or their officials, and that the records were made out, used, and preserved *ex officio*." Nevertheless, Veenhof acknowledges that the practical reality in Assyriology requires a far less constrained approach to this aspect. Veenhof includes these collections from the private domain by allowing that, for Assyriology: "The difference between official and private archives, ... is at times less significant than the terminology might suggest. This is true when private archives belong to a person who heads a large, rich family which operates as a kind of institution, with a hierarchical structure, an efficient administration and a variety of personnel." By referring specifically to instances of family "archives" in the Old Assyrian period, as well as similar instances during the Neo-Babylonian period, as well as the prevalent private "archives" at Nuzi, Veenhof argues: "All these archives owe their existence to the need of written documentation for evidentiary or informatory purposes, in order to control and steer the movement of goods and persons. The fact that most of these archives comprise some material of a more personal nature (correspondence with relatives, expecially [*sic*] women; documents bearing on family affairs, such as marriage, adoption and inheritance) is understandable and no reason for a different classification." Such adjustment of the very essence of the archival approach, namely the custodial features of the definition of what an "archival collection" is constituted to be, is problematic and will warrant further discussion in the latter parts of this chapter.

retrieval practices at Mari that mirrors an equal lack of homogeneity in archival practice in second millennium B.C.E. palaces as a rule:

> ... one is immediately struck firstly by the heterogeneous arrangement of objects in storage and secondly by the apparent lack of a noticeable system in organizing the archives. A spot check of other second millennium palaces which produced appreciable quantities of texts reveals this observation to be generally applicable.[38]

This is the exact opposite of what may be expected under Weitemeyer's model, where these collections would have represented the third and possibly final phase of evolutionary collection development. Under Weitemeyer's regimen, it should not be implausible to presume an unmistakable standardization in the character of archives and archival practice at this juncture. Nonetheless, Sasson's study contradicts this assumption.

Sasson continues, describing a laborious and intricate process associated with the retrieval of a document that involves a minimum of eight officials, from the moment the king (the patron of the archives) expresses a request for information until the information is successfully retrieved.[39] Sasson's description became the prime example for the wholesale description of retrieval practices in ancient times, despite the fact that the

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[38] Jack M. Sasson, "Some Comments on Archive Keeping at Mari," *Iraq* 34 (1972): 55. Sasson is referring to second millennium deposits at Alishar, Shemshāra, Tell al Rimah, Alalakh, Nuzi, Boğazköy, Ras Shamra, Knossos, Pylos, Mycenae and Thebes. It is also evident from Sasson's footnote that some first millennium sites, notably at Nimrud and Sultantepe, as well as the instances described by Goossens in "Introduction à l'archivéconomie de l'Asie Antérieure," 98-107, exhibit the same discrepancies.

[39] Sasson uses the case of a register of weavers and their supervisors, compiled some time before the time of retrieval, as an example of how the process of recovery of information worked: "This tablet had been placed, among other documents, perhaps, in a basket which had been sealed by Etel-pi-šarrim. In the presence of Yassur-Addu, the basket had been entered into one of the store-houses, in the workshop area under the former's supervision. Igmilum, yet a third official, had been dispatched by the *bīt têrtim*, the 'secretariat,' to seal this room. Now the king decides to refresh his memory of this tablet's content. He writes the queen, who appoints three trustworthy officials to accompany Yassur-Addu, an attaché of the king, who had some knowledge of the tablet's whereabouts. Led by Yassur-Addu, these trustworthy officers break Igmilum's seal, open the door of the store-house, remove the baskets, and proceed with them, untouched, to the queen. Upon receipt of the baskets, the queen, either on her own or through a proxy, reseals the chamber. From the time the tablet was inscribed until the moment the king re-read it, at least eight officials were involved, from all levels of the administration" (Jack M. Sasson, "Some Comments on Archive Keeping at Mari," 63).

author himself indicated most forcefully the prevalent inconsistency in archival methodology for the time period,[40] which puts it in clear opposition to a fluent, universal, standardized system that is to be expected in accordance with Weitemeyer's model.

By comparison, the "archival approach" creates no chronological markers and makes no presumptive assessments of the nature and development of archival practices. It is accommodating to examples that fall outside the purview of Weitemeyer's evolutionary approach to ancient archives and libraries, for example, the emergence of "sophisticated" archive keeping techniques relatively soon after the development of writing,[41] as well as record keeping practices reminiscent of archive keeping *before* the development of writing.[42] Of the former, room L.2769 in the Early Bronze Age Palace G, at Ebla, is the most glaring example. The discovery of the vast textual deposits at Tell-Mardikh in the

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[40] Black and Tait ("Archives and Libraries in the Ancient Near East," 4:2198) perpetuate this image of Mari as the classic example of ancient retrieval practices, by referring exclusively to Sasson's working example under the general heading "Retrieving Tablets from an Archive."

[41] See also Jean Bottéro (*Mesopotamia: Writing, Reasoning, and the Gods*, 69-70): "The oldest written archives in Mesopotamia found to this day consist roughly of four principal collections of this clay tablets that served as the 'papers' of the country. The oldest come not only from the soil of Sumer, at Uruk (whence the name *Uruk tablets*), but also from Akkad, at Kiš. They date to the period around 3000, and we have good reason to believe that they are very near the 'invention' of writing." The other collections referred to by Bottéro are the Djemdet-nasr tablets from Uruk and Kiš, the Ur tablets (2700 B.C.E.), and the tablets discovered in Fara and Abu Salabikh (ca. 2600 B.C.E.).

[42] For the accommodation of "archives before writing," the archival historian, Donato Tamblé ("Perspectives for the History of Archives Before Writing," in *Archives Before Writing: Proceedings of the International Colloquium Oriolo Romano, October 23-25, 1991* [Pubblicazioni del Centro Internazionale di Ricerche Archeologiche Antropoligiche e Storiche 1; Turin: Scriptorium, 1994], 407), concedes: "Of course the traditional conception of archives as the complex writings produced by a physical or juridical body during the course of its activity ought to be widened. Or, what is better, we must broaden the very concept of 'writing' to that of 'documentation,' defined as 'every symbolic objectification for documentary purposes.'" See also the work on prehistoric Near Eastern archives dating from the eighth to the third millennium B.C.E., by Denise Schmandt-Besserat, "Tokens: A Prehistoric Archive System," in *Archives Before Writing: Proceedings of the International Colloquium Oriolo Romano, October 23-25, 1991* (Pubblicazioni del Centro Internazionale di Ricerche Archeologiche Antropoligiche e Storiche 1; Turin: Scriptorium, 1994), 13-28; Denise Schmandt-Besserat, "From Tokens to Tablets: A Re-Evaluation of the So-Called 'Numerical Tablets,'" *Visible Language* 15 (1981): 321-344; Denise Schmandt-Besserat, "The Envelopes that Bear the First Writing," *Technology and Culture* 21 (1980): 357-385; as well as her two volume work: Denise Schmandt-Besserat, *Before Writing* (2 vols.; Austin: University of Texas, 1992).

mid-1970s is particularly devastating to Weitemeyer's model, as mentioned before.[43] Hans Wellisch, aware of the detriment this posed to the traditional approach, attempted to presume a much earlier date for the development of writing, in order to still allow for the "development" of "sophisticated techniques" observed at Ebla:

> Such sophisticated techniques of arrangement of the texts as well as their composition point to the great antiquity of archival and library practices, which may indeed be far older than was assumed to be the case before the discovery of Ebla. Given the rather slow development of technical innovations in that age, the invention of writing may also be much older, irrespective of whether it is attributed to the Sumerians or the Egyptians, for both of whom the earliest instances of written records so far found are dated to the beginning of the third millennium B.C. Probably much more than five or six hundred years elapsed between the first attempts to record human thought for posterity, the inscription of signs on more or less permanent materials (the earliest of which almost certainly disappeared without leaving a trace), their collection in repositories, and, finally, the invention of archival storage and retrieval methods. It is perhaps not unreasonable to assume a period of perhaps a thousand years for these successive developments, which

[43] L.2769 is often referred to as the "main archive" of a complex of several rooms in the immediate vicinity, in which significant deposits of texts were found: "The cuneiform tablets of the State Archives were found, in different concentrations, in rooms of three different kinds: a) rooms where the tablets were originally kept in a fix [*sic*] or provisional way; b) rooms where the tablets were consulted at the time of the destruction of the building; c) rooms where the tablets were suddenly left while they were brought from one place to the other. The rooms which were certainly devoted to the storage of the cuneiform documents are three: the main archive room L.2769 in the outer sector of the Administrative Quarter ...; the small archive store L.2712 at the North end of the eastern portico of the same Court ...; the northern trapezoidal store L.2764, in the inner sector of the Administrative Quarter ... More than 14,700 inventory numbers of tablets and fragments were collected in L.2769; nearly 900 were found in the small archive room L.2712, and more than 500 in the trapezoidal store L.2764. Also the outer vestibule L.2875 of the same Administrative Quarter was partially used to keep some tablets: 650 inventory numbers were found scattered there" (Paolo Matthiae "The Archives of the Royal Palace G of Ebla: Distribution and Arrangement of the Tablets According to the Archaeological Evidence," in *Cuneiform Archives and Libraries: Papers Read at the 30e Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale in Leiden, 4-8 July 1983* [ed. Klaas R. Veenhof; Uitgaven van het Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut te Istanbul 52; Istanbul: Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut, 1986], 53-71). See also Alfonso Archi, "The Archives of Ebla," in *Cuneiform Archives and Libraries: Papers Read at the 30e Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale in Leiden, 4-8 July 1983* (ed. Klaas R. Veenhof; Uitgaven van het Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut te Istanbul 52; Istanbul: Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut, 1986), 57-58.

would mean that the invention of writing might date back to the middle or even the beginning of the fourth millennium B.C., although it is unlikely that records from that time will ever be found or that, if found, they could be reliably dated.[44]

Ebla is of peculiar consequence because both methodologies have been applied, respectively, to room L.2769 and to the complex of rooms in its vicinity, where significant textual hordes were excavated. In sharp contrast to Hans Wellisch's abovementioned salute to Weitemeyer, Alfonso Archi chose to apply the "archival approach" to Ebla discovery in accordance with the Dutch *Manual*.[45] In his introduction, he points rightly to the underlying reliance of this approach on what he refers to as the assumption of "modern excavating techniques."[46] The "archival approach's" reliance on provenance and original order makes detailed archaeological description of find spots for effective description of the original order of the collection, the ideal. And the application of the "archival approach" is justly limited for any excavation where the archaeological record might be scanty or in doubt, but it is erroneous to assume that this precludes the retroactive use of the approach. In fact, especially in the case of private records and manuscripts, archivists are more often than not expected to reconstruct original order and provenance upon taking custody of the records. Part of the archivist's first order of business upon assuming custodial responsibility for such a "dismembered" archival collection, is an attempt at the "reconstitution" thereof.[47] In the case of ancient collections, this suggests that the full implementation of the "archival approach" would argue in favour of re-assembly of textual units dispersed to various museums and

[44] Hans H. Wellisch, "Ebla: The World's Oldest Library," *Journal of Library History* 16/3 (1981): 498.
[45] Alfonso Archi, "The Archives of Ebla," 72-86.
[46] Alfonso Archi, "The Archives of Ebla," 72.
[47] Rules 11 and 12 of Muller, Feith and Fruin (*Manual for the Arrangement and Description of Archives*, 38-43) apply.

collectors over the world. Or, as a more pragmatic alternative, it argues for a centralized inventory of holdings from such dispersed units.[48] The latter might be offered as part of a compromise in future decisions of restitution and compensation where ownership of partial or total textual units is in dispute.[49]

At Ebla, the inherent utilitarian nature of the approach is unmistakably evident from Archi's far from glamorous conclusion (if compared to Wellisch's elaborate claims). After a detailed depiction of the *status quo* of the texts, fragments and chips, their provenance and a description of the original order, Archi concludes simply: "Only when the texts will be entirely studied, it will be possible to explain some of the facts here indicated, which seem anomalous."[50] This conclusion portrays the very essence of the approach. The description of the interrelatedness of the textual *fonds* has to be established before individual texts may be selected for study, in order to illuminate the nature of the collection or to discuss perceived anomalies or discrepancies that may be evident after the application of archival principles. It has to precede rather than follow the study of textual deposits. At this point in the application of the "archival approach," there is no need for a

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[48] Rule 12, in Muller, Feith and Fruin (*Manual for the Arrangement and Description of Archives*, 41-43): "If it is difficult to reconstitute a dismembered archival collection, the various parts of that collection, wherever they may be deposited, should nevertheless be described by a single official in a single inventory, with mention of where the documents are located." In the case of private ownership, public access to these documents may raise additional problems.

Such may indeed be the function of the 10 fragments of so-called "Assyrian Library Records" described by Simo Parpola in his well-known essay of the same name. The fragments constitute three tablets written by a single scribe. These tablets reflect the accession of a significant number of texts (in various formats) into the holdings of the royal collection at Nineveh. Parpola suggests a common geographic provenance for all the texts on the inventory, namely, Babylonia at about the time of the sacking of Babylon in 648 B.C.E. As private ownership is most often indicated, the list also provides contextual evidence of original ownership and profession. See Simo Parpola, "Assyrian Library Records," *JNES* 42/1 (1983): 1-29.

[49] The current weaknesses in UNESCO's enforcement capabilities and the fact that this entity can only mediate upon request in matters regarding movable cultural objects, augurs ill for future mediation and settlement of international disputes regarding ownership of excavated finds. See also Jeanette Greenfield, *The Return of Cultural Treasures* (2nd ed.; Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1996); and Talia Einhorn, "Restitution of Archaeological Artifacts: The Arab-Israeli Aspect," *International Journal of Cultural Property* 5 (1996): 133-153.

[50] Alfonso Archi, "The Archives of Ebla," 86.

typological designator of any kind. The approach is entirely non-critical and non-prescriptive of the nature or perceived developmental phases, or the absence thereof, as reflected in the described deposit. At this stage in the proceedings the approach is not an interpretative instrument; it functions exclusively on a descriptive level. As goal it has no sweeping statement or elaborate conclusion, but the reconstructed representation of the state of affairs at the moment of discovery that in most cases would also reflect the *status quo* at the moment of abandonment or destruction of a deposit in ancient times. Note that this does not necessarily reflect the nature and arrangement of the deposit at the moment of creation, and it may significantly differ from that point in time, depending on the life-span of the organic textual entity before destruction or abandonment.

Therefore, although Veenhof suggested that room L.2769 at Ebla signified for most of his readers the quintessential ancient cuneiform "archive,"[51] Archi's study indicates that a typological distinction is not necessary for the archival approach to be successfully applied. In the words of David Bearman: "The tactic is that archivists should find, not make, the information in their descriptive systems."[52]

As mentioned before, it should be cautioned that Veenhof's interpretation of the "archival approach" is a decided adaptation of the standard approach, and his modification concerns the terminological understanding of "archival collections" in

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[51] Veenhof, "Cuneiform Archives: An Introduction," 4.

[52] "The axiom is that archivists describe the context out of which records were created, rather than describing the content of the records themselves. It should be understood however that this axiom is valid because the description of that context is the most powerful proxy for the content description of records, and that should it fail to achieve the envisioned goal, the axiom would need to be revised. The premises are that the most practical means of achieving intellectual control are top-down definition of holdings, description of provenance, and exploitation of the lifecycle of records in the description of process. These premises should be realized in practical description approaches in inverse order from that stated above: lifecycle records systems control should drive provenance-based description and link to top-down definitions of holdings. The tactic is that archivists should find, not make, the information in their descriptive systems" (Bearman, "Archival Methods," 31).

particular. Veenhof deliberately favoured the European version of the "archival approach" represented in the Dutch *Manual*, because the principles of provenance and original order are central to Veenhof's innovation in the description of ancient collections. Until recently, these two principles were not accorded the same deference in the United States.[53] But it seems that two aspects of Veenhof's modified interpretation show strong leanings towards the North American perception of a life cycle approach to archival records: his modification of the concept *fonds* and his incorporation of collections of private origin into the standard approach of the "archival collection."

Veenhof adjusted the "archival approach" to allow for a single category of archival *fonds*, while a possible alternate archival typology is dismissed as restricted to a few negligible instances:

> Most examples of 'archives' adduced thusfar [*sic*] show that we do not use that term ("archives") in its accepted meaning of a collection or repository of records no longer in use but preserved for their historical value and stored separately. We have mentioned a few occasions where such measures had been taken, but they probably were rare, not only in ancient Mesopotamia. Normally, old records no longer needed by the administration were thrown away in due time or put to secondary use, as building material, mummy wrapping, etc. The occasional presence of older documents without any apparent practical use may simply be due to the failure to take such measures on the part of the responsible scribes, e.g. when there was no lack of space to store them.[54]

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[53] See Marjorie Rabe Barritt, "Coming to America: Dutch *Archivistiek* and American Archival Practice," *Archival Issues* 18 (1993), 43-54.

[54] Klaas R. Veenhof, "Cuneiform Archives: An Introduction," 7. Note that the collections or repositories of records "no longer in use but preserved for their historical value and stored separately" dismissed by Veenhof, closely align to Weitemeyer's "earliest archives" described to have been: "... established in connection with store-rooms" (Mogens Weitemeyer, "Archive and Library Technique in Ancient Mesopotamia," 220). More on this later in the chapter.

In this manner, Veenhof formulated his alternative to the approach championed by Mogens Weitemeyer and made his revised perception of *fonds* the key element of his methodology:

> We (Assyriologists) use 'archives' as a designation of what archival science calls a 'fonds d'archives,' that is 'the total of records accumulated during the time a particular task was performed by an institution or person,' to which some would like to add 'and still present with those who made them out or used them.' These conditions are met by many cuneiform archives, which were normally used and kept growing until the very moment they stopped, usually in consequence of some catastrophe. The time of abandonment or destruction normally can be determined from the dates of the latest records.[55]

Thus Veenhof matched his interpretation of ancient "archive keeping" to what archivists refer to as "records management," and largely negated the existence of the second phase as existing in ancient textual deposits. As an illustration of the bi-phasal nature of archives, the records management-archives relationship is best illustrated by the life cycle of the archival record:

> This theory is based on the premise that it is possible to divide the life of a record into eight distinct, separate stages, starting with a records management phase consisting of
>
> - Creation or receipt of information in the form of records,
> - Classification of the records or their information in some logical system,
> - Maintenance and use of the records, and
> - Their disposition through destruction or transfer to an archives.
>
> This is then followed by a second, archival phase consisting of
>
> - Selection/acquisition of records by an archives,

[55] Klaas R. Veenhof, "Cuneiform Archives: An Introduction," 7-8.

- Description of the records in inventories, finding aids, and the like,
- Preservation of the records, or, perhaps, the information in the records, and
- Reference and use of the information by researchers and scholars.[56]

This description of the life cycle of a record is highly compatible with Paolo Matthiae's description of the record activity in the Administrative Complex of Palace G at Ebla:

> The tablets were kept in different ways in the various rooms of the Royal Palace G. Certainly these differences were linked to the destination of the rooms devoted to the preservation, but it is difficult to understand the exact reason for this difference. The cuneiform tablets were permanently kept on planks of the wooden shelves of the main archive room L.2769, and temporarily preserved on the suspended shelves of the small archive room L.2712, on the high built mudbrick benches of the trapezoidal store L.2764 ..., and on the low mudbrick benches of the outer vestibule L.2875.[57]

Matthiae is furthermore able to reconstruct the functional significance of these rooms. The archive rooms L.2712 and L.2769, adjacent to the Court of Audience, held respectively the tablets concerning rations on the one hand, and textile deliveries and metal receipts, on the other. It is surmised that the difference in provenance is related to the length of preservation of the documents. Records of "continuing value" were allocated to L.2769, the "main archive," or "permanent archive": "It is easy to understand that the texts concerning food rations were kept for short administrative cycles, while the long monthly accounts of textiles, and the registrations of metal entries under the responsibility of high rank palace officials, were kept for long periods, even during the

[56] Jay Atherton, "From Life Cycle to Continuum: Some Thoughts on the Records Management-Archives Relationship," in *Canadian Archival Studies and the Rediscovery of Provenance* (ed. Tom Nesmith; Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow, 1993), 392-393.
[57] Paolo Matthiae "The Archives of the Royal Palace G of Ebla," 60.

reigns of different kings."[58] This description of the nature and function of the archive complex in Palace G is certainly comparable to the life cycle described above by Jay Atherton. L.2712, as well as the network of other smaller archival rooms, consultation rooms, and storerooms, would therefore have served as temporary record holdings. At the end of a specified time, older tablets would have been removed from the temporary holdings. Tablets that have lost their continuing value would be weeded out and discarded, while others would be assigned (*in toto* or by reconstituting the information thereon contained onto monthly tallies) to permanent holdings in L.2769.[59] Veenhof's conclusion of an absence of such permanent holdings as hallmark of ancient collections would therefore have to be carefully evaluated. The idea of permanent preservation of archival holdings with "historical value" as the sole objective is a phenomenon that emerged only with the French Revolution.[60] Nevertheless, room L.2769 does indeed constitute a permanent repository within the custodial control of the original administrative agency and may therefore rightly be allowed the designation "archives."

As is the case for ancient libraries, this chapter suggests that permanent archival repositories, that is, the secondary phase in the life cycle of the record, did indeed exist in the ancient context. But, as is the case with the Shamash Temple at Sippar, archaeological evidence (*in situ* discovery, accurate archaeological notation of provenance and original

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[58] Paolo Matthiae "The Archives of the Royal Palace G of Ebla," 68.
[59] For a detailed description of the function of the archive rooms, as well as sketches, see Paolo Matthiae, "The Archives of the Royal Palace G of Ebla," 66-71.
[60] Hugh Taylor ("Information Ecology and the Archives of the 1980s," in *Canadian Archival Studies and the Rediscovery of Provenance* [ed. Tom Nesmith; Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow, 1993], 185-199) coined the phrase "historical shunt" to indicate the shift from the traditional understanding of archives as purely functional entities as underlying administrative support for official bodies. With the advent of the French Revolution, Taylor argues, modern archives emerged as exclusively "historically" motivated entities, assembled for and by historians or "historian-archivists." See also Terry Cook's response to Taylor in "From Information to Knowledge: An Intellectual Paradigm for Archives," in *Canadian Archival Studies and the Rediscovery of Provenance* (ed. Tom Nesmith; Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow, 1993), 201-226.

order, etc.), to support a more prevalent designation of "archives" is limited.[61] At most, the traditionally designated "archives" of the ancient Near East, both private and public, fall within the parameters of the more general designation, "record holdings," a designation these collections share with a great majority of adjunct textual deposits. It is therefore postulated that most adjunct textual deposits (a possible exception being what was traditionally referred to as "literary archives")[62] that gets accorded the term "archives" in the generic library/archives dichotomy, are created with archival potential because of the commonality in purpose during the first stage in the record life cycle. It is only when the second phase is reached that a distinction is established between archival and adjunct textual deposits. This is the proverbial moment of truth in the destiny of the record: permanent preservation because the record was deemed of "continuing value"[63] or, alternatively, discard. What makes the Near Eastern heritage so intriguing is that the second option did not necessarily entail permanent destruction (as might be expected), hence the confusion in the typological determination for the extant examples of ancient textual deposit, forthwith referred to as "adjunct textual deposits." [64]

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[61] It is important to note that this is in contradiction with Veenhof ("Cuneiform Archives: An Introduction," 8), who follows a less rigid approach to the designation of the term "archive." He refers in particular to the administrative documents that were apparently removed from the primary deposit at Mari after Zimrilim replaced the former Assyrian regime: "There is no reason to deny these groups of administrative records from the period of Assyrian rule the qualification 'archives,' even though they were not found *in situ*. But we must be aware of the considerable gaps due to selection (chronologically and typologically; the small daily records were preferred as filling material over the larger ledger tablets) and random discovery, which makes their use for statistical purposes risky."

[62] Because of lack of evidence for provenance and original order, this dissertation argues that these collections may not be designated "libraries," but may have functioned as such in ancient times.

[63] "... archives dispose of records which cease to be of continuing value," (David Bearman, "Archival Methods, 49). For a discussion of records designated of "permanent," "enduring," or "continuing value," see Bearman's sections on "Retention and Preservation," as well as "Intellectual Control," (David Bearman, "Archival Methods," 17-27 and 49-58).

[64] Permanent destruction was avoided in a number of ways, most prominent being the potential of the writing media as recycled entities: clay tablets used as fill in building projects; parchment recycled as palimpsests; papyri used as stuffing in mummies, etc. The redoubtable quality of these materials to survive the ravages of time far surpassed the expectations of their creators. Further attention will be accorded to the difference between discard and permanent destruction of the written record in the latter parts of this chapter.

## 4.2 Adjunct Textual Deposits

### 4.2.1 Introduction

The "archival approach," despite the adjectival designator, is entirely democratic in its potential applicability. Nevertheless, seldom is it employed outside the boundaries of textual deposits traditionally designated "archives": genizas, rubble heaps, fill used as building material,[65] foundation deposits,[66] and so forth. Additionally a pervasive disinclination exists to the accommodation of a range of textual entities that fall outside the confines of the formal ancient library/archive dichotomy.

This statement should be qualified. It is not suggested that alternative accumulations of texts are not given credence, but they are rarely accorded independent recognition, apart from cursory mention in the greater context of ancient library or archival development. These disparate bodies of texts are not deemed to be on an equal footing with texts considered part of the traditional dichotomy and have more often than not been amassed into the archival category, indiscriminately interpreted as all texts of a "non-literary" nature. This is yet further evidence of the traditional emphasis on individual textual content, rather than interrelated features between texts as indicator of the library/archive distinction.

The following discussion proposes to include all textual deposits, irrespective of nature or content, as part of a single continuum of the range of accumulative variation. Thus libraries, archives, genizas, foundation deposits and textual dumps of various sorts,

[65] See, for example, the so-called "Persepolis fortification tablets" discovered in the fortification wall, "where they were used as fill" (R. T. Hallock, "The Persepolis Fortification Archive," *Or* 47 (1973): 320). Note that, despite their provenance, Hallock saw fit to use the designation "archive" for this deposit.
[66] See Richard S. Ellis, *Foundation Deposits in Ancient Mesopotamia* (Yale Near Eastern Researches 2; New Haven, Conn.: Yale University, 1968).

as organic bodies of texts, are considered to represent points on a multi-dimensional continuum of activity based on the management of information. This is best described in terms of the expansion and/or contraction of the functions of information theory, where the functions represent converging elements of knowledge transfer: acquisition (with clear emphasis on selection), organisation, the determination of access and preservation.[67] Libraries and archives are centrally positioned, responding to all constituents of information theory in equal measure. Adjunct textual deposits' response to one or more of the functions of information theory has atrophied, is delayed or terminated. In this fashion these deposits exist at different and less central cross sections of the continuum. A geniza, for example, would function on the perimeter of the continuum where the organisation of information is completely suspended. At a different perimeter is to be placed "collections" that suspended the very important function of selection of information.[68] These are the *super libraries*: the Library of Assurbanipal and the Library of Alexandria, with their strong emphasis on the universal collection of information. They were probably the closest humankind would ever come to collecting in one physical location all knowledge known to civilization.

### 4.2.2 Expanding the Continuum: Knowledge Transfer and Convergence

The Canadian archivists, Cynthia Durance and Hugh Taylor, explored the similarities and differences between archives and libraries and their functionaries

[67] See Cynthia J. Durance and Hugh A. Taylor, "Wisdom, Knowledge, Information and Data: Transformation and Convergence in Archives and Libraries in the Western World," *Alexandria* 4/1 (1992): 37-61.

[68] As these textual bodies respond to the organization directive, they are, in fact credited with the title "collection." See Chapter 5 on encyclopaedic knowledge, universal libraries and total archives.

throughout history. Thus they attempted to address the universal loss of information during the process of knowledge transfer and convergence by repositories of the human documentary heritage, exacerbated by the multiplicity of modern communication media.[69] Durance and Taylor's work is based on the premise that their subjects of inquiry have one fundamental commonality: "Both libraries and archives contain the media of record, whether of the spoken, written or printed word."[70] As libraries and archives are in a state of definitional flux, Durance and Taylor proposed to define their subject of inquiry as broadly as possible, also including so-called "human repositories" in pre-literate societies.[71] This broad inclusiveness in the subject approach allows the work of Durance and Taylor to be utilized for the inclusion of adjunct ancient deposits as part of the continuum of information theory they outlined.

As explained in Chapter 2, Durance and Taylor rely strongly on the supposition that the intention of the creator of the textual deposit, the perception the user has of the textual entity, and the actual use to which the entity is put, are as important for the typological definition as is size or content. Ancient society's perception (as corporate body) and the individual's interpretation (as user) are both paramount in the assignment of meaning: "It is entirely possible, and not infrequent, that one person's archives is another person's library."[72] Thus an important interplay between context, function and

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[69] Cynthia J. Durance and Hugh A. Taylor, "Wisdom, Knowledge, Information and Data," 37-61.
[70] Durance and Taylor, "Wisdom, Knowledge, Information and Data," 39.
[71] "The members of what we often describe as pre-literate societies carried their archives and libraries in their heads," (Durance and Taylor, "Wisdom, Knowledge, Information and Data," 39). On the topic of the human mind/memory as the "library of society," see in particular, H. Curtis Wright, *The Oral Antecedents of Greek Librarianship* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University, 1977).

Note that I do not concur with the traditional evolutionary, developmental approach to the history of archival and library professionals espoused by Durance and Taylor ("Wisdom, Knowledge, Information and Data," 39-42). It nevertheless reflects the standard approach to the history of libraries and archives, as expounded in Chapter 2 of this dissertation, to which the reader is referred.
[72] Durance and Taylor, "Wisdom, Knowledge, Information and Data," 44.

intent is acknowledged, allowing for the possibility that the nature of the deposit may show a certain degree of fluidity during the life cycle of the texts.

This methodological assumption proves a perceptible obstacle for the application of Durance and Taylor's work to ancient textual deposits. As is the case for the "archival approach," Durance and Taylor assume knowledge of intent at the moment of creation, which is absent from the archaeological report that reflects the state of affairs at the moment of burial, abandonment or destruction. While the archaeological record therefore provides a cross-sectional glimpse of the *status quo* (and a partial one at that, depending on the representative nature of the ancient deposit discovered) at the end of the institutional life cycle of the textual deposit, the definitional criteria of user perception and usage assume knowledge of the genesis and initial formation of the deposit. It also does not distinguish between the first and second phases of the life cycle of the record, both of which have the same observable end result: preservation vs. discard or destruction. The question then becomes: how do we establish user intent in the Near East, when all we have are the partial remains of ancient textual deposits?

This question assumes, first of all, as Durance and Taylor do, that the emergence of formal textual collections is not part of an evolutionary process, but that, as rudimentary duplication of human repositories, they find their first expression relatively soon after the development of writing, or even before, as concrete representations of the abstract information management strategies of the human mind.[73]

It is therefore proposed that a logical course of action would involve the determination of the range of possibilities of creative intent in the formation of textual

[73] H. Curtis Wright argues for the establishment of libraries (and presumably archives), in the transitional period between a predominantly oral and written culture. See H. Curtis Wright, *The Oral Antecedents of Greek Librarianship*, 127-173.

deposits. This avenue of inquiry is best served by supplementing the archaeological record through the consultation of descriptions found in Near Eastern material regarding the procedures involved in ancient information management and knowledge transfer.[74] For this purpose, the historicity and chronology of the various accounts are not of primary concern. It is postulated that the range of textual collective possibilities are not induced by an evolutionary development, but motivated solely by user intent and propelled by the procedural necessities of information transfer: creation; selection, acquisition and collection; organization; and determination of access. Thus a cross-section of textual references illustrating the range of possibilities acceptable for the Near Eastern user of texts may be employed irrespective of chronological boundaries.

This endeavour is particularly profitable, as a mechanism for capturing the manner of acts involved in the partial or complete abandonment of texts. Encapsulating this pivotal happening in the life cycle of the record is of particular import, as this is the crucial moment for the constitution of the second phase in the life cycle of the record: archives. Without entering this phase, the record is inevitably doomed to discard and destruction. And most conspicuous of all discarded bodies of texts, because of the evident ambivalence pertaining to permanent preservation and final disposal is the Jewish geniza-practice.

[74] This integrated approach is also strongly advocated by Richard Zettler, "Written Documents as Excavated Artifacts and the Holistic Interpretation of the Mesopotamian Archaeological Record," in *The Study of the Ancient Near East in the Twenty-First Century: The William Foxwell Albright Centennial Conference* (ed. Jerrold S. Cooper and Glenn M. Schwartz; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1996), 81-101.

### 4.2.2.1 The Geniza and the Hiding, Storing and Disposing of Texts

For the purposes of investigating user intent regarding hiding, storing or disposal of texts, the geniza-phenomenon is the final word. Selection becomes of paramount importance; determination of access is limited, while organisation and preservation are completely suspended, because future retrieval plays no role in the creation of this form of textual deposit.

The present understanding of the Jewish geniza as a repository for discarded documents and ritual objects that contained the name of God is broadly based and understood in terms of the best-known example of the practice. The Cairo Geniza reached its so-called classical highpoint from ca. 950 to 1200 C.E.[75] Because of the date of its primary example, the geniza-practice in general has been ignored as an example of an *ancient* textual deposit in the study of ancient Near Eastern archives and libraries. The only exception is the initial identification by Eleazar Sukenik and later Del Medico of the Dead Sea Scrolls as one or more possible genizas.[76]

One feature distinguishes a geniza from libraries and especially from archives: it functioned as a religious dumping ground for worn-out texts or discarded sacred objects.

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[75] For most complete coverage, see S. D. Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society: The Jewish Communities of the Arab World as Portrayed in the Documents of the Cairo Geniza* (6 vols.; Berkeley: University of California, 1967-1993). See also the recent Stefan C. Reif, *A Jewish Archive From Old Cairo: The History of Cambridge University's Genizah Collection* (Culture and Civilisation in the Middle East; Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 2000).

[76] Eleazar L. Sukenik, *Megillot Genuzot Mi-Tokh Genizah Qedumah She-Nimse'ah Be-Midbar Yehudah: Seqirah Rishonah* (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1948); and H. E. Del Medico, *The Riddle of the Scrolls* (London: Burke, 1958). See also Stefan C. Reif, *A Jewish Archive From Old Cairo: The History of Cambridge University's Genizah Collection*, 12: "There is indeed evidence that while some communities made 'assurance double sure' by burying the unwanted texts in the ground to await the natural process of disintegration, there were others that removed them to caves or tombs, sometimes storing them first in suitable vessels. It is not implausible that the Qumran Scrolls represent just such a *genizah*, although there is clearly room for dispute about the immediate reason for the removal."

"For contemporary research and for the study of bibliography, these places are real treasures, 'archives' as it were, although their original users did not use them for archival purposes."[77] The geniza, though often aligned to an archive in terms of contents and scholarly treatment, cannot be regarded as an ancient archive.[78] The nature of the entity falls short of an important requirement for both archives and libraries: a lack of expectation for the retrieval of information. Without retrieval of information as ultimate prerogative for the constitution of a textual deposit, the need for internal organisation becomes irrelevant. A haphazard intermingling of documents is therefore to be expected and was indeed found. By the same token, lack of retrieval as an intention of the users of the geniza meant also that preservation, crucial to the assignment of "enduring value" that governs the potential permanent preservation of the archival record, is not a high priority for the record or object discarded in the geniza. Although immediate destruction of the record is avoided (because religious practice runs interference in the process of discard), the informational potential of the record is, for all intents and purposes, nullified by its disposal in the geniza: the record is dead.[79] It is therefore not surprising to find that

[77] J. Sadan, "Genizah and Genizah-Like Practices in Islamic and Jewish Traditions," *BO* 43 (1986): 36.
[78] The find itself reconstitutes itself as an "archive" from the perspective of the present. Hence Reif's title: *A Jewish Archive From Old Cairo*. The very real scholarly dilemma created by this reconstituted textual entity is best described by Hallock as relating to the so-called "Persepolis Fortification Archive": "The original Persepolis fortification tablets were not found in their original place of deposit, but in the fortification wall, where they had been used as fill. There is therefore a theoretical possibility that they do not belong to a single archive. There is the more serious possibility that they do not include all the types of text present in the original archive, or that they misrepresent the proportional quantities of the various types of texts" (R. T. Hallock, "The Persepolis Fortification Archive," *Or* 47 [1973]: 320).
[79] That is, from the perspective of the ancient creator and user of the record. In a metaphorical sense, the present re-emergence of historical knowledge transfer from a record already declared "dead" in a previous life cycle, implies an unintended resurrective quality. Thus imparting information to an audience for which it was not created and therefore not intended: Oppenheim's classic dilemma in the assignment of meaning. See also Solomon Schechter's discussion of the analogous association between the hidden holy book and the human body in Judaism (Solomon Schechter, *Studies in Judaism: Second Series*. [London: Adam and Charles Black, 1908], 1-3).

genizas are often likened to burial grounds and the texts to dead bodies. Paul Kahle describes the practice as follows:

> The Jews used to deposit all sorts of written and printed material in such rooms which were provided in or near their synagogues; they were not intended to be kept as in archives, but were to remain there undisturbed for a certain time ... So such written - and in later times also printed - matter was taken from time to time to consecrated ground and buried; thus it perished.[80]

At this point it is important to emphasise that the term "disposal" of texts, as used in the context of the geniza-practice, is clearly to be distinguished from the outright destruction of texts. In the instance of the geniza, religious practice acted as certain inhibitor. Such a distinction comes to the fore clearly with the rise of papyrus and parchment as alternative writing materials to clay, as fire is the most obvious method of destruction for the former, while it did not necessarily have a negative effect on the latter.[81] Defective tablets that broke during the firing process or became outdated, or were

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[80] Paul E. Kahle, *The Cairo Geniza* (2nd ed.; Oxford: Blackwell, 1959), 4.

[81] Fire was ironically an unintentional contributory in the preservation of some textual deposits. Tablets were often stored unbaked, or partially baked in the sun. During the conflagration of a besieged city, these unbaked tablets were exposed to intense heat and thus successfully preserved for posterity, as Pettinato, for example, describes at Ebla: "They (the tablets) were apparently not baked in special ovens, so that the varying hues are due to the greater or lesser intensity of the heat of the fire that destroyed the palace. The hues vary from white-beige to copper red to coal black. One should perhaps be eternally grateful to the king who destroyed Ebla by fire, which baked the tablets into a marvelous state of preservation. When the tablets of Ebla are compared with those of Abu Salabikh, it will be seen that the Italian Mission had a relatively easy task. To be sure, some few tablets were exposed to moisture, especially those on the floor of room L.2769, and were irreparably damaged, but the vast majority got well baked in the fire and hence were saved" (Giovanni Pettinato, *The Archives of Ebla*, 40). For the unsuccessful emulation of this process upon the discovery of unbaked tablets by archaeologists in the field or museum conservators, see for example, E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Rise and Progress of Assyriology* (London: Martin Hopkinson & Co., 1925), 148; and E. A. Wallis Budge, *By Nile and Tigris: A Narrative of Journeys in Egypt and Mesopotamia on Behalf of the British Museum Between the Years 1886 and 1913* (2 vols.; London: John Murray, 1920), 1:316. See also Klaas Veenhof's note ("Cuneiform Archives: An Introduction," 1) on the difficulty in establishing whether tablets were baked in antiquity by design or inadvertently during conflagration. He notes the limited written references to baking. Julian Reade ("Archaeology and the Kuyunjik Archives," in *Cuneiform Archives and Libraries: Papers Read at the 30e Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale in Leiden, 4-8 July 1983* [ed. Klaas R. Veenhof; Uitgaven van het Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut te Istanbul 52; Istanbul: Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut, 1986], 218-219) suggests that the so-called "library" texts of the Kuyunjik collections, unlike their Middle Assyrian counterparts, as well as unlike the foundation documents, were not baked intentionally. Nevertheless, ovens in the vicinity

discarded for any other reason, would be dumped at the bottom of wells or on rubble heaps, or used as fill for the building of foundations in walls or under roads. Such a dump of textual material was pointed out as having been mistakenly included in the collections commonly referred to as the "Library of Assurbanipal" at Nineveh.[82] When papyrus and parchment started to predominate, it became easier to distinguish between destruction and disposal. Apart from the more pragmatic reasons for discard, such as erroneous or obsolete information, the best descriptions of the destruction of scrolls and books are usually to be associated with the need to suppress rebellion or to destroy heretical material. A spectacular account of this is found in the biblical Book of Jeremiah. The book dictated by the prophet, and read by Baruch, eventually found its way to King Jehoiakim, the son of Josiah: "The king was seated in his winter apartments - it was the ninth month - with a fire burning in a brazier in front of him. Each time Jehudi had read three or four columns, the king cut them off with a scribe's knife and threw them into the fire in the brazier until the whole of the scroll had been burnt in the brazier fire" (Jer 36:22-23 JB). In this passage, the king's destruction of the scroll is interpreted as an active exhibition of his defiance.[83] But the burning of books was not always condemned

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of possible "archive rooms" are attested to, most notably at Ugarit, where an oven was found near the so-called south-western archives. The oven still had seventy tablets inside (Klaas Veenhof, "Cuneiform Archives: An Introduction," 7).

[82] See Julian Reade, "Archaeology and the Kuyunjik Archives," 216.

[83] Such action of "defiance" in the Near Eastern context may have an additional subtext that emanates from ancient Mesopotamian scholarship to the larger Near Eastern context. This is what Jean Bottéro refers to as the *realism of the written*, namely: "... in the opinion of the ancient scholars of Mesopotamia the script was fundamentally *concrete and realistic*. One did not write first of all the word, the pronounced name of the thing, but the thing itself, furnished with a name. The name was inseparable from the thing, confused with it ... And this written name, equal to the thing, constituted a material given, which was concrete, solid, and comparable to a substance of which each portion, even the smallest one, contained all the faculties of the total, just as the smallest grain of salt has all the characteristics of the heaviest block." Bottéro continues: "According to the opinion of their devotees, the gods had to determine and to decide first of all the *destinies* of all things, in order to produce and govern the world and the people from day to day. Their orders had to be *written down* in order to give them substantiality, publicity, and force" (*Mesopotamia: Writing,*

in Near Eastern accounts. An incident related in the New Testament, in the Acts of the Apostles, is a good example of this. During Paul's ministry in Ephesus, some believers were so struck by his words and actions that they came forward, admitted their use of spells and their practice of magic and, " ... collected their books and made a bonfire of them in public" (Acts 19:19 JB).[84] The difference between such utter destruction and disposal in a geniza, is best illustrated by, *Gittin 45b*: "R. Nahman (250-290) said: we have it on tradition that a scroll of the Law which was written by a heretic should be burnt, and one written by a heathen should be withdrawn (*ygnz*)."[85] Upon reading *Aboth of Rabbi Nathan* 1:4, it may even seem that the act of withdrawal (גנז), may have been revocable (which, of course, destruction by fire would have made impossible):

> Be deliberate in judgement: in what way? This teaches that a man should take time in rendering judgement; for whoever takes time in rendering judgement is unruffled in judgement. As it is said (Proverbs 25:1): *These also are the Proverbs of Solomon which the men of Hezekiah king of Judah copied out:* not that they copied them out, but that they took their time. Abba Saul (120-150) says: not that they took their time, but that they interpreted them. Originally they used to say: Proverbs, Song of Songs, and Ecclesiastes were withdrawn (*g.n.z.*), for they presented mere parables and were not part of Scripture. So they arose and withdrew them, until the Men of the Great Assembly came and interpreted them.[86]

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*Reasoning, and the* Gods, 99, 101). It may therefore be argued that the king, by destroying the scroll, thereby destroys the reality created by a prophecy written down.

[84] See also Canfora's chapter on "Conflagrations" for further discussion and examples of the intentional and unintentional destruction of ancient collections of parchment and papyrus by the medium of fire: Luciano Canfora, *The Vanished Library: A Wonder of the Ancient World* (trans. Martin Ryle; Hellenistic Culture and Society 7; Berkeley: University of California, 1990), 190-193.

[85] As quoted and discussed by Sid A. Leiman, *The Canonization of Hebrew Scripture: The Talmudic and Midrashic Evidence* (Transactions of the Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences 47; Hamden, Conn.: Archon, 1976), 73-74.

[86] As quoted and discussed in Sid A. Leiman, *The Canonization of Hebrew Scripture*, 73-74.

Although the suggestion for the possibility of the reversal of withdrawal is certainly clear in this passage, it will not be pursued further, as the argument is at best tenuous and with limited precedent.

Destruction of religious texts functioned therefore on at least two levels. The internal regulation of religious practice by means of the destruction of harmful texts was counterbalanced by the less severe disposal/withdrawal of texts that culminated most probably in the geniza-practice. The other perpetrator of conscious destruction was external in nature. Political and religious forces from outside could threaten the continuation of the written tradition and only the effective hiding of texts could counteract this. This naturally implied that the users intended for the texts to be retrieved for eventual use. Successful preservation (and possible internal organization) was therefore of paramount importance.

The pseudepigraphal *Testament* or *Assumption of Moses* includes a careful description of how texts were to be hidden. Before his departure, Moses provides the following specific instructions to Joshua on the manner in which documents relating to the history and future of Israel, should be taken care of: "But (you) take this writing so that later you will remember how to preserve the books which I shall entrust to you. You shall arrange them, anoint them with cedar, and deposit them in earthenware jars in the place which (God) has chosen from the beginning of the creation of the world ..."[87] The hiding of religious texts represented in this account seemed to have included a fixed organisation as part of the preservation imperative. This was apparently quite prevalent,

[87] J. Priest, "The Testament of Moses (First Century A.D.): A New Translation and Introduction," in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha: Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments* [ed. James H. Charlesworth; vol. 1 of *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, ed. James H. Charlesworth; New York: Doubleday, 1985], 927).

as proven by the numerous references to, as well as actual deposits of texts found in the Judean Desert, including the scrolls in the eleven caves at Qumran.[88]

Some references to the stowing away of texts are very evident in their intent, but none more so than the account in the Book of Jeremiah, Chapter 32. Jeremiah is told to buy a piece of land in Anatoth from his cousin and the resultant passage relays what can only be assumed to be the standard practice for the purchase and legal transfer of land ownership:

> I (Jeremiah) drew up the deed and sealed it, called in witnesses and weighed out the money on the scales. I then took both the sealed deed of purchase and its open copy, in accordance with the requirements of the law, and handed over the deed of purchase to Baruch son of Neriah, son of Mahseiah, in the presence of my cousin Hanamel, of the witnesses who had signed the deed of purchase, and of all the Jews who then happened to be in the Court of the Guard. In their presence I gave Baruch these instructions: Take these deeds, the sealed deed of purchase and its open copy, and put them in an earthenware pot, *so that they may be preserved for a long time* (למען יעמדו ימים רבים) (Jeremiah 32:10-14 JB).

This pre-occupation with long-term preservation with eventual retrieval as specific purpose, is also alluded to in the fourth pseudepigraphal Book of Ezra, in which the author is entreated to keep or hide seventy of the ninety-four books revealed to him, to be given to the "wise." The twenty-four books not hidden, may equate to the number of books in the Hebrew Bible.[89]

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[88] Godfrey R. Driver documented a number of medieval references to hidden or secret stashes of presumably hidden documents found in the Judean desert in medieval times. See the first chapter of Godfrey R. Driver, *The Judaean Scrolls: The Problem and A Solution* (New York: Schocken, 1965), 7-15.

[89] 4 Ezra 14: 24, 37-48: "But prepare for yourself many writing tablets, and take with you Sarea, Dabria, Selemia, Ethanus, and Asiel – these five, because they are trained to write rapidly; ... So I took the five men, as he commanded me, and we proceeded to the field, and remained there. And on the next day, behold, a voice called me, saying, 'Ezra, open your mouth and drink what I give you to drink.' Then I opened my mouth, and behold, a full cup was offered to me; it was full of something like water, but its

The successful retrieval of hidden texts after a time of adversity had passed is best illustrated by the already mentioned passage in the Second Book of Maccabees, where it is related that Judas Maccabeus brought together a collection of dispersed books after the revolts. The books are described as, "... books dealing with the kings and the prophets, the writings of David and the letters of the kings on the subject of offerings" (2 Macc 2:13 JB). As discussed in the previous chapter, it is not entirely farfetched to surmise that the survival of the Hebrew Bible could be attributed at least partly to the effective retrieval of hidden sources after the Maccabean Revolt and the copying and distribution thereof. It has to be assumed that, as these texts were implied to have been hidden with the express purpose of safe preservation for eventual retrieval, a form of internal organisation did apply. This clearly distinguishes these collections of hidden texts from our understanding of the function of a geniza, or for that matter, a mere dump of discarded material.

Until further evidence can be found, the conclusion stands that a geniza is completely devoid of any function that would enable easy and deliberate retrieval of information on demand. The only problem with this fairly straightforward understanding of the later geniza-practice is that the root, גנז, often gave rise to a wide range of interpretative possibilities as late as Talmudic times. The root is found in six instances in

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color was like fire. And I took it and drank; and when I had drunk it, my heart poured forth understanding, and wisdom increased in my breast, for my spirit retained its memory; and my mouth was opened, and was no longer closed. And the Most High gave understanding to the five men, and by turns they wrote what was dictated, in characters which they did not know. They sat forty days, and wrote during the daytime, and ate their bread at night. As for me, I spoke in the daytime and was not silent at night. So during the forty days ninety-four books were written. And when the forty days were ended, the Most High spoke to me, saying, 'Make public the twenty-four books that you wrote first and let the worthy and the unworthy read them; but keep the seventy that were written last, in order to give them to the wise among your people. For in them is the spring of understanding, the fountain of wisdom, and the river of knowledge.' And I did so" (B. M. Metzger, "The Fourth Book of Ezra [Late First Century A.D.] with the Four Additional Chapters: A New Translation and Introduction," in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha: Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments* [ed. James H. Charlesworth; vol. 1 of *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, ed. James H. Charlesworth; New York: Doubleday, 1985], 554-555).

the Biblical text. What is of special interest for the purposes of this discussion is the usage in Esther 3:9 and 4:7, as well as that in Ezra 5:17, 6:1 and 7:20.

The Book of Esther uses the term גנזי המלך and given the contexts, there can be little doubt that it is to be translated as "the king's treasuries" or "royal treasuries." In both instances it refers to money to be deposited by Haman into the king's coffers, should he approve the plot against the Jews.

In the Book of Ezra, the Aramaic גנזיא or בית גנזיא can be translated by a similar phrase, "treasuries" or "treasure-houses."[90] The context in which these references occur, is of particular interest, especially Ezra 5:17 and 6:1. This passage details the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the temple by the returnees from Babylon. The sudden flurry of building activity in Jerusalem was of concern to the Samaritans, and they wrote to the Persian ruler, referring him back to the history and reputation of the city of Jerusalem as recorded in "the book of the records of thy fathers" (Ezra 4:15 KJV).[91] Apparently, after referring back to this "book," the Persian ruler ordered a complete halt to building activities in Jerusalem (Ezra 4:19, 21-22).

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[90] L. Koehler and W. Baumgartner, eds., *Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti Libros: A Dictionary of the Hebrew Old Testament in English and German with Supplement* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1985), 1062.

The present debate regarding the authenticity of the so-called "Aramaic Persian documents" quoted in the Book of Ezra and particularly mentioned in the following discussion is noted. For the purposes of the subsequent deliberation the authenticity of the documents *per se*, is not of particular import. Whether or not the reader holds to a minimalist view that these documents were altered or outright fabricated or not do not detract from the author of the Book of Ezra's clear awareness of textual deposits, their function and use at the time of the Achaemenid Empire. For Lester Grabbe's particular questioning of authenticity, see Lester L. Grabbe, *Ezra-Nehemiah* (Old Testament Readings; London: Routledge, 1998), 125-133; Lester L. Grabbe, *The Persian and Greek Periods* (vol. 1 of *Judaism From Cyrus to Hadrian*; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), 30-42; and Lester L. Grabbe, "Reconstructing History from the Book of Ezra," in *Second Temple Studies: The Persian Period* (ed. P. R. Davies; JSOTSup 117; Sheffield: JSOT, 1991), 98-107. See also Bob Becking's summary of the question regarding the authenticity of sources in the Book of Ezra in "Ezra's Re-Enactment of the Exile," in *Leading Captivity Captive: "The Exile" as History and Ideology* (ed. Lester L. Grabbe; JSOTSup 278; European Seminar in Historical Methodology 2; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 40-61.

[91] בספר־דכרניא די אבהתך, alternatively translated as, "the archives of your predecessors" (NIV) or "in the archives of your ancestors" (JB).

According to Ezra 4:24, work on the temple was suspended until the second year of Darius' reign. In this instance, Tattenai and others were concerned that the rebuilding of the temple would be interpreted as political insurrection, and he wrote a letter to Darius to request information concerning the original decree by King Cyrus (Ezra 5:17). Now the king is not referred to "the book of the records of his fathers," but to the "king's treasure house" (בבית גנזיא די־מלכא) in Babylon. Upon receipt of this information in Babylon, the king's representatives are seemingly referred to a secondary or permanent collection in Ecbatana (Ezra 6:2) where confirmation is eventually found that the Jews were indeed granted the right to rebuild the temple during an earlier administration.[92] From this passage it is clear that the possibility for the retrieval of the pertinent information is not only assumed by the writer and recipient of the request, but also expected by all parties concerned. Not only does this imply the organised preservation of documents of previous administrations by the Persians in Babylon, but also, that records existed of the contents found in collections in other administrative centres of the realm, like Ecbatana. It seems that in Biblical times, the term בית גנזיא not only referred to royal storerooms or treasuries, but could also be used to refer to an entity far closer related to an archive, that is, a collection established in an organised fashion to enable eventual retrieval of information at the behest of the user.

The root גנז and its various derivatives follow the same multi-dimensionality up to Talmudic times. Sid Leiman discussed the various renderings in Talmudic and Midrashic passages in great detail. Jastrow renders meanings such as, "to save, hoard up, reserve, to remove from sight, hide, to suppress, prohibit the reading of, to disappear, be hidden," but

[92] Ecbatana (in central Iran) served as capital city of the satrap of Media from the Achaemenid to Sasanian period. It also served as royal treasury and summer residence. For a summary of the archaeological history of this city, see Stuart C. Brown, "Ecbatana," *OEANE* 2:186-187.

also "to save."[93] The word is generally assumed to be of Old Persian origin, *ganj*, which is translated to mean "storeroom" or "treasury."[94] Nevertheless, it seems that an older cognate can be found in Akkadian. According to *The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago*, the word ***kanāšu*[95] referred to *kamāsu*,[96] is to be translated as, "to gather, to collect, to bring in (barley, persons, animals, documents or objects)"[97] and, "to prepare for burial."[98] This latter derivative is particularly interesting given the association of material from genizas with cemeteries in later times, but it also harkens back to Pedersén's description of the architectural lay-out of private houses at Assur: "The rooms of a typical private house in this part of the city were arranged around one or more inner courtyards. The family graves were often placed under the floor of the innermost room of the house. The family archive was, in many cases, kept in that same room."[99] The Akkadian root may therefore give an early indication of the later association of genizas with cemeteries.

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[93] Marcus Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature* (1903; repr., New York: Judaica, 1996), 258-259.
[94] S. D. Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society*, 1:1.
[95] A. Leo Oppenheim, ed. *The Assyrian Dictionary: K* (vol. 8 of *CAD*; ed. Miguel Civil et al; Chicago: The Oriental Institute, 1971), 148.
[96] A. Leo Oppenheim, ed. *The Assyrian Dictionary: K*, 114-117.
[97] The *CAD* cites Middle Babylonian references like: "*ṭuppi šumāti ina GI.GUR.IM.MA kam-sa-at* the itemized (?) tablet has been put in the tablet container." See A. Leo Oppenheim, ed. (*The Assyrian Dictionary: K*, 115-116) for this, and additional references.
[98] A. Leo Oppenheim, ed. (*The Assyrian Dictionary: K*, 117): "to prepare for burial: *šalmassu ú-kám-mis-ma* he (Nabonidus) prepared her (his mother's) corpse for burial."

Note also Reif's (*A Jewish Archive From Old Cairo: The History of Cambridge University's Genizah Collection*, 11-12) acknowledgement of possible related cognates in other Semitic languages: "The earliest occurrences in Hebrew literature of the root *gnz*, from which the word *genizah* is derived, are in late sections of the Hebrew Bible, where it refers to the storage of valuable items. Given that these examples have Persian linguistic elements and that aspects of these texts may reflect a Persian imperial environment, it is probable that the entry into Hebrew was through Persian. Nevertheless, the root is attested not only in Hebrew and Aramaic but also in Arabic, Ethiopic and Late Babylonian with the meanings of 'hide,' 'cover' and 'bury' ..."
[99] Olof Pedersén, *Archives and Libraries in the Ancient Near East: 1500-300 B.C.*, 136.

The semantic sphere of influence of an earlier Akkadian root did not unambiguously limit itself as far as derivatives are concerned. Marcus Jastrow[100] translated the root כנס with an almost identical range of semantic possibilities: "to collect, gather; to cover, shelter, bring home." The derivative nouns, כנסיה and כנסת, that all fall within the semantic sphere of "gathering" or "storage" or "assembly," is in common use. It is uncertain, but possible phonological similarities as well as semantic commonality, may indicate a relation between גנז and the Aramaic roots כנש or כנס, both with strong emphasis on "gathering" and "storage" or "collecting," hence, for example, the term for "synagogue," בית כנשה.[101]

It is important to emphasise that terminological resonance alone is of limited use in determining the nature of textual deposits, as these entities seemed to have taken on a chameleon-like quality throughout history. Morris Jastrow's singular insistence on size and Olof Pedersén's reliance on contents render their definitions of little use in distinguishing between ancient archives and genizas, as the distinction is to be found rather in the use of the collections and the expectation of retrieval. A particular feature of Weitemeyer's exposition of archival technique does bear mentioning. Mogens Weitemeyer pointed out that the two Ur III "archive buildings" discovered at Telloh, indicated a peculiar architectural feature: "No doors led into the buildings, accession to which must therefore have been gained from above."[102] This finds a reverberation in the

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[100] Marcus Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature*, 649-650.

[101] L. Koehler and W. Baumgartner, eds., *Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti Libros*, 1086.

[102] Weitemeyer ("Archive and Library Technique in Ancient Mesopotamia," 220-221) refers to similar structures discovered at Nuzi, Kalhu, Sippar and Dēr: "At Nuzi the archive room was separated from the temple cella by a wall, and the archive, it is assumed, had to be entered by means of a ladder. The Lagash buildings seem to form parts of a rectangular block. Perhaps they were cellars under a building or courtyard, or they may have been independent buildings situated around a central courtyard. They may have been entered from the 'courtyard' in the same way as the Nuzi archive, i.e. by means of ladders."

architectural description of the Cairo Geniza, as described by Solomon Schechter, upon his visit in December 1896: "The Genizah, which probably always formed an integral part of the synagogue, is now situated at the end of the gallery, presenting the appearance of a sort of windowless and doorless room of fair dimensions. The entrance is on the west side, through a big, shapeless hole reached by a ladder."[103]

For the Cairo Geniza, the lack of doors is easily explained. Access to the deposit is restricted to one-way traffic by which documents are deposited in the room. Effortless admission to the deposit is of little concern, as the "hiding away" of worn-out material is the object of the exercise. No retrieval of information is intended. The earlier Ur III examples of doorless rooms may have a similar function of at least restricted access. It is not farfetched to presume that these rooms may have preserved archives of the manner portrayed by Atherton as typical of the second phase of the record cycle. The kind of "archives" Veenhof proposes to have existed on an extremely limited scale in the ancient Near East. The deposits preserved in these closed rooms were in some cases quite considerable. E. Wallis Budge describes a concealed chamber at Tell ed-Der: "When the *debris* was cleared from the entrance, which was in the roof, we saw that the chamber contained many large jars, with coverings fixed in position with bitumen. Some jars were full of tablets, and others only half-full; and three were empty. Each jar contained the contracts and business documents probably of one family ... There were nearly 3000 tablets in that chamber."[104]

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[103] Solomon Schechter, *Studies in Judaism: Second Series*, 5-6.

[104] E. Wallis Budge, *The Rise and Progress of Assyriology*, 142. Tell ed-Der is situated 25 km south of modern Baghdad and was presumably founded shortly before the Ur III period. For summarized information on the archaeological history of the site, see Léon de Meyer, "Der, Tell Ed-," *OEANE* 2:145-146.

Furthermore, it is of vital importance to point out that the occurrence of doorless chambers outlived the Ur III period to which their occurrence is limited by Weitemeyer. As the following example indicates, the feature is also not restricted to official or institutional locations, but extended to the domain of private ownership.

Tahsin Özgüç, the Turkish archaeologist known for his work at Kanesh, indicates a similar closed room with presumed access from the second floor as part of the "archive rooms and the storerooms" of the house of an Assyrian trader in City II of the *kārum* at Kanesh, more than a century later than Ur III:[105]

> In construction techniques and plans the newly unearthed buildings resemble those previously excavated. Basically we should not expect great changes in these buildings which lasted for about 100 years and continued to serve the same functions. The similarity in house plan-type seems to be based upon the function. The economic character of Level II houses in the *kārum* is very much evident, regardless of to whom they belonged. The small, locked archive rooms and the store-rooms for marketable merchandise was carefully set apart from the kitchen and living rooms. They all share uniform concepts. The differences in details do not change the essential overall unity and homogeneity.[106]

Özgüç continues to describe one of the best-preserved Assyrian houses in the district. On the ground floor of a double storey house, excavators found textual deposits in all rooms. Hence the conclusion that: "The building is the archive of one of the rich Assyrian

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[105] *Kārum* Kanesh Phase II is dated between ca. 1900 and 1830 B.C.E. This outpost of Old Assyrian trade in Anatolia provides the bulk of the textual evidence (approximately 15,000 texts thus far) for the economic base of Ashur at that time. Assyrian merchants lived and traded in Kanesh, one of a network of far-flung trading posts for the city of Ashur. Similar trading posts are attested for at Alishar, Boğazköy, Karahüyük and Acemhüyük. For a summarized discussion on the organization of Assyrian trade and the Assyrian *kārums*, see Amélie Kuhrt, *The Ancient Near East c. 3000-330 BC*, 1:90-95.

[106] Tahsin Özgüç, "Observations on the Architectural Peculiarities of the Archive of an Assyrian Trader of Kārum Kanesh," in *Veenhof Anniversary Volume: Studies Presented to Klaas R. Veenhof on the Occasion of His Sixty-Fifth Birthday* (ed. W. H. van Soldt; Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 2001), 367.

On the buildings of Level II, see also Tahsin Özgüç, *Kültepe-Kaniş: New Researches at the Center of the Assyrian Trade Colonies* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basimevi, 1959), 81-100.

merchants of the *kārum*."[107] Of particular interest are two adjacent rooms, referred to as the "archive rooms (nos. 5 and 6)." From the accompanying sketch and description, it is clear that room 5 was without a door, and entrance to the room must therefore have been from the top, where the living quarters were presumably located. The partition wall between rooms 5 and 6 was unfortunately destroyed and the deposits of the two rooms intermingled. Exact provenance and original order would therefore be difficult to establish. As was the case for the deposit described by Budge, room 5 also contained groups of tablets in pots, but this is not unusual. Additionally, evidence for texts that were originally placed on wooden shelves against the wall, as well as packed in bags of straw wrapping, was found.

Richard Starr's archaeological report of the excavations at Nuzi from 1927-1931 under Pfeiffer and Starr,[108] is perhaps the most informative regarding the existence and nature of these "doorless rooms." In his extensive discussion of architectural features at Nuzi, Starr relates two distinct patterns of use associated with these doorless chambers. Note again the similarity in descriptive language between Starr and the earlier account of the Cairo Geniza by Schechter:

> Rooms were frequently found at Nuzi without any doorways whatsoever. Where a room was traced from remnants of walls half a meter or less in height, one could presume that the reason no doors were found was because the sills were exceptionally high; but when rooms were found with walls

[107] Tahsin Özgüç, "Observations on the Architectural Peculiarities of the Archive of an Assyrian Trader of Kārum Kanesh," 370.

[108] Nuzi is situated in northeastern Iraq. The first excavations at this ancient provincial centre of the Hurrians was undertaken at the incentive of Gertrude Bell under the auspices of the Iraq Museum in conjunction with the American Schools of Oriental Research under the directorship of Edward Chiera in 1925. For detail on the archaeological history and further bibliographic references, see Diana L. Stein, "Nuzi," *OEANE* 4:171-175; see also the introduction to Starr's excavation report, Richard F.S. Starr, *Nuzi: Report on the Excavations at Yorgan Tepa Near Kirkuk, Iraq, Conducted by Harvard University in Conjunction with the American Schools of Oriental Research and the University Museum of Philadelphia, 1927-1931* (2 vols.; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University, 1939), 1:xxix-xxxvi.

> almost two meters high, as in F27, F29 and F35, Stratum II, and only slightly less high in several other doorless rooms, with a solid face of visible bonded *libin* on each wall, such a supposition is impossible. That these rooms were used, is proven by the presence of quantities of household objects, and by their packed pavements. It is clear that there was access from above my means of ladders or wooden steps. ... One would at first suppose such enclosures to have been storerooms; but the occurrence of several connected rooms having no outlet to the rest of the house-unit, yet having much-used pavements, indicates that in these instances at least they were lived in, and easily accessible. [109]

Starr indicates the doorless room indicated as G73 of Temple A,[110] as a second, and distinctly different architectural feature and resultant in alternate use:

> There is no proof of overhead entry, but there is proof of entry over a high, separating wall (G73, Temple A).[111]

Starr was clearly of the opinion that in this instance the room functioned as storage chamber with only the peculiar architectural deficiency and the resultant supposed architectural "demand" for "special segregation" as common feature to all these building spaces.

G73 is of particular interest to the present discussion because of Starr's detailed observations regarding the peculiarity of this structure and the presence of a textual deposit within its precincts. The description is given in full because of the evident similarity in description to those previously cited, particularly as related to the Cairo Geniza:

> The small alcove G73, which in Temple C had been open and which in Temple B was closed off, remained closed in Temple A, though it was far

[109] Starr, *Nuzi*, 47-48.
[110] Temple A forms part of the temple area of Stratum II along the northwestern ridge of Nuzi. Stratum II is now dated to the mid-fourteenth to the mid-thirteenth centuries B.C.E.
[111] Starr, *Nuzi*, 48.

from being abandoned. Within it was a considerable store of tablets of the ordinary contract type, two glazed pots such as were found in fragments nearby ..., a glazed wall-nail and many beads. This is a most interesting case. We have here, appearing on the plan as a doorless room, an enclosure which was in reality not only accessible from G29 but in part open to the cella. It is certainly not thinkable that this tiny storeroom would have been decorated with a glazed wall-nail and beads had it been accessible only from the roof ... The tablets scattered over the floor of G29 near here, and only near here, could have been thrown out of the alcove into the cella over a separating wall not less in height than the 81 cm. [*sic*] which remained when excavated. This could easily be scaled with the aid of a wooden ladder or steps. Using the position of the wall-nails in the palace chapel as a guide for their height here we may safely assume that the dividing wall was less than 178 cm., [*sic*] since both the wall-nails and beads within the alcove would have lost their main decorative purpose had the dividing wall been so high as to make them invisible from the cella. Thus, the height of the wall may at least be restricted within the limits of 178 cm. [*sic*] and the 81 cm. [*sic*] of the existing wall. It is quite probable that the glazed pots found in the alcove were in their proper storage place and that the alcove was the *storeroom for business documents and for cult objects not in constant use* (my emphasis) ... Looters, treading ruthlessly in the tiny alcove, would account for the shattered condition in which the tablets and vessels were found both within and outside the storeroom. Whether the priest wrote these tablets and stored them for others, or whether he accepted them only for safe-keeping cannot be known. The tablets pertain to ordinary commerce and seem to have no inscriptional connection with the temple.[112]

To summarize: the existence of an evident organisational system for the archival groups found in the chamber at Der, described by Budge, clearly argues for retrieval of information as the object. The examples cited from Kanesh and Nuzi, are probable further

[112] Starr, *Nuzi*, 101-102.

examples of the same practice, but may unfortunately not be cited as the provenance and original order were disturbed without clear observation regarding the existence of an internal organisation that would have confirmed the possibility of retrieval of information.

Der is therefore the best example. The restricted access to the room and the fact that the tablets were stored in jars and not on open shelves where they could be easily consulted, may further argue for the function of this room as a permanent archive. The type of archival entity that has as its holdings documents of permanent value such as contracts, documents related to landownership, and so forth. These documents are not used on a daily basis, but consulted and preserved as proof. It is this kind of permanent repository that is most probably described in the aforementioned Biblical discussion to have existed in the city of Ecbatana: this archive is consulted only after the local archival resources in Babylon is exhausted, indicating a probable cross reference to a more permanent deposit for records of enduring value (in this instance the decree of Cyrus) in the city of Ecbatana (Ezra 6:1-2). Although the root גנז functions in this context, it is clear that the repositories it portrays are evidently more closely aligned to an archive in function and intent, than to any present understanding of the Jewish geniza. The functioning of an archive in a community would employ all aspects of information theory, while the medieval geniza-practice seems to have been fossilized by Judaism around one religiously defined objective. The Geniza may therefore be said to be a one-dimensional institution on the perimeter of the information theory continuum with no intention of retrieval. Thus the Jews discard sacred documents, "... in a dignified manner, or

(protected them) from an unseemly end, without any thought as to who might find them."[113]

### 4.2.2.2 Building Deposits, Foundation Deposits and the Discovery of Ancient Texts

> 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 dominions 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 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.[114]

Foundation deposits in ancient Mesopotamia have received exhaustive treatment in the work of Richard Ellis by the same name. As Ellis points out, the term "foundation deposit" refers most clearly to deposits of objects and texts laid down in the foundation of an ancient building. Ellis coined an additional term, "building deposits," to allow for a broader scope of inclusion than that allowed by the term "foundation deposit." He distinguishes the two as follows:

> A building deposit is an integral part of the structure of a building but is neither decorative (usually not even visible) nor structurally useful. It may occupy any position in the building – high or low, in walls or under floors.

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[113] J. Sadan, "Genizah and Genizah-Like Practices in Islamic and Jewish Traditions," 38.
[114] H. Curtis Wright, "Ancient Burials of Metal Documents in Stone Boxes – Their Implications for Library History," *Journal of Library History* 16/1 (1981): 58-59.

> The term 'foundation deposit' is used to designate a building deposit placed in the foundations or lower parts of a building – below floor level.[115]

These deposits were not of an exclusively textual nature, but included a miscellany of objects, cones, cylinders, prisms, tablets,[116] pegs, as well as possible human and animal sacrifice as part of the deposit. As for their distribution, deposits were found in secular and religious structures, but apart from one exception, have not been found in private dwellings.[117]

Again, as was the case in the previous discussion, foundation deposits by their very nature offer limited access but seem to emphasise long-term preservation: the deposits are buried, often in metal or stone containers, and the texts themselves are often written on metal and stone that may have indicated an intention of permanent preservation. Oppenheim therefore cautions that the creative intent in constituting these deposits is with limited expectation of retrieval: "... 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."[118]

Nevertheless, the fact that many building deposits were found in secondary locations indicate, that these deposits were indeed consulted. For the Ur III-period, for

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[115] Richard S. Ellis, *Foundation Deposits in Ancient Mesopotamia* (Yale Near Eastern Researches 2; New Haven, Conn.: Yale University, 1968), 1.

[116] "'Tablet-shaped' is rather loosely interpreted; such things as the huge blocks of stone and lead used by Tukulti-Ninurta I and the thin metal plates of Sargon II and the Achaemenid kings must be included," Ellis, *Foundation Deposits in Ancient Mesopotamia*, 94.

[117] This statement excludes protective figurines, of which Ellis lists five known deposits in private residences (Ellis, *Foundation Deposits in Ancient Mesopotamia*, 163-164). Magic bowls are also excluded.

[118] A. Leo Oppenheim, *Ancient Mesopotamia*, 26.

example, only deposits of Ur-Nammu and Šulgi were found *in situ*, despite a great number of peg deposits found.[119]

Given the high premise placed on creative intent by the "archival approach," Ellis' work on building deposits is of particular value. He notes four key motivating factors in the establishment of building deposits: sanctification, protection, commemoration and elaboration.[120] Commemoration as motivating factor is particularly important, as it may be taken as an indicator of intentional long-term preservation on the part of the creator of the deposit. The creator therefore anticipated the reading of his document in the indeterminable future. No real internal organization is expected, as the deposit usually contained limited documentary material that was sometimes duplicated on different kinds of writing material.

It may therefore be concluded that human retrieval of the deposit was not the immediate intention at creation. The document was written and deposited as a metaphorical act of creation. By retrieving such documents during building repair in the future, the deposit finds an unintentional (on the part of the creator) audience. The transfer of information contained in the deposits were therefore, especially in early instances, relayed inadvertently when building projects by future rulers laid bare earlier deposits and the very act of retrieval was therefore unintentional and inadvertent.

This state of affairs changed by the Neo-Babylonian period. It may even be surmised that the retrieval of the texts included in these deposits were one of the primary objectives of a king during restoration projects.

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[119] Ellis, *Foundation Deposits in Ancient Mesopotamia*, 63-69.
[120] Ellis, *Foundation Deposits in Ancient Mesopotamia*, 165-168.

In a chapter that has already referred to Biblical indications of adjunct textual deposits, it would be remiss not to refer at least briefly to one of the most contentious references to the discovery of religious texts in the Bible: the account in 2 Kings 22 of the discovery of the Book of the Law by the priest Hilkiah, during the reign of Josiah. The discovery of the book is set within the framework of a narrative relating a period of general repairs to the temple. And, although it is impossible to determine the extent of what the priest discovered, Neo-Babylonian material provides at least a precedent for the possibility that this passage did reflect a certain degree of historicity. Neo-Babylonian evidence makes it clear that, not only were the Babylonian kings as early as Hammurabi active participants in temple restoration projects, but they knowingly set out to excavate for earlier foundation deposits that clearly included texts along with artefacts. One of the best known examples are detailed in four cylinders written in 546 B.C.E. for King Nabonidus, in which he relates restoration projects undertaken at the two temples of Shamash at Sippar and Larsa, and the two temples of Anunit in Agade and Sippar-Annunit. From the section regarding restoration work at Sippar, the cylinders relate:

> The foundation record of Ebarra which Burnaburiash, a king of former times, my predecessor, had made, he saw and upon the foundation record of Burnaburiash, foundation of that Ebarra he laid ... Me Nabuna'id king of Babylon, care-taker of Esagila and Ezida, now in the tenth year, in my legitimate reign ... when Shamash the great lord thought about his first dwelling, by a dream which I perceived and which the people perceived for themselves, he sent me to restore Ebarra upon the foundation record of that ancient Ebarra even unto its place ... I beheld the ruins that covered the lofty ziggurat, and caused to be summoned numerous people. The inclosure of that temple (and) ziggurat right and left in front and behind I excavated; Ebarra

unto its extent I examined and the writing of the name of Hammurapi a former king, my predecessor (therein I beheld).[121]

In another passage, regarding the work at Larsa, the deliberateness of the excavation process is even more evident: "The foundation record of Eulmash of Agade, which since the age of Sargon king of Babylon ... had not come to light, Kurigalzu king of Babylon, a king of former time, sought for. ... Thus he wrote, thus he did. 'The foundation record of Eulmash I sought for, I expended pious toil but attained not'."[122] Nabonidus then relates in great detail how he summoned "skilled workmen" to search for the missing records through "pious labour." After three years he was told that the search was still unsuccessful. The workmen speculated that rain had removed the foundation records from the area of the site where it was supposed to be. Fortified by a vision, though, and provided with a prophecy, the king's persistence eventually delivered the foundation record of Naram-Sin. The king ends his narrative with the words, "The deeds of Sin lord of the gods and of Ishtar, dwellers in heaven and earth, which upon inscriptions of cylindrical shape I have written that the peoples of distant times may hear."[123]

Keep in mind that the written record as an important part of the building deposit only surfaces in the Isin-Larsa period and that the written record is the element in the building deposit most closely responsible for fulfilling the commemorative vocation of the deposit: "From then on the commemorative monument occupies an increasingly prominent place among the types of deposits. Though different objects were used, such as stone tablets and clay cylinders, each with its own history, the purpose was that of

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[121] S. Langdon, "New Inscriptions of Nabuna'id," *The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures* 32 (1916): 111-112.
[122] S. Langdon, "New Inscriptions of Nabuna'id," *The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures* 32 (1916): 113.
[123] S. Langdon, "New Inscriptions of Nabuna'id," *The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures* 32 (1916): 116.

preserving a record of the work."[124] By Neo-Babylonian times, Ellis observes, the primary function of building deposits has been reduced to two aspects, protection and remembrance: "It seems to me that the types of deposits used in the later periods reflect the concerns of people who had no real conviction of the importance or efficacy of what they were doing, ... whose real motive was a fear of extinction."[125] Hence the building deposit in its Neo-Babylonian guise becomes focused on the function of permanent preservation as the ultimate motivation for its creation. And as Nabonidus' unrelenting search for the building deposits of his predecessor indicates, the deposit for the Neo-Babylonian ruler also incorporates the intention of retrieval as necessary by-product of the endeavour for permanent existence.

The common theme from the Neo-Babylonian to the pseudepigraphal and Gnostic material regarding the hiding and discovery of texts seems to revolve around the implicit virtue attached to the relentless seeking and successful retrieval of the hidden material. This is not accidental. Libraries and archives exist with inbuilt mechanisms to enable the retrieval of information, mechanisms already implanted at the moment of creation of the collective entity. Texts are unable to transfer information, unless they are read. A deposit created without the intention of recovery would therefore be as destructive as burning religious texts, unless more esoteric meaning is attached to the deposit, as Ellis suggests to be the case for deposits in earlier time periods. As sacral meaning diminishes, the successful recovery of deposits gain an importance not previously attached to it.

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[124] Ellis, *Foundation Deposits in Ancient Mesopotamia*, 166.
[125] Ellis, *Foundation Deposits in Ancient Mesopotamia*, 166.

## 4.3 Conclusion

> In the Near East, where great quantities of records have been found on excavation sites, only rarely could any part of the site be identified as an archives room. Most of the time we cannot tell whether we are dealing with an archival aggregate or with a collection of trash, the equivalent of a modern waste-paper basket. And yet we cannot exclude such *disjecta membra* from our consideration because they may still reveal a patter worth discovering.[126]

In 1902, Bernard Grenfell, Arthur Hund and Gilbart Smyly published the evidence from a cache of papyri found in the winter of 1899-1900 at Ûmm el Baragât (ancient Tebtunis) in Egypt. Part of the published deposits originated from the innards of crocodile mummies, dated to the end of the second, or the early part of the first-century B.C.E. It was accidentally discovered that these mummies were wrapped in sheets of papyrus. As a result, all the crocodile-tombs in the cemetery were unearthed and some papyri recovered. The editors, publishing the results of their finds, were extremely cautious in indicating the provenance of the material: "For purposes of dating it is often a matter of importance to know which documents came from the same crocodile-mummy."[127] Hence the curious classification found in *The Tebtunis Papyri*: "Classification of Papyri According to Crocodiles."[128]

The aforementioned instance of extreme caution in respect of provenance, illustrates more poignantly than any theoretical construct the underlying scholarly requisite of *respect des fonds*. Assignment of meaning is the direct outcome of the determination of the nature of the textual deposit as organic unit. Individual texts in the unit are therefore only meaningful insofar as they support the inherent meaningfulness of

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[126] Ernst Posner, *Archives in the Ancient World* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University, 1972), 5.
[127] Bernard P. Grenfell, Arthur S. Hunt and J. Gilbart Smyly, eds., *The Tebtunis Papyri* (3 vols.; University of California Publications Graeco-Roman Archaeology 1; London: Henry Frowde, 1902), 1:xvi.
[128] Bernard P. Grenfell, Arthur S. Hunt and J. Gilbart Smyly, eds., *The Tebtunis Papyri*, 1:xvi.

the unit. This approach is universally applicable and non-judgemental as pertaining to the nature of the textual unit. As such it is suggested for far more pervasive implementation not only as the preferred initial methodological approach, but also as necessary outcome the preservation and management of such texts as unified entity.

# Chapter 5

# The Politics of Memory: Encyclopaedic Knowledge, the Universal Library and Total Archives

> When it was announced that the Library contained all books, the first reaction was unbounded joy. All men felt themselves the possessors of an intact and secret treasure ... The universe was justified; the universe suddenly became congruent with the unlimited width and breadth of humankind's hope.[1]

> The dream of a library (in a variety of configurations) that would bring together all accumulated knowledge and all the books ever written can be found throughout the history of Western civilization. It underlay the constitution of great princely, ecclesiastical, and private 'libraries'; it justified a tenacious search for rare books, lost editions, and texts that had disappeared; it commanded architectural projects to construct edifices capable of welcoming the world's memory.[2]

## 5.1 Introduction

According to the fictitious thirteenth-century C.E. account related by Abdullatif of Baghdad as well as Ibn Al-Qifti, the great Library of Alexandria met its final demise at the hands of the Caliph Omar, after the conquest and occupation of Alexandria in 642

[1] Jorge Luis Borges, "The Library of Babel," in *Collected Fictions* (trans. Andrew Hurley; New York: Viking, 1998), 115.
[2] Roger Chartier, *The Order of Books: Readers, Authors, and Libraries in Europe Between the Fourteenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (trans. Lydia G. Cochrane; Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University, 1994), 62.

C.E.[3] Omar is purported to have sealed the fate of the great library with his legendary dictum that if the contents of the library were in agreement with the Koran, they were obsolete and therefore of little concern; and if they were in disagreement with the Koran, they were undesirable and therefore eligible for destruction.

This legend most clearly indicates the arbitrary impermanence of any textual deposit: even as outward representation of memory enhancement, and hence a symbol of durability and longevity (an attempt at permanent memorialisation) the deposit is nevertheless vulnerable to a destiny capriciously decided by the shifting custodial powers that be. This uneasy truce between longevity and transience is what governs Jacques Derrida's interpretation of the Freudian impression of archivization:[4]

> ... the archive must inevitably carry in itself, as does every concept, an unknowable weight. The presupposition of this weight also takes on the *figures* of "repression" and "suppression," even if it cannot necessarily be reduced to these. This double presupposition leaves an imprint. It inscribes an impression in language and discourse. The unknowable weight that imprints itself thus does not weigh only as a negative charge. It involves the history of

[3] Most scholars agree that the original Library of Alexandria had probably atrophied into a state of non-existence long before the conquest of Egypt by Omar. For a discussion of alternate theories regarding the fate of the once famous library, see Mostafa El-Abbadi, *The Life and Fate of the Ancient Library of Alexandria* (Paris: UNESCO, 1990), 145-178.

[4] Note that, as Derrida openly admits to a deliberate avoidance of formally conceptualizing the "archive," his work on archives is used as supplemental to the following discussion, at most. It is not featured in the previous chapters where terminological distinction is discussed: "Well, concerning the archive, Freud never managed to form anything that deserves to be called a concept. Neither have we, by the way. We have no concept, only an impression, a series of impressions associated with a word" (Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression* [trans. Eric Prenowitz; Religion and Postmodernism; Chicago: University of Chicago, 1996], 29). Given the absence of a clear conceptualization, this work allows itself the further liberty to argue that Derrida's "impression" of an archive is universally applicable to *all* collected textual deposits, that is, libraries *and* archives. The Derridean "archive" is therefore read as "collection" in the following discussion, as it is argued that Derrida's "simple continuous progress in representation" (Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever*, 15), is in actual fact an alternate depiction of the basic elements of information theory, inherent to all collections whether archive or library. In this regard support is taken from Steven Lubar's observation: "Derrida's 'archive' is not the sort of archives that employs members of the Society of American Archivists. It is an archive in a more psychoanalytical, more cultural sense ... an archive is a public, prosthetic, memory. That is, it is a place where we use technology to improve our memory and make it available to others" ("Information Culture and the Archival Record," *The American Archivist* 62 [1999]: 13).

> the concept, it inflects archive desire or fever, their opening on the future, their dependency with respect to what will come, in short, all that ties knowledge and memory to the promise.[5]

In this fashion the fictitious rendering of the ultimate destruction of the great universal library at Alexandria points to the one element that mighty accumulation of texts heretofore lacked: selection of information by a set standard or acquisition policy. And for Caliph Omar, that standard was the convergence or divergence from the Koran.

Selection is Derrida's "unknowable weight" that manifests itself in both positive and negative light as "desire" or "fever" ("mal d'archive"). Selection is by definition an ambivalent balance between exclusion and inclusion, whereby exclusion may imply the literal or figurative destruction of the textual elements barred from the collective entity. The horror that the supposed actions of Caliph Omar arouse in the Western audience to the present day, should not be interpreted necessarily as reflective of a belief in Islamic insensitivity towards Western learning (medieval history has indicated quite the opposite to be true), but points to the inherent horror at the finality in the destruction of elements considered extraneous to the selection criterion imposed by Caliph Omar. In practical terms this legend is illustrative of the custodian's power politics: Caliph Omar becomes the arbiter of societal recollection and amnesia.

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[5] Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever*, 29-30.

## 5.2 Encyclopaedic Accumulation: "A Variety of Configurations"[6]

The universal collection of information is per definition indiscriminate and therefore negates the existence of a function of selection of information, thus limiting the import of the act of collection within the information theory continuum: if accumulation is indiscriminate, then collection becomes a blanket act of inclusion, rather than a conscious distinction between the essential and the ephemeral.

The indiscriminate or encyclopaedic accumulation of texts is most famously associated with Assurbanipal and the Library of Alexandria, but it should be noted that the phenomenon is not restricted to these examples. The urge (Derrida's "desire" or "fever") to encompass all known information, finds equivalents in the history of the development of encyclopaedias and reference works, some internet sites may qualify as budding contenders in the pursuit of the library or archive "without walls," as well as in a relatively new phenomenon: the "total archives." The latter parts of this chapter will emphasize the commonality in all these permutations of encyclopaedic accumulation. But some explanation of total archives and universal libraries is deemed appropriate:

### 5.2.1 Total Archives

The phenomenon of "total archives" is not new. Despite the fairly recent introduction of the term, it represents an "evolution" in the perception of government archives evident in the period after the Second World War. The term is still ill defined,[7]

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[6] Roger Chartier, *The Order of Books*, 62.
[7] Terry Cook, "The Tyranny of the Medium: A Comment on 'Total Archives,'" in *Canadian Archival Studies and the Rediscovery of Provenance* (ed. Tom Nesmith; Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow, 1993), 403.

but in layman's terms, the concept allows for the formal combination of public and private records, as well as records that may veer from the traditional textual medium, in the same official archival repository. It also acknowledges a closer tie between the public agency that produces the documents to be archived and the archival agency: the second stage in the life cycle of the record may therefore be reached far sooner, or almost contemporaneously, with the actual creation of the record. This differs quite substantially from the traditional European understanding of a significant lag between the moment of creation and the final selection for permanent conservation in the archives.

It was in 1970, during the twelfth international conference of the archival Round Table in Jerusalem, that *total archives* was first used to account for an already existing phenomenon in many regional and national archives.[8] Total Archives is therefore a pragmatic acknowledgement from the upper echelon of archival management of the often indistinguishable divide between the private and the public in documentary output of public agencies. At the same time this is a radical shift from the nineteenth and early twentieth-century primarily European perspective on archives, namely, that public archives are exclusively concerned with the documentary product of the public entity, the state: "... the first task of a government archivist (was) to be occupied essentially if not exclusively with the documents produced in the functions of the state, and what was not public records was 'abandoned to libraries and cultural institutions as not directly relevant to public archives repositories.'"[9]

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[8] For historical background on the development of the term, see Wilfred I. Smith, "'Total Archives': The Canadian Experience," in *Canadian Archival Studies and the Rediscovery of Provenance* (ed. Tom Nesmith; Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow, 1993), 133-150.

[9] Wilfred I. Smith, "'Total Archives': The Canadian Experience," 134.

Most telling of the development of *total archives* within the post-Second World War societal context, are the four "facets" identified by Cook as representative of the concept at present:

> One is that archives should acquire collections reflecting the total complexion of society; archives must not collect the papers of only the rich, powerful, and famous, but of the plumber as well as the politician, the menial as well as the musician. A second perspective of total archives concerns networks; there should be an institutionalized system of archives – national, provincial, and municipal co-operating with university, church, county, business and labor – to ensure that the records of all significant human endeavor are preserved. This refers not only to the collection of institutional records – the above archives acquiring the official files of their parent or sponsoring body – but also to such networks developing strategies for the collection at every level of material on such important themes as labor, women, sports, or intellectual history. The third and more traditional dimension concerns the archival involvement in each state of the total life cycle of institutional records ... Finally, and perhaps most popularly, total archives is 'the desirability of preserving all types of archival material.'[10]

The preservation of "all types of archival material" is of particular concern to Cook, who rages against the popular pronouncement associated with total archives, namely, that the medium becomes the message. The universal incorporation of all kinds of modern media has as inevitable by-product a significant fragmentation of the archival content to accommodate the various media in one collection and thus poses a direct threat to provenance. Cook also points with a certain irony to the task of universal acquisition and the resultant behemoth created, as an inexorable impediment to easy access: the inevitable "... fragmentation of the archival whole according to media retards scholarship ... Only

[10] Terry Cook, "The Tyranny of the Medium: A Comment on 'Total Archives,'" 403-404.

those few researchers able to spend many weeks in archives are able to learn the intricacies of the different media collections and their varying methods of organizing and describing material, and so find all the relevant sources on a given topic."[11]

Easy access is in many ways to be put on equal footing with free access to information. The dilemma that Cook points to is that, without the former, the latter is but a theoretical platitude. Access to a representative sampling of the complete societal output (the uncensored communal memory, if you will) is therefore impeded by the very overwhelming nature of the medium this ideal has created. And thus the societal value or meaning of the archives is exponentially reduced with ever increasing fragmentation. Because, as Derrida points out: "Archivable meaning is also and in advance codetermined by the structure that archives."[12] If the structure is indeterminable, meaning suffers accordingly.

Within the ancient Near Eastern and medieval context, the modern idea of total archives is significant as it illustrates in practical terms the dilemma faced by the formation of a universal collection. The proponents of total archives have as their rationale the resistance to a silencing of the memory of the disenfranchised majority in favour of the empowered minority. As the public record is often associated with bureaucratic control, total archives, in principle, strives for the democratization of the societal memory by blanket inclusion of material and medium. It is best reflected in the final element of the mandate of the Public Archives of Canada, approved in 1982: "... the enhancement of a sense of national identity based on archives as the collective memory of

[11] Terry Cook, "The Tyranny of the Medium: A Comment on 'Total Archives,'" 408.
[12] Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever*, 18.

the nation."[13] Here the "nation" may presumably be far more inclusively defined than the traditional synonymous reading of "government" or "state."

This discussion will return in the latter half of this chapter to the principles underlined in the analysis of total archives and the implications of the linguistic politicization of the archival entity as societal memory, for the reading or non-reading of ancient history.

### 5.2.2 Universal Libraries

The utopian ideal of a "true library" of universal proportions underlies all discussions of the Library of Assurbanipal and the Library of Alexandria, as well as, to some extent, the Library at Pergamum.[14] This epitome of catholic knowledge procurement is often combined with well-developed antiquarian interests and a strong movement towards comprehensive literary stabilization, sometimes referred to as *canonization*.[15] As such it is posited as the untenable, unreachable reflection of a celestial *urtext*,[16] a text – or, more accurately, a collection of texts - to which even God may be

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[13] Wilfred I. Smith, "'Total Archives': The Canadian Experience," 144. Smith argues that Canadian archival policy is at the forefront of the development of a total archives perspective on archival management.

[14] For an elaborate description of the libraries of Alexandria and Pergamum, see Rudolf Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship: From the Beginnings to the End of the Hellenistic Age* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1968), 98-104, 234-251.

[15] As mentioned before, the idea of a virtual library, or at a more rudimentary level, the worldwide web, may be latter-day equivalents of the same phenomenon. See Steven Lubar ("Information Culture and the Archival Record," 10-22) for an example of other parallels between ancient and modern collective practice. The aforementioned uses ancient Near Eastern clay tokens and the Web as "archetypal archives" in the consideration of archival connectivity and context within human society. Lubar is chair of the Division of the History of Technology at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History. The aforementioned article is a revised version of his 1997 keynote address at the annual meeting of the Society of American Archivists.

[16] The pseudepigraphal books of Jubilees and Enoch are excellent examples of how this idea of a celestial equivalent to earthly textual collections permeates both Judaism and Christianity. The Book of Jubilees claims authority because of its appeal to a heavenly equivalent and the purpose of the earthly copy is clearly stated to be a deliberate act of resistance against the ultimate destructive force: forgetting. To give but one of several examples, *Jub.* 6:35: "... the book is written before me and is ordained in the heavenly tablets of

argued to be subject.[17] But, bound by temporal and spatial strictures, the definitive terrestrial equivalents to the universal collective ideal existed in tandem with the incongruous and continual creation and production of new written material, as well as the natural demise of older records because of the limitations inherent in the nature of the writing material. The latter impediments thus became incessant limitations on the attainment of the former ideal. And both grew to be intertwined in an ongoing struggle towards an improbable earthly realization: universal collection of all information in one location. The paradoxical strife within the universal collection is articulated by the biblical maxim: "Of making many books there is no end,"[18] the ancient Near Eastern equivalent for the phenomenon Uwe Jochum refers to as the "book epidemic."[19] This

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the division of days – lest they forget the feasts of the covenant ..." (O. S. Wintermute, "Jubilees [Second Century B.C.]: A New Translation and Introduction," in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha: Expansions of The 'Old Testament' and Legends, Wisdom and Philosophical Literature, Prayers, Psalms and Odes, Fragments of Lost Judeo-Hellenistic Works* [ed. James H. Charlesworth; vol. 2 of *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, ed. James H. Charlesworth; New York: Doubleday, 1985], 68). By the same token, see also, for example, *1 En.* 81:1-2: "Then he said unto me, 'Enoch, look at the tablet(s) of heaven; read what is written upon them and understand (each element on them) one by one. So I looked at the tablet(s) of heaven, read all the writing (on them), and came to understand everything. I read that book and all the deeds of humanity and all the children of the flesh upon the earth for all the generations of the world" (E. Isaac, "1 [Ethiopic Apocalypse of] Enoch [Second Century B.C.- First Century A.D.]: A New Translation and Introduction," in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha: Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments* [ed. James H. Charlesworth; vol. 1 of *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, ed. James H. Charlesworth; New York: Doubleday, 1985], 59).

Traces of the same idea exist in Islam: "Islam has within it a strong sense of the unity of all religions under God. In his revelation activity, God created the 'Mother of the Book' (*sūra* 43:14 and 13:39) or the 'Hidden Book' (*sūra* 56:78) in heaven, of which all earthly scriptures are copies" (Harold Coward, *Sacred Word and Sacred Text: Scripture in World Religions* [Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1988], 103). See also Jacques Berque, "The Koranic Text: From Revelation to Compilation," in *The Book in the Islamic World: The Written Word and Communication in the Middle East* (ed. George N. Atiyeh; Albany: State University of New York, 1995), 17-29.

[17] See, for example, Genesis Rabbah 1:1: "Thus God consulted the Torah and created the world" (H. Freedman and M. Simon, eds., *Midrash Rabbah: Genesis Vol. 1* [trans. H. Freedman and M. Simon; 3d ed.; London: Soncino, 1983], 1); and the first chapter of the New Testament Gospel of John: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1 KJV). See also Susan Niditch's discussion of "God's writing" in *Oral World and Written Word: Ancient Israelite Literature* (Library of Ancient Israel; Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 1996), 79-82; as well as Chapter 3, footnote 53, of this dissertation.

[18] "And further, by these, my son, be admonished: of making many books there is no end; and much study is a weariness of the flesh" (Eccl 12:12 KJV).

[19] "Indeed, if it were possible to compress all knowledge in the world into a single book, the world would be liberated from the 'burden of letters' and the resulting 'enormous loss of time'; the book epidemic

production of new material is often further enhanced by the copying and publication capacity of the universal collective entity itself. At Nineveh, for example, the special editions of literary works produced by the scribes of the Assurbanipal collection is still easily distinguishable by the particular red colour of the clay from which these tablets were produced.[20]

Thus the idealized pursuit of a universal library or any similar collective entity that may purport to control encyclopaedic knowledge of the inhabited universe is posited in the Western mindset as the final word in humanity's ability to control his or her created environment. The universal collection is the ultimate physical embodiment or "prosthesis" (to borrow from Derrida),[21] of the collective memory and thus the model instrument in the perpetual resistance to forgetfulness.[22]

As perfected memory the universal collection is posed as a powerful instrument of political control in the hands of the collector. The collective function of the textual corpus may be devoid of selection and all encompassing in scope, but access to such a source of encyclopaedic knowledge may be arbitrarily restricted, thereby assigning infinite power

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lamented since the romantic period would be cured" (Uwe Jochum, "Library Utopias," *Library History* 11 [1995]: 16).

[20] Julian Reade, "Archaeology and the Kuyunjik Archives," in *Cuneiform Archives and Libraries: Papers Read at the 30e Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale in Leiden, 4-8 July 1983* (ed. Klaas R. Veenhof; Uitgaven van het Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut te Istanbul 52; Istanbul: Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut, 1986), 218-219.

[21] Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever*, 16.

[22] The dichotomy of memory versus forgetting runs concomitant to the dualistic revelation versus hidden secret, so prevalent in especially the apocalyptic, apocryphal and pseudepigraphic material. This dichotomy is also to be found in the more pragmatic physical guise of the collection of texts, as opposed to the discard thereof. On the topic of memory and forgetting and the resultant emphasis on the copying of texts in Judaism and Christianity, in particular at Qumran, see H. Gregory Snyder, *Teachers and Texts in the Ancient World: Philosophers, Jews and Christians* (Religion in the First Christian Centuries; London: Routledge, 2000), 159-164. See also the work of Jan and Aleida Assmann and others on cultural memory in, for example, Aleida Assmann, Jan Assmann and Christof Hardmeier, eds., *Schrift und Gedächtnis: Beiträge zur Archäologie der Literarischen Kommunikation* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 1983); and Jan Assmann and Tonio Hölscher, eds., *Kultur und Gedächtnis* (Suhrkamp Taschenbuch Wissenschaft 724; Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1988).

to the custodian of the collection as the definitive disperser of knowledge[23] and as final arbiter between the collective memorialization and the forgetting. As if the open-ended nature of the acquisition prerogative for the universal collection is countermanded by the restriction of access to the privileged few.

In an interesting aside, Assurbanipal illustrates this empowering capacity of the custodian to full effect.

To put the following passage in full perspective, it should first of all be recollected that this collection is ultimately a royal, private collection, as is, ultimately, the case for the Library of Alexandria.[24] The prerogatives of the king, as royal patron, are central to the collection policy employed. As such, the whim of the king regulates and controls procurement of sources, collection and access. In this regard Simo Parpola draws attention to the proprietary nature of ownership in the typical Assurbanipal colophon:

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[23] This points to the self-sustaining quality of the universal collection that would work against any need for co-operative scholarly pursuits. Of the Library of Assurbanipal, Stephen Lieberman says: "It seems quite unlikely that anyone from outside (say, a Babylonian scholar) would have been allowed to look at one of the king's tablets and copy it for his own purposes ..." (Stephen J. Lieberman, "Canonical and Official Cuneiform Texts: Towards an Understanding of Assurbanipal's Personal Tablet Collection," in *Lingering Over Words: Studies in Ancient Near Eastern Literature in Honor of William L. Moran* [ed. Tzvi Abusch, John Huehnergard and Piotr Steinkeller; Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars, 1990], 330). For contrast, see Pettinato's rather elaborately named section on "Scientific Congresses and Cultural Exchanges": "Two lexical lists, in addition to the normal colophon consisting of the scribe's signature, carry the annotation: *in* $u_4$ dumu-nita dub-sar $e_{11}$ *áš-tù ma-ri*$^{ki\ 12}$, '(tablet written) when the young scribes went up from Mari.' Among the various possible interpretations of this annotation, this appears to be the most plausible: scribes from other cities were visiting Ebla and on this occasion some symposium or scientific congress was being held during which they composed some scientific documents. Should this hypothesis bear up, it would prove the vitality of cultural exchanges in the third millennium and the esteem in which the school of Ebla was held" (Giovanni Pettinato, *The Archives of Ebla: An Empire Inscribed in Clay* [Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1981], 239).

[24] "Much of the intellectual production of Alexandria derives directly from Ptolemaic patronage ... the patronage of the Hellenistic kings was nothing new; the institution was seemingly an invariable accompaniment of royal splendour. The difference, at least in Egypt, lay in the extent and direction of its development" (P. M. Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria* [3 vols.; Oxford: Clarendon, 1972], 1:305). See also Rudolf Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship*, 98.

*ekal/ṭuppi Aššur-bāni-apli*.[25] Additionally, almost all actions related to retrieval of information originate with the king:

> ... virtually all letters of the ... corpus are to be understood as responses to external pressure exerted on the scholars either by the king (demanding answers to specific questions) or by circumstances (omens, cases of illness, etc., necessitating prompt professional action) ... the scholar's role was basically that of an automate or robot enabling the ruler to protect his person and to further his personal desires ... with the help of the Mesopotamian 'wisdom'. Any attempt to deviate from this basic role would have been harshly dealt with by the king.[26]

This rigid control by patron did not inhibit the expectation of proactive, as well as reactive, information searches. The inner circle of scholars was expected not only to interpret existing phenomena, but also to predict forthcoming events. The scholar is therefore the mediator between the texts (as collected entity) and the king, but, wary of the interpretative power thus grudgingly bestowed, Assurbanipal regarded the information presented with a healthy dose of suspicion, evident in the pre-emptive nature of the response of one of his sages: "And as regards the rains which were (so) scanty this year (that) no harvest was reaped, this is a good omen pertaining to the life and vigour of the king, my lord. The king, my lord, perhaps says: 'Where did you see (that)? Tell me!' ..."[27]

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[25] Simo Parpola, "The Royal Archives of Nineveh," in *Cuneiform Archives and Libraries: Papers Read at the 30e Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale in Leiden, 4-8 July 1983* (ed. Klaas R. Veenhof; Uitgaven van het Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut te Istanbul 52; Istanbul: Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut, 1986), 234.

[26] Simo Parpola, *Letters from Assyrian Scholars to the Kings Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal. Part II: Commentary and Appendices* (vol. 2 of *Letters from Assyrian Scholars to the Kings Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal*; Alter Orient und Altes Testament 5/2; Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker, 1983), xviii-xix.

[27] Simo Parpola, *Letters from Assyrian Scholars to the Kings Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal. Part I: Texts* (vol. 1 of *Letters from Assyrian Scholars to the Kings Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal*; Alter Orient und Altes Testament 5; Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker, 1970), 75.

Stephen Lieberman regards this keen awareness of the collection's empowering nature as the key element in both the incentive for the collection of Assurbanipal's vast "library," as well as the impetus for continued and blanket acquisition:

> Assurbanipal collected his tablets in order to remove power from the hands of ... consultants and retain it himself. His ability to check prevented advisors from choosing between variant traditions in order to affect royal decisions or wilfully misrepresenting the scholarly tradition, and it therefore gave him independence from whims and plots in the court.[28]

Thus the universal library rises in importance as the arbiter in matters of power. But, as the empowerment is as much to be found in the careful selection of material during acquisition (already indicated as absent for the universal entity), as in presiding over the selective dissemination of information upon retrieval, central to the pursuit becomes the cataloguing and classification practices, instrumental in the fluent introduction of new material into the existing collection, as well as enabling the successful preservation and retrieval of said material from the collection. Hence the instinctive emphasis placed on cataloguing, classification and Callimachus' *Pinakes* in the discussions of the Library of Alexandria.[29]

In this light Derrida's observation should be interpreted:

> ... the archive ... is not only the place for stocking and for conserving an archivable content *of the past* which would exist in any case, such as, without the archive, one still believes it was or will have been. No, the technical structure of the *archiving* archive also determines the structure of the

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[28] Stephen J. Lieberman, "Canonical and Official Cuneiform Texts," 327.

[29] See, for example, Edward A. Parsons, *The Alexandrian Library: Glory of the Hellenic World. Its Rise, Antiquities, and Destructions* (London: Cleaver-Hume, 1952), 204-218; Rudolf Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship*, 123-151; P. M. Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria*, 1:322-335; Mostafa El-Abbadi, *The Life and Fate of the Ancient Library of Alexandria*, 95-102; Rudolf Blum, *Kallimachos: The Alexandrian Library and the Beginnings of Bibliography* (trans. Hans H. Wellisch; Wisconsin Studies in Classics; Madison, Wis.: Wisconsin University, 1991); and Lionel Casson, *Libraries in the Ancient World* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University, 2001), 31-47.

> *archivable* content even in its very coming into existence and in its relationship to the future. The archivization produces as much as it records the event.[30]

As Steven Lubar expounds: "In other words, how we remember shapes what we remember,"[31] and in the physical sphere: "*Creating* archives produces power. So too does *using* archives."[32] If the creation of the collective entity is the result of blanket inclusion, even greater political power is bestowed on the method of organization of the collection, as this ultimately becomes the determinative factor in the establishment of ease of access and successful retrieval of required information.

The language of political power and control thus bestowed on the description of the process of collection, organization and dissemination of information, is much removed and far less benign than the traditional presupposition for the origins of these mythical beasts: a culture of leisure, intellectual inquiry and benign patronage of the arts and sciences by enlightened patrons willing to part with substantial amounts of money in the pursuit of "culture."[33] Lionel Casson perpetuates this image quite successfully by answering his posed questions: "What caused such an institution to rise at just this time? Why in Alexandria, a city that was not much older than the library itself?"[34]

Casson's answer:

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[30] Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever*, 16-18.
[31] Steven Lubar, "Information Culture and the Archival Record," 13.
[32] Steven Lubar, "Information Culture and the Archival Record," 15.
[33] Cf. Michael H. Harris' (*History of Libraries in the Western World* [4th ed; Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow, 1995], 4-5) discussion of the proposed prerequisites for library development in the social, economic and political sphere; as well as J. K. Gates' (*Introduction to Librarianship* [2nd ed; New York: McGraw-Hill, 1968], 5-6) seven reasons for the origins of libraries. Of the development of libraries, in Greece and Alexandria in particular, Fraser writes: "Undoubtedly, ... the possibility of an affluent, carefree, and peaceful life under conditions of patronage attracted literary men, while the scientist was no doubt tempted by the possibility of resources for investigation not available to him elsewhere" (*Ptolemaic Alexandria*, 1:306).
[34] Lionel Casson, *Libraries in the Ancient World*, 31.

> It was an age whose intellectual interests were inevitably broader than before – and whose rulers could afford to subsidize these interests ... All the Hellenistic monarchs sought to adorn their capitals with grandiose architecture and to build up a reputation for culture. The Ptolemies, able to outspend the others, took the lead.[35]

This depiction is arguably strongly reminiscent of the perceived circumstances of the patronage of scholars and private libraries in medieval times. As is indeed intimated by Pfeiffer's classic paragraph on the lack of influence of Egyptian and "Oriental" libraries on the "revolutionary" nature of the Library of Alexandria:

> There was a free world of the spirit even in the new monarchies, and the preconditions for such a development existed only where Greek civilization prevailed. The unprecedented interest in books was kindled by the new scholar poets, who were in desperate need of texts; by a notable coincidence the royal patrons and their advisers immediately fulfilled these imperative demands in a princely way. We shall find a similar sequence of events when in the Italian renaissance the ardent zeal of the poets and humanists from Petrarch to Politian led to the recovery of the Classics and the setting-up of great libraries.[36]

It is possible that this depiction have more in common with the philanthropical nature of the nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century public library movement, than with any realistic portrayal of medieval or ancient text collections, their user community, or their patrons.

As was the case for the Library of Assurbanipal, the Library of Alexandria was conceived and flourished under strict Ptolemaic patronage.[37] Demetrius of Phaleron,

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[35] Lionel Casson, *Libraries in the Ancient World*, 32.
[36] Rudolf Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship*, 103.
[37] W. Peremans expounds on this by also claiming a wider sphere of influence for the library and its functionaries. He was of the opinion that it would be impossible to imagine a severely limited "cultural" role for the functionaries of the Library of Alexandria. As far as he was concerned, the interplay between library officials and the state (what he calls the "political life") is assumed because of the close relationship

Philitas and Straton may have been central to the initial conceptualization and development of the Alexandrian Library, but this does not negate the firm control of the patron, Ptolemy I Soter, and his direct successors.[38] Soter provided the seed money and Soter established the intellectual circle that would both generate and nourish the Alexandrian Library. The establishment of such intellectual pre-eminence was first and foremost a political act, an act of "exploitation," inverted by a reversal in the fortunes of the Ptolemaic empire, as explained by Fraser:

> The exploitation of the talent of the kingdom began no doubt with the acquisition of the earliest Ptolemaic spheres of influence, Cyrene and Cos (which was the birthplace of Philadelphus in 309 B.C., and was thereafter closely allied with, though not strictly subject to Egypt), and was intensified under Philadelphus, particularly after Samos became Ptolemaic in 281/280. It was a perfectly natural procedure, indeed only to be expected ... The reverse of the picture is also true. Once Egypt lost her overseas empire, her intellectual pre-eminence in almost all fields was lost ...[39]

## 5.3 Derrida's Fever and Desire

The language of politics and control can thus be said to permeate the historical description of the universal collective textual entity even before it was illuminated anew by the lens of deconstructionist scholarship. Jacques Derrida's concern with archival

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of the Court with the Library of Alexandria: "... uit hetgeen hierboven werd gezegd is reeds gebleken dat men ongelijk zou hebben de rol van de bibliothecarissen te beperken tot het zuiver culturele domein. Evenals de overige cultuurdragers stonden zij in betrekking met het hof en speelden zij een rol in het politieke leven" ("Bibliotheek en Bibliothecarissen te Alexandrië," in *Scrinium Lovaniense. Mélange Historiques/Historische Opstellen: Étienne van Cauwenbergh* [Recueil de Travaux d'Histoire et de Philologie 24; Louvain: University of Louvain, 1961], 88).

[38] Of particular importance in the emergence of the Library of Alexandria, are Ptolemy I (305-282 B.C.E.), Ptolemy II (282-246 B.C.E.), Ptolemy III (246-222 B.C.E.), and Ptolemy IV (222-205 B.C.E.).

[39] P. M. Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria*, 1:307-308.

politics is the maxim: ".... the question of a politics of the archive is our permanent orientation ..." and, Derrida continues,

> It runs through the whole of the field and in truth determines politics from top to bottom as *res publica*. There is no political power without control of the archive, if not of memory. Effective democratization can always be measured by this essential criterion: the participation in and the access to the archive, its constitution and its interpretation.[40]

As has been demonstrated in the preceding sections of this chapter, the universal library (because of the custodial powers of the royal patron) and the total archives (because of inevitable fragmentation and resultant impediments to successful information retrieval), both fall short of Derrida's "essential criterion" for "effective democratization." If this were the only criterion set, the known universal collective entities would answer with remarkable accuracy to Derrida's most sinister conceptualization of archives (that is, the collected entity: library, archive or museum) as the ultimate political tool in control of societal memory.

But, Derrida also introduces a second aspect to his archival impression: Freud's death principle, also referred to as the "anarchy drive" or the "destruction drive,"

> ... it not only incites forgetfulness, amnesia, the annihilation of memory, as *mnēmē* or *anamnēsis*, but also commands the radical effacement, in truth the eradication, of which can never be reduced to *mnēmē* or *anamnēsis*, that is, the archive, consignation, the documentary or monumental apparatus as *hyponēma*, mnemotechnical supplement or representative, auxiliary or memorandum. Because the archive, if this word or this figure can be stabilized so as to take on a signification, will never be either memory or

[40] Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever*, 4. In keeping with his theory of the counterbalancing existence of memory and amnesia, Derrida (*Archive Fever*, 4) refers to Sonia Combe's work (translated as *Forbidden Archives*) as illustrative example of the opposite to democratization of archives. See Sonia Combe, *Archives Interdites: Les Peurs Françaises Face à L'Histoire Contemporaine* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1994).

> anamnesis as spontaneous, alive, and internal experience. On the contrary: the archive takes place at the place of originary and structural breakdown of said memory ... Consequence: right on that which permits and conditions archivization, we will never find anything other than that which exposes to destruction, and in truth menaces with destruction, introducing, *a priori*, forgetfulness and the archiviolithic into the heart of the monument ... The archive always works, and *a priori*, against itself.[41]

Thus it may be surmised that an archive or library exists only if both the collection (Derrida's "consignation") and discard or destruction (Freud's "death principle") of information is present. For Derrida, collections have per definition a counterbalancing existence of inclusion and exclusion. Or, in Derrida's parlance, access versus hiding, repression or suppression: the existence of a text collection is governed on the one hand by access to the material and offset by the censoring, hiding or "repression"/"suppression" of other texts. Political power without the textual collection to convert and subvert societal memory and amnesia is therefore untenable. Statehood and/or religious predominance would require the collected record as outward confirmation of its very existence. To put it differently, statehood without a well-developed bureaucracy (Jamieson-Drake's "centralized, administrative control")[42] is untenable; and centralized religion without a common text base, if a central shrine is absent (as the revisionists argue to be the case until at least the eighth century B.C.E. or much later for "Israelite religion"), is unsustainable.

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[41] Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever*, 11-12.

[42] David W. Jamieson-Drake (*Scribes and Schools in Monarchic Judah: A Socio-Archeological Approach* (JSOTSup 109; SWBA 9; Sheffield: Almond, 1991), 37.

For this reason, the work by Jamieson-Drake, *Scribes and Schools in Monarchic Judah* (notwithstanding acknowledged concerns),[43] as well as Michael Niemann's *Herrschaft, Königtum und Staat: Skizzen zur Sociokulturellen Entwicklung im Monarchischen Israel*,[44] both published in the early 1990s, are regularly cited by proponents of the revised or minimalist understanding of the historicity of "Ancient Israel."[45] The reason is that many a publication on ancient scribes, schools or societal literacy, in recent years have had as ultimate concern a probe into the existence or non-existence of formal institutions that would have harboured and cultivated such phenomena: the state and the temple. As Lemche explains, "The title of Jamieson-Drake's study is beguiling, as it is certainly not the limited aim of the author only to show the extension of literacy in Palestine around the turn of the first millennium B.C.E. Instead of this, he questions the well-established idea about the existence of a Judean state as early as the tenth and ninth centuries."[46] For Lemche, Jamieson-Drake's absence of proof for

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[43] David W. Jamieson-Drake's *Scribes and Schools in Monarchic Judah: A Socio-Archeological Approach*, was published in 1991. The material, on which his "socio-archeological approach" is based, has received initial praise, but later also severe criticism: "At a seminar in Copenhagen in April 1995 on 'Jerusalem in Arcaeology', it became evident that Jamieson-Drake's book is not a major piece of work. Not so much because of its methodology, which is faultless, but because of the material on which he based his theories. Seemingly, Jamieson-Drake is dependent on material of low scholarly value, dated archaeological reasoning, wrong or simply bad archaeology, misleading conclusions, and so on" (Niels Peter Lemche, "From Patronage Society to Patronage Society," in *The Origins of the Ancient Israelite States* [ed. Volkmar Fritz and Philip R. Davies; JSOTSup 228; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1996], 107).

[44] (FAT 6; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1993).

[45] Both are favourite citations in substantiation of the principal revisionist argument, especially for Lemche. But, Lemche is very careful to acknowledge the difficulties with Jamieson-Drake's material (see note 43), nevertheless implying redemptive qualities to the work because the methodology itself has received little criticism and because, in Lemche's opinion, Niemann's comparable results by means of a different approach may be taken as support for Jamieson-Drake's conclusions. See, for example, Niels Peter Lemche, "Early Israel Revisited," *CurBS* 4 (1996): 26; Niels Peter Lemche, "From Patronage Society to Patronage Society," 107; Niels Peter Lemche, "Clio is Also Among the Muses! Keith W. Whitelam and the History of Palestine: A Review and a Commentary," in *Can a 'History of Israel' Be Written?* (ed. Lester L. Grabbe; JSOTSup 245; European Seminar in Historical Methodology 1; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1997), 140-141; and Niels Peter Lemche, *Prelude to Israel's Past: Background and Beginnings of Israelite History and Identity* (trans. E. F. Maniscalco; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1998), 221.

[46] Niels Peter Lemche, *The Israelites in History and Tradition* (Library of Ancient Israel; London: SPCK, 1998), 79. Keith Whitelam also reposition Jamieson-Drake's work, thereby emphasizing the association between text collections and statehood: "Although his work is ostensibly a study of scribal schools in

the existence of schools and scribal activity in a structured, tenth- or ninth-century B.C.E. administrative environment is evidence of the absence of Judahite statehood itself. This is in keeping with Derrida's dictum: "... there is no political control without control of the archive."[47]

But, because Derrida's archive exists only at the convergence of existence and non-existence, the revisionists have to counter a negation of maximalist posed tenth and ninth-century B.C.E. Israelite and Judahite statehood depicted by the biblical text corpus, with the establishment of an alternate, later textual construct that would both engender and annihilate the preferred memory of the former existence/non-existence of the "Israelites":

> History itself is created by its writers. It is a product of literature. As such, history belongs to those who do the writing. The capacity and vulnerability of a tradition for creative reinterpretation is not restricted much by a tradition's content, nor by how close it may be to the origins of the tradition in the past. It is almost entirely determined by the bearers of the tradition.[48]

Hence the import of revisionist denial to traditional scholarship's understanding of the origins of text based Judaism and also, to a large extent, Christianity.[49]

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Judah, his investigation of the archaeological remains of the period has demonstrated quite forcibly that there was very little evidence of even basic state structures in the tenth or ninth centuries. He finds little evidence that Judah functioned as a state prior to the eighth century BCE increase in population, building, production, centralization, and specialization. Even then, the archaeological evidence only points to a remarkably small state structure" (*The Invention of Ancient Israel: The Silencing of Palestinian History* [London: Routledge, 1997], 165-166). See also Thomas L. Thompson, *Early History of the Israelite People: From the Written and Archaeological Sources* (SHANE 4; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1994), 333.

[47] Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever*, 4.

[48] Thomas L. Thompson, *The Mythic Past: Biblical Archaeology and the Myth of Israel* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1999), 268.

[49] The revisionist approach has as a result come under vehement attack, most recently, and perhaps most comprehensively, in William G. Dever, *What Did the Biblical Writers Know and When Did They Know It? What Archaeology Can Tell Us About the Reality of Ancient Israel* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans, 2001).

## 5.4 Clio's Birdcage:[50] Origins, the Text and the Revisionists

Niels Peter Lemche, in a recent paper entitled, "Chronology and Archives – When Does the History of Israel and Judah Begin?" suggests that the current controversy regarding the origins of "ancient Israel" can be settled by answering the secondary question: "When did the Judaean state have archives if it at all had archives including record keeping in the form of chronicles or even royal annals?"[51]

Lemche echoes the words of Philip Davies' *In Search of 'Ancient Israel.'* Where, in describing the environment of the post-exilic scribes whom he postulates to be responsible for "the production of literature in Yehud," Davies suggests, "We have a reasonable amount of evidence to associate books with temples or with the royal court. Where literary archives have been unearthed in the ancient Near East they have been either at temple sites, such as at Ugarit, or royal archives, such as at Ebla or Mari or Tell el-Amarna." Davies then asks: "Do we, then, have any evidence of such archives or libraries in Yehud?"[52]

Note Davies' use of the term "literary archives" as presumed alternate to accommodate the either/or entity "library" or "archive." Davies is particularly non-discriminate in his usage of the terms "library" and "archive." In *Scribes and Schools*[53] he

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[50] Timon of Phlius or Timon the Misanthrope on the scholars of Alexandria: "Many are feeding in populous Egypt, scribblers on papyrus, ceaselessly wrangling in the bird-cage of the Muses" (Rudolf Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship*, 97-98).

[51] My sincere thanks to Prof. Lemche who readily made a copy of his paper available to me. The paper was delivered at the first meeting of the European Association for Biblical Studies in Utrecht, on the 8th of August 2000. Please note that the draft of the paper was put at my disposal with the kind request that it not be used in print until Lemche had published a final version in a forthcoming festschrift. Unfortunately, the time constraints of the submission of the present dissertation did not allow a delay until the forthcoming printed article, based on the paper, could be referred to. Therefore, I restrict myself to Lemche's abstract of the paper that is considered to be public record.

[52] Philip R. Davies, *In Search of 'Ancient Israel,'* (JSOTSup 148; Sheffield: JSOT, 1992), 110.

[53] Philip R. Davies, *Scribes and Schools: The Canonization of the Hebrew Scriptures* (Library of Ancient Israel; Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 1998), 85.

provides a distinction that differs little from Olof Pedersén's rudimentary demarcation, discussed in Chapter 2, and is of limited use for the same reasons that Pedersén's was found inadequate.[54] Davies's definition (which he himself calls "crude")[55] reads: "By 'archive' is meant a set of administrative records preserved for administrative necessity; a 'library' is a collection of literary works providing for their preservation and consultation. The contents of an archive are determined by administrative requirements; the contents of a library to a greater extent are chosen."[56] As the following will indicate, the result of Davies' distinction is the same as that of Pedersén's: an intermingling of textual properties that makes the "archive" and "library" thus described an interchangeable entity arbitrarily endowed with the characteristics of either or both.

As already alluded to in Chapter 3, Davies subsequently uses the well-known passage in 2 Maccabees 2:13-14, as well as the work of Roger Beckwith on biblical canonization,[57] to answer his posed question for the existence of a text collection, by

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[54] Olof Pedersén, *Archives and Libraries in the Ancient Near East: 1500-300 B.C.* (Bethesda, Md.: CDL, 1998), 3.

[55] From this it is inferred that the definition is adapted from the traditional approach to ancient libraries and archives with little input from the author himself. The resultant inconsistency, already indicated in Chapter 2, is therefore only to be expected in Davies' discussions of ancient text deposits.

It should be mentioned that Van Seters, in his discussion of the Book of Kings, also makes a distinction of sorts between archives and libraries, or "scribal tradition," strongly reliant on Oppenheim. For Van Seters, as archival records represented only "day-to-day business or legal transactions," the expectation of long term conservation and retrieval is absent. Therefore, in his estimation, only those documents that would be acquisitioned into the "scribal tradition," the posited library, would survive for possible inclusion in a biblical Book of Kings that is presumably written long after the fact. See John Van Seters, *In Search of History: Historiography in the Ancient World and the Origins of Biblical History* (New Haven: Yale University, 1983), 299-300.

[56] Philip R. Davies, *Scribes and Schools*, 85. Note also what Davies seems to suggest in his review of collection development in Greece: "Although a public archives office came to be part of every city's government, and both archives and legal translations (including private ones) were preserved there, Greece did not develop an archiving culture. It did, however, develop a bibliothetic culture" (Philip R. Davies, *Scribes and Schools*, 27-28). Note the intimation that an "archiving culture" can be absent even when "archives" exist in an ancient society. Davies never indicates what the difference is. The patent inconsistency in the statement speaks for itself.

[57] Cf., for example, Roger T. Beckwith, *The Old Testament Canon of the New Testament Church and its Background in Early Judaism*, London: SPCK, 1985; and Roger T. Beckwith, "Formation of the Hebrew Bible," in *Mikra: Text, Translation, Reading and Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Ancient Judaism*

postulating the existence of a "temple archive," (presumably a mixture of temple library and state sponsored archive), alternately referred to as the origin of the so-called "Hasmonean Library." Thus, in consummate obedience to Derrida's description, Davies allows himself to answer his question in the affirmative, by denying earlier collection development (the traditional view on the origins of the Hebrew Bible) by way of proposing a later construct to explain the canonization of what he calls the "Masoretic-rabbinic canon":[58]

> This statement (2 Macc 2:13) probably means that in the author's day there existed in Jerusalem a library of books which was thought to have been there since the time of Nehemiah, the contents of which correspond very well with what might have been the 'canon' of the day. The act of setting up such an archive (whether by Judas or one of his successors) is crucial in the establishment of an 'official' canon that had overt political and nationalistic and not merely scribal or school motives behind it.[59]

It is not the purpose of this work, or the intention, to attempt to address the principal object of inquiry posed by Davies, Lemche, or any other acknowledged or unacknowledged member of the revisionist movement. Nevertheless, as the existence and dating of text collections are deemed crucial to this most topical debate, it would be remiss not to survey the archival and library related revisionist postulates proposed to negate the underlying historical base for much of the Hebrew Bible.

Although the suggestion of the manipulation of the individual record as evidentiary agent for the establishment of historical reality is certainly not new or

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*and Early Christianity* (ed. Martin Jan Mulder; The Literature of the Jewish People in the Period of the Second Temple and the Talmud 1; Assen/Maastricht: Van Gorcum, 1990), 39-86.

[58] Philip R. Davies, *Scribes and Schools*, 169-174.

[59] Philip R. Davies, *Scribes and Schools*, 87.

Note that the Book of Nehemiah never makes reference to the collection of books by Nehemiah referred to in this passage.

restricted to a minimalist approach to biblical history,[60] the suggestion of such manipulation as sole motivator for the genesis and dissemination of textual *collections*,[61] does pose a more multifaceted object of inquiry. For Davies and Lemche, but even more so for Thomas Thompson, the formation of what he calls "regional libraries,"[62] as fixed, institutional entities in post-exilic Israel during the Persian period,[63] becomes both the moment of history invented, as well as the representation of, and vehicle for, the propagation of said history: "Not only is the Bible's 'Israel' a literary fiction, but the Bible begins as a tradition already established: a stream of stories, song and philosophical reflection: collected, discussed and debated. Our sources do not begin. They lie already *in medias res*."[64] This instant appearance of a full-fledged collection (as posed by the revisionists) agrees with Chapter 4's suggestion that there need not be a "development" from rudimentary to advanced library or archival practice. But, this non-evolutionary approach is heavily reliant on the acknowledgement of the existence of such full-fledged

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[60] Scribal influence over the individual text's creation, content and dissemination is often suggested. See, for example, Lipiński's description of the influence of "royal and state scribes" (to be distinguished from "ordinary street scribes") in Jerusalem and the ancient Near East: "Royal or state scribes were certainly authors or redactors of compositions the purpose of which was to diffuse the Davidic ideology and the royal propoganda" (E. Lipiński, "Royal and State Scribes in Ancient Jerusalem," in *Congress Volume: Jerusalem 1986* [ed. J. A. Emerton; VTSup 40; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1988], 160).

[61] Apart from Davies mentioned above, see for example, Lemche's description of the canonization of the Hebrew Bible as a "Jewish-Rabbinic collection of writings no earlier than the 2nd century CE (although the beginning of this process of canonization can be traced further back)," ("The Old Testament – A Hellenistic Book?" *SJOT* 7 [1993]: 163-193).

[62] Thomas L. Thompson, *The Mythic Past*, 268. A particular difficulty with *Mythic Past* is the absence of footnotes and bibliographic references. Evidence for Thompson's postulates is therefore limited and based solely on the present interpretation of his own description, without recourse to his sources.

[63] Note is taken of the revisionist denial of "exile" and a distinct periodization of ancient Near Eastern history. Nevertheless, as a matter of convention, the present discussion of the revisionist postulates is placed within the setting of traditional chronological markers.

[64] Thomas L. Thompson, *The Mythic Past*, xv.

Baruch Halpern counters this general approach in an earlier response: "Only a philologist could expect that an accurate written history must be devoid of untruth ... Understanding history requires that the reader distinguish literal statements from the intent with which they are made. Even outdated works of history, works that were dead wrong, remain works of history after their reconstructions are discredited. In history, conscious intention is everything. Thompson's work is history, even if I thoroughly disagree with it. Amazingly, then, that he does not accord the same courtesy to his ancient colleagues, in light of clear evidence that they were trying their best, in Samuel and Kings, to get things right ("Erasing History: The Minimalist Assault on Ancient Israel," *BRev* 11/6 [1995]: 34-35).

text collections as reflective of an intricate oral culture, culminating in the posited existence of oral repositories. Reverting to the deconstructionist language of Derrida, yet again: textual deposits are "prosthetics" or substitutes for the human memory. Thompson's "tradition already established" comes into existence with this degree of maturity only if he allows for an established oral history or "oral repository" that would precede it and co-exist with it, as Susan Niditch's work confirms:

> ... oral style informs the written works of the Hebrew Bible, and the contextual 'writing world' concerns of writers in turn influence the forms of traditional-style works preserved in the Bible. As we hope to show ... literacy in a traditional culture is very much informed by the worldviews and aesthetics of orality, even while writing increasingly becomes a useful tool in many facets of Israelite life.[65]

Thompson's postulate "regional libraries"[66] or "ethnographic collections"[67] as decentralized, presumably duplicated holdings of a central collection's carefully selected, honed and distributed image of collective self (the canon?), respond to Derrida: the collection itself (that is, the super collection from which Thompson's "regional libraries" would derive and also contribute) becomes the mechanism and entity of ultimate political control.

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[65] Susan Niditch, *Oral World and Written Word*, 45.

[66] "When the Persians, in an attempt to win over the provinces to their administration, introduced forms of 'home rule', they further encouraged the collection and codification of local customs and law. ... Much of this work of collecting was both creative and original. It was in the effort to formulate the contemporary beliefs and understandings that were expressive of Palestine's traditions, that many of the earliest coherent texts of the Bible began to develop. They accumulated in various forms of collections and discussions about traditions and learning from the past. The ideological theme of restoring the past and reviving the local religious coherence of the subject territories encouraged the formation and creation of such literatures. They were centred on the leaders and events of the past as they were known and thought to have been by the scribes and teachers who discussed and created them in written and oral forms. Collections of regional 'libraries' took on the task of interpreting the traditions, as a national treasure lost and restored" (Thomas L. Thompson, *The Mythic Past*, 268).

[67] Thomas L. Thompson, *The Mythic Past*, 270.

To put it differently, it implies a deliberate involvement by an official entity (temple and/or state) via official scribes, in both a creative and custodial capacity, in the establishment of the mechanisms responsible for knowledge transfer. This entails the manipulation not only of the creative process, but also the collection, selection and retrieval practices, according to a very particular agenda. Additionally this assumption requires that control of such a collective entity becomes as much a symbol of political or religious authority and legitimization as the control of the throne or a central shrine would imply. In revisionist literature these "temple archives" (Davies) or "regional libraries" (Thompson) originate from an exclusively elitist proto-collection. These collections are therefore indirectly like the "libraries in the Assyrian period", ultimately: "... part of the world of prestige. Kings and great men of wealth purchased texts, and sponsored scholars and teachers."[68] The Machiavellian intent hereby imparted on Thompson's "regional libraries" only makes sense if he is suggesting a centralized structure of control for these libraries. A central collection that would regulate the distribution and access to the regional entities: "... a universal system of cataloguing traditions. It created the library as an adequate place for the wisdom of the past."[69] Such a portrayal of the ancient text collections is highly dependent on only one possible ancient template, constantly suggested by his references to the Assyrians and their establishment of continuous political and intellectual control: the Library of Assurbanipal. For Thompson the chronological divide poses no particular problem:

> Just as there is no great sea-change between the Assyrian and the Persian, or between the Persian and the Hellenistic empires, the difference between the

[68] Thomas L. Thompson, *The Mythic Past*, 268.
[69] Thomas L. Thompson, *The Mythic Past*, 269. Thompson, in order to fulfil the requirement of "collection," suggests three "coherent schemes or chronologies" as the organizational principles present in his collective entity, the Bible.

> intellectual worlds of the ancient Near East and Hellenism is largely a product of the observer ... When Nineveh fell to the Babylonians in 605 BCE, no empire fell. The old empire's administration moved to Babylon. When the Persian army entered Babylon in 539, the administration shifted from that of the Babylonian King Nabonidus and his court, to that of Cyrus and his Persians. The 'world' continued to be administered from Babylon. The new administration did not so much conquer the empire anew, as establish the legitimacy of its succession to empire.[70]

Thus Thompson can claim direct intellectual ancestry from the "libraries in the Assyrian period,"[71] for which the most prominent figurehead is Assurbanipal. But, furthermore, Thompson theologizes the worldview of an autonomous king with ultimate intellectual control over his subjects, by suggesting "a different view of sovereignty"[72] in antiquity:

> It was not the centralized and absolute monarchs of Europe who ruled in the ancient world, but a servant of the divine. The metaphor of king in the ancient world, signifying 'autonomy', is important to understand, as it is no accident that the biblical world finds such a profusion of kings among Palestine's scrub farmers. If the seat of government mirrors the divine king of kings, then one has to people the world – as in Grimm's and Scheherazade's tales, with as many kings and princes as possible.[73]

Presumably, as government, in any revisionist interpretation needs to establish control and control is seated in the centralized "collection," then to posit this as direct "mirror" of the divine, is to also envision the divine, celestial universal collection or library as duplicated by the earthly subjects. Not only does the Hebrew Bible, or for that

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[70] Thomas L. Thompson, *The Mythic Past*, 380-381.
[71] Thomas L. Thompson, *The Mythic Past*, 268.
[72] Thomas L. Thompson, *The Mythic Past*, 379.
[73] Thomas L. Thompson, *The Mythic Past*, 379-380.

matter, the Dead Sea Scrolls, not conform to standards of universal collection,[74] the existence of a third entity of universal collection in antiquity would have drawn the notice and comment at least of legend and lore. These entities were much admired and envied and word of an empire wide movement towards control of information[75] would have been evidenced in more than just the inferred suppositions of the revisionists.

The difficulty for this understanding lies in overcoming the great deconstructionist himself, Derrida's "archive fever." Thompson's "regional libraries" subvert the Derridean impression: the regional multiplicity thereby suggested, hint at Derrida's "effective democratization": "the participation in and the access to the archive, its constitution and its interpretation."[76] It subverts the centralized control of the elite, as proposed by the revisionists, over the content, nature and distribution of the biblical canon. And if the "origins" of the Hebrew Bible is consecutive to the emergence of "regional libraries" of Persian or Hellenistic times, then by default this would have to imply just the opposite of revisionist theory: regional entities for the creation and collection of origin traditions imply democratized participation and an equal absence of central control over said traditions.

## 5.5 Conclusion

Universal collections comply most stringently with the extreme elements of control over human existence. In religion and literature they often pose as metaphysical

[74] Note Thompson's (*The Mythic Past*, 270) substitution of the word "collector" for "editor": "Such schemes used the chronologies already given in the stories and supplemented them with events known to the collector." His posited collection(s) is in the process of expanding rather than contracting.
[75] An empire wide intellectual unity is explained within Thompson's argument for uninterrupted empire from the Assyrians onwards: "Hellenism was the cumulative product of international culture over centuries. Beginning already in Assyria's dominance over the Levant in the ninth century BCE, the ancient Near East had long developed an interactive, international culture ..." (Thomas L. Thompson, *The Mythic Past*, 379).
[76] Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever*, 4.

manifestations of the divinity: all-knowing and unattainable. In reality, the total archives or universal library exists (where it is attempted) on the cusp of impossibility. It expands indefinitely, as intellectual production increases and the net sweeps ever wider in the unrestrained quest for ultimate inclusiveness, a movement that works, per definition, against intellectual discrimination between the substantial and the ephemere in information gathering. Therefore, as modern archival varieties have indicated, the universal collection is as likely to implode on itself (even with modern technology to assist centralized control over systemization) by inevitable fragmentation and the failure of easy access. Assurbanipal and Alexandria, despite their emulation by archival and library historians as the templates for the description of ancient textual collections, are therefore freakish anomalies in humanity's ever-increasing endeavour to control informational output. This observation is not only confirmed by the first part of this chapter, but also, within the tenets established by deconstruction. Revisionist libraries and archives as presently posed by their major proponents are therefore not possible within the paradox of expansion and contraction placed on a collective entity by Derrida's *Archive Fever*.

# Chapter 6

# Conclusion:
# The Consequences

> To say that writing is the ancient Near East's single most important cultural contribution is a truism that cannot be weakened by repetition. The consequences of that contribution are immense and can be appreciated only after a thorough and multidisciplinary study.[1]

A direct consequence of the development of writing is the inevitable necessity to manage information, irrespective of the nature of said information. And, as Herman Vanstiphout indicated in the above passage, the appreciation of the ancients' approach to this daunting task is best served by a multidisciplinary study.

It was soon evident from an extensive survey of the published material, summarized in Chapter 2, that this revealed a glaring deficiency in present-day scholarship. This short-fall is blamed for the inconsistencies in terminology, definition and usage apparent in most material on the subject irrespective of discipline; as well as the misrepresentation of the nature and range of ancient textual entities in library and archival history. As such, this work set out to address this problem by structuring itself by means of the limited number of cross-over publications that could be identified after a thorough review of the literature, and thus an attempt is made to rectify an evident short-coming in the present scholarly discourse.

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[1] Herman Vanstiphout, "Memory and Literacy in Ancient Western Asia," *CANE* 4:2181.

The work of Jastrow, Weitemeyer, Posner, Veenhof and Pedersén were used to inform what was identified to be of central concern, a concern raised by the lack of synthesis of material: pervasive terminological inconsistency and a resultant confusion in definitional delineation of the ancient textual entities. By combining ancient Near Eastern studies with library history, information science and archival science, for the first time in pursuit of this objective, the primary order of business was to address this state of affairs.

This work challenges long-accepted notions in traditional scholarship, most prominently, the perfunctory presumption of the predominant importance of the Library of Assurbanipal and the Library of Alexandria as ultimate representatives of ancient information management and the ideal of an ancient library.

The presumed non-existence of a "temple library" as argued by Morris Jastrow, is also challenged and it is indicated that this entity, rather than the so-called "universal collections" of Assurbanipal and Alexandria, should be held as standard representation of the nature of libraries in the ancient Near East.

This work in addition argues for the blanket inclusion of all textual entities under the generalized and impartial designation, "textual deposits." Such a neutral rendering allows for a judicious designation of the terms, "archive," "library," "geniza," "foundation deposit," and so forth, by means of the standard introduced by an envisaged continuum suggested by information theory. Such an approach based on process, rather than the subjectively applied exclusion and inclusion by means of content, location or number of entities in the textual unit, is strongly advocated. This allows for the inclusion of adjunct textual deposits such as the geniza and building deposits, as equal partners in the consideration of the nature of textual deposits in the ancient Near East, thus

suspending the hierarchical judgement that comes with the often routine, but inconsiderate, designation of textual entities as either "library" or "archive."

As mentioned, this multidisciplinary synthesis of the published material re-evaluates the idealized portrayal of Assurbanipal and Alexandria and raises the inevitable question as to whether the quest for universal control of information was served by the expansive, idealized collection envisioned by Morris Jastrow, that is, his "true" library as represented by the Library of Assurbanipal and the Library of Alexandria,[2] or by a much smaller and severely restricted corpus of literature. In Chapter 3 it is then argued that Jastrow's denial of the presence of such units in the ancient temple setting is contravened by Egyptologists such as Jan Assmann and the work on biblical canonization pursued by Nahum Sarna and others.

Universal or encyclopaedic information gathering is best likened to Gilgamesh's legendary mission in search of immortality. By the same token, the study of the ancients' quest for the attainment of encyclopaedic knowledge has become a two-edged sword governed by concerns regarding representivity[3] and terminological inconsistency; and overshadowed by the traditional emphasis placed on the contents of the individual text in lieu of the interrelated meaning assigned to such a text by its place in the collective whole. To this should be added the problems posed by the magnitude of textual material at the disposal of modern-day scholarship and the equally daunting divergences in the

[2] Jastrow's influence in the coining and usage of the term "true library" is discussed in Chapter 2, footnote 6. The pervasive impression of Jastrow's application of this term on a century of scholarship is evident in the fact that Henrietta McCall, in her general discussion of the Mesopotamian textual heritage, devises a tripartite distinction into school texts, "administrative archives" and a "'true' library," defined as: "... a deliberate collection of fine literature brought together for the motive of collection itself, probably in a palace or temple" (*Mesopotamian Myths* [The Legendary Past; London: British Museum Publications, 1990], 17).

[3] That is, as McCall formulated it: "How representative of the literary tradition as a whole is the literature which has survived?" (*Mesopotamian Myths*, 20).

quality and nature of archaeological reportage, as well as the physical distribution of textual units in public and private holdings.

This study concludes that, in contradiction to traditional scholarship, it is evident that humanity's mission to govern, organize and explain the perimeters of his/her known universe was best served not by a surfeit of accumulative texts in one location, but by the careful selection process by which a distinctly agile, relatively small and duplicable unit could be fused that had as it's main objectives the facilitation of retrieval and easy access. These collections are postulated to have existed in abundance and, although initially associated with the bastions of scribal activity, the temple and palace, later gained independent existence, as the prevalent presence of textual discoveries in private dwellings may suggest.

The "typical" ancient library is best represented by the recently discovered Neo-Babylonian Sippar temple library. An equally small and agile unit indicative of Atherton's second phase in the life cycle of archival texts is identified as "typical" of the ancient archive. Such a collection is represented by Room L.2769 in the Early Bronze Age Palace G, at Ebla. It is postulated that these two ancient Near Eastern deposits are illustrative of the typical ancient library and archive, but, although such collections are deemed to have been prevalent all over the ancient Near East, very few may be allowed to be conclusively assigned the title "archive" or "library" by modern scholarship because of the prerequisites of *in situ* discovery and reliable archaeological indication of internal organisation that would argue for the facilitation of retrieval of information, a predominant requirement for the identification of a library or archive as collected entity.

The chronological divide between the textual deposits identified at Ebla and Sippar points to another traditionally accepted myth debunked by this work: there is no

"developmental" process to be found in the "technique" employed by ancient textual deposits. A library or archive, as physical representation of ancient oral repositories, mimic these entities to come into being as fully equipped with uniquely assigned organizational substructures to facilitate both the establishment of prerequisite selection criteria and easy access to information. It is therefore completely acceptable to assume the existence of mature ancient archives or libraries at any time in the history of the ancient Near East, even fairly close to the development of writing itself. Nevertheless, scholars should always take cognisance of the fact that, as entities conceived in service to their societal creators and users, all textual deposits may conceivably have undergone a number of changes in nature and function during their lifetime. This explains the chameleon-like qualities displayed by the geniza throughout history, as discussed in Chapter 4.

In light of the above, it is concluded that the organization and use of ancient and medieval textual deposits represent one of the most important consequences of the inception of writing. Their durability and widespread distribution patterns warrant the respect of modern scholarship and a far more circumspect approach to these valued vehicles for ancient culture. The present work's attempt to realign long accepted historical thinking to the reality of recent archaeological discovery and scholarly discourse in a variety of disciplines is evidence for the value of a multidisciplinary approach in re-evaluating often fossilized entities within present scholarship.

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