

Society and Economy of Sippar in the Time of Hammurabi

More than 2,000 clay tablets, dug illegally in the last century and now scattered among the world's museums, provided uniquely intensive coverage of economic and social relations within the city of Sippar in northern Babylonia. From this material it is possible to identify, with widely varying degrees of fulness, the activities of approximately 18,000 individuals who were inhabitants of the city between roughly 1800 and 1600 B.C. With the aid of a research grant from the National Science Foundation, we are seeking to approach questions of demography, land tenure, craft organization, and the differentiation of wealth and status groups on a truly quantitative basis.

During the past year the comprehensive files on the Sippar material have been completed.

A systematic study of the individuals and the pertinent material concerning them has been started by Dr. Rivkah Harris in preparation for the directory of Sippar. Lists have also been made on the prices of slaves, fields, houses, the rents for the same, and so forth. A seminar was held throughout the year on the interpretation of this material, as a result of which a clearer picture of the over-all socioeconomic situation prevailing in Sippar has emerged.

Recently, Professor A. Leo Oppenheim went to London to transliterate some three hundred additional Sippar texts which were made available for the project. These are now being processed for inclusion into the files. Although the central position of the *nadītu* women, residents of the Sippar cloister, in the economy of Sippar has not changed, the new material presents a glimpse into the administration of the Shamash temple, and, to a lesser extent, the function of the officials responsible to the king in Babylon.

RIVKAH HARRIS