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## BRIEF NOTES

### *The Tower of Babel at Borsippa*

I am pleased to see that Dr. Kraeling (above, p. 276 ff.) maintains the identification of the Tower of Babel with Birs Nimrud. That has been my view ever since I first saw the remarkable ruins of Birs Nimrud in 1889. They are far more striking to the eye than anything in Babylon, and they lie sufficiently near to Babylon to make the ordinary man connect them with the famous name of Babel, for indeed Borsippa must have seemed to him no more than a suburb of the great city. It seems to me, however, that Dr. Kraeling has omitted the best evidence of his theory, which I cited in *Nippur* (Vol. 1, 217) in 1897. Because it was written so long ago that it has passed out of mind, I venture to quote the passage:

‘In the clay cylinders of Nebuchadrezzar found by Sir Henry Rawlinson in the corners of the Ziggurat of Birs Nimrud, we read:

“Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon, the rightful ruler, the expression of the righteous heart of Marduk, the exalted high priest, the beloved of Nebo, the wise prince who devotes his care to the affairs of the great gods, the unwearying ruler, the restorer of Esagila and Ezida, the son and heir of Nabopolassar, king of Babylon, am I.

“Marduk the great god formed me aright and commissioned me to perform his restoration; Nebo, guider of the universe of heaven and earth, placed in my hand the right sceptre; Esagila, the house of heaven and earth, the abode of Marduk, lord of the gods, Ekua, the sanctuary of his lordship, I adorned gloriously with shining gold. Ezida I built anew, and completed its construction with silver, gold, precious stones, bronze, *misukkani* wood, and cedar wood. *Timinanki*, the ziggurat of Babylon, I built and completed; of bricks glazed with lapis-lazuli (blue) I erected its summit.

“At that time the house of the seven divisions of heaven and earth, the ziggurat of Borsippa, which a former king had built and carried up to the height of forty-two ells, but the summit of which he had not erected, was long since fallen into decay, and its water conduits had become useless; rain storms and tempests had penetrated its unbaked brick-work; the bricks which cased it

were bulged out, the unbaked bricks of its terraces were converted into rubbish heaps. The great lord Marduk moved my heart to rebuild it. Its place I changed not and its foundation I altered not. In a lucky month, on an auspicious day I rebuilt the unbaked bricks of its terraces and its encasing bricks, which were broken away, and I raised up that which was fallen down. My inscriptions I put upon the *kiliri* of its buildings. To build it and to erect its summit I set my hand. I built it anew as in former times; as in days of yore I erected its summit.

“Nebo, rightful son, lordly messenger, majestic friend of Marduk, look kindly on my pious works; long life, enjoyment of health, a firm throne, a long reign, the overthrow of foes, and conquest of the land of the enemy give me as a gift. On thy righteous tablet which determines the course of heaven and earth, record for me length of days, write for me wealth. Before Marduk, lord of heaven and earth, the father who begat thee, make pleasant my days, speak favorably for me. Let this be in thy mouth, ‘Nebuchadrezzar, the restorer king.’ ”

Nebuchadrezzar describes the condition in which the ziggurat was when he found it. It was built long before his day, and built with very ambitious ideas. It was forty-two ells in height, but the summit had never been completed. The consequence of this failure to erect the summit was that the water struck into the unprotected mud bricks forming the mass of the interior of the ziggurat, dissolved them, and broke and bulged out the casing walls of baked bricks by which the different terraces were held in, reducing the whole to a huge mass of ruins. The water conduits referred to are such as Haynes found on the sides of the ziggurat at Nippur, designed to carry off the water from the surfaces of the upper terraces, and save the whole structure from decay. These conduits are useful only in case proper arrangements are made to carry into them the water falling on the surfaces of the upper terraces. The failure in this case to ‘erect the summit’, and the consequent soaking of the water into the clay bricks of the interior, soon rendered these conduits useless.

The striking similarities of this story to that of the Tower of Babel are, outside of the site, the extremely ambitious nature of this ziggurat of Borsippa which Nebuchadrezzar found in ruins, and the fact that after it had been raised to a great height the work was abandoned, leaving the building in such an incomplete condition that its ruin was inevitable.

As Nebuchadrezzar found it, the tower was little more than an enormous mass of ruins. He built it over entirely, and made it a seven-staged ziggurat. It is the ruins of Nebuchadrezzar's ziggurat which constitute the present Birs Nimrud, and the explorations which have been conducted there revealed the seven stages still existing.

Now, Nebuchadrezzar gives no similar description of the ruined and incomplete condition of any other ziggurat which he rebuilt. He rebuilt, among other places, the ziggurat of Esagil in Babylon, but he says nothing of its ruined condition. Evidently the ruined condition of the ziggurat at Borsippa, in connection with its great size and ambitious design, made a strong impression upon his mind, or the mind of the writer of his inscription. This is not a positive proof that it made a similar impression on the world at large, yet the natural induction is that the ruined condition of this ziggurat was notorious, and impressed all beholders. How long before the time of Nebuchadrezzar it had fallen into such a condition, it is impossible from our present information to say. Nebuchadrezzar says 'long since', and does not mention the name of the original builder, calling him merely 'a former king', as though its original construction were a thing of the remote past, the details of which were long since forgotten. But whatever the date, Nebuchadrezzar's account of the ruins of this ziggurat corresponds so well with the story of the eleventh chapter of Genesis, that one is inclined to attach that story, at least tentatively, to this ruin. The proximity of the site to Babylon led to its connection with that well-known name, Babel, in the Hebrew story.

JOHN P. PETERS

University of the South

*Note on Angarôs, in Montgomery's 'Aramaic Incantation  
Texts from Nippur'*

In Montgomery's *Incantation Texts from Nippur*, page 196, there is the translation of a lengthy charm on behalf of one Mešaršîâ, in which a large number of non-Semitic deities and demons are invoked. In line 7 of this charm occurs the formula, 'In the name of Angarôs'. In view of the fact that certain Indian names certainly occur in these incantations,—Hindu in Nos. 24 and 40, and Hinduîthâ in number 38,—it does not seem improbable