

the Old Akkadian. The next is the Old Babylonian period, when the scholars, especially at the city of Nippur, studied the writing and the language in order to make it more systematic, and prepared dictionaries, grammars, and lists of forms, which have been extremely helpful to modern scholars. The language is more regular and systematic at this period than at any time before or since. During the latter part of the second millennium B.C., two varying dialects, called Middle Babylonian and Middle Assyrian, occur in quite a variety of tablets, especially legal documents. Then comes the later Assyrian period, the time of the supremacy of the great kings of Assyria. From this period many historical and administrative documents have been preserved. It is followed by the Neo-Babylonian period, the time of the renewed greatness of Babylon, in which a type of writing rather different from the Assyrian is used, and again there is a great variety of materials. Modern scholars have extensively studied various periods of Akkadian, writing grammars and dictionaries of them. There is still much work to be done in this field but tremendous progress has been made. A good survey of the various types of Akkadian literature in translation can be found in Ancient Near Eastern Texts Related to the Old Testament, edited by James B. Pritchard, which contains translations of various types of documents by a number of well-known scholars.

#### 4. Sumerian.

Before scholars had gone far in the study of Akkadian they began to find signs used to represent something quite different from their usual meaning. It was at first thought that these signs represented a sort of code-language in which ideas were presented in an abbreviated form. However, the suggestion was soon made that instead it represented an earlier language, parts of which were still used in writing the later language, much as Latin phrases and particularly abbre-