

SUMERIAN HYMNS

CONTRIBUTIONS TO ORIENTAL HISTORY AND PHILOLOGY

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SUMERIAN HYMNS

FROM

CUNEIFORM TEXTS IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM

TRANSLITERATION, TRANSLATION
AND COMMENTARY

BY

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Note

The so-called "Sumerian Question" as to the genuine linguistic character of the ancient Non-Semitic Babylonian texts has agitated the Assyriological world for more than twenty years. The new Sumerian matter from the monuments which is constantly coming to hand demands, in the interest of all those who can look upon this discussion with impartial eyes, a most rigid and unprejudiced examination. Dr. Vanderburgh in the following monograph has adhered to the views expounded in my "Materials for a Sumerian Lexicon" (J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1905—1907), that the so-called Sumerian was originally a Non-Semitic agglutinative language which, in the course of many centuries of Semitic influences, became so incrustated with Semiticisms, most of them the result of a very gradual development of the earlier foreign sacred speech of the priests, that it is really not surprising to find the theory that Sumerian was merely a Semitic cryptography set forth and vigorously upheld by so eminent a scholar as Professor Halévy (MSL., pp. VIII, IX).

The study of the more ancient Non-Semitic texts, more particularly of the Sumerian unilingual hymns, cannot fail to shed additional light on the nature of this peculiar idiom, besides furnishing a valuable addition to the study of the Babylonian religious system.

The texts of the hymns in Vol. XV. of the Brit. Mus. Cun. Texts are not always in good condition and present many difficulties, a solution of some of which, it is hoped, has been suggested in this work with at least approximate correctness.

John Dyneley Prince

Columbia University

October 1st, 1907

To the
Rev. Edward Judson, D. D.,
in recognition of his friendship to the author
and of his interest in Oriental studies