

VORWORT DES HERAUSGEBERS

Der vorliegende Band 11 der Reihe „Texte und Materialien der Frau Professor Hilprecht Collection“ (zur Bandzählung siehe Vorwort zu Band 6) ist den sumerischen „model contracts“ aus altbabylonischer Zeit – nebst ihren Duplikaten in anderen Sammlungen – gewidmet. Ihre Edition hat Dr. Gabriella Spada, eine führende Spezialistin auf diesem Gebiet, übernommen. Sie hat sich selbst um die Finanzierung ihrer Reisen gekümmert und das Editionsprojekt rasch und zielstrebig durchgeführt. Ich danke ihr sehr herzlich für ihr großes Engagement und die gute Zusammenarbeit. Die für den Druck notwendigen Mittel konnten nun zum ersten Mal aus einem kleinen Jahresbudget bestritten werden, das die Friedrich-Schiller-Universität der Sammlung dankenswerterweise bewilligt hat.

Jena, im März 2018

M. Krebernik

PREFACE BY THE AUTHOR

*A Marco e Arturo,
i miei compagni di avventura*

The edition of this corpus of tablets from the Hilprecht-Sammlung is part of a larger project aimed at the full edition of all extant Old Babylonian model contracts, resulting in a complete analysis of model contracts as a specific typology.

First of all I want to thank here *il mio maestro* Franco D'Agostino, who followed this work of mine from the very beginning with patience and helpfulness.

Financial support of the project was provided partly by the University of Rome, “Sapienza” (“Writing Techniques vs Technologies for Writing – Progetto di Ricerca di Ateneo 2015): special thanks are due to Lorenzo Verderame (ISO, Rome), who gave me the opportunity to participate in the project, focusing on the advanced scribal learning practices of the Old Babylonian period.

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Manfred Krebernik, Professor of Altorientalistische Philologie at the Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena and Curator of the Hilprecht-Sammlung, who allowed me to study and publish this corpus of school tablets. My gratitude also goes to his valuable assistants, Prof. Dr. Kai Lämmerhit and Dr. Jana Matuszak, who facilitated my visits to the collection.

I am grateful also to Marten Stol, Niek Veldhuis and Ricardo Dorado Puntch, who offered helpful comments and suggestions: their invaluable remarks greatly improved the edition of this volume. Ronald Veenker has revised the English form of the volume and for this (and for his friendship) I want to thank him warmly. Needless to say, I bear the full responsibility for any errors or omissions.

Thanks also to my family and my dearest friends, who have always supported me in all my projects.

Infine grazie al mio Marco perché, insieme ad Arturo, è sempre al mio fianco e fa il tifo per me, qualsiasi cosa succeda.

Cesenatico, March 2018

Gabriella Spada

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1. The texts

This volume presents the edition of a corpus of eleven cuneiform objects, eight tablets and three prisms (two of them in a fragmentary state) recording model contracts.¹ Being part of the first stage of the Old Babylonian scribal curriculum, model contracts were used to train the scribes in the formal patterns of administration and law. Although they were apparently a common element in scribal schooling and several hundreds of such exercises have survived, only a small number of them has been published to date.² While they were not functional documents, but simply didactic tools (being stripped of incidental details, such as the list of witnesses and the date), model contracts follow the common patterns of Sumerian contract types and represent a comprehensive assortment of all possible transactions that the ancient Mesopotamian administration might have been required to draw up in the everyday economic life: barley and silver loans; deeds of real estate, field or slave sale; marriage contracts; adoptions, and so on.

The corpus of cuneiform objects here presented includes three of the five types of tablets within the classification first proposed by M. Civil (1969: 27–28; 1979: 5) and later modified by S. Tinney (1999: 160). According to this division, most of the school tablets seem to have belonged to one of five physical categories, grouped according to their shape and format, and identified by a number (Type I, II, III, IV and Prisms), each of which probably represents a particular teaching method.

Nearly all of the cuneiform tablets in the Hilprecht Sammlung have been excavated during the four campaigns at Nippur carried out by the Babylonian Expedition, affiliated with the University of Pennsylvania (1888–1900). Unfortunately, the archaeological context of the finds remains difficult to determine and field records as well as published accounts can offer only some general information.

Most of the Old Babylonian and school archives are said to have been recovered from the southern part of the eastern mound, known as “Tablet Hill” or the Scribal Quarter (Gibson–Hansen–Zettler 1998–2001: 549–550), which has been further investigated by the Joint Expedition, formed by the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago and the University Museum of the University of Pennsylvania (1948–1952).

The finds of these archaeological campaigns have been divided between the Ottoman authorities and the American excavators, which means that different parts of all archives are dispersed over different continents, and are housed in the cuneiform collections of Istanbul, Philadelphia, Chicago and Jena.

Recently, C. Proust (2008) and A. Goddeeris (2016) have published all the Old Babylonian mathematical tablets (Proust) as well as the legal and administrative documents (Goddeeris) housed in Jena. In particular, the corpus published by Goddeeris was the last large unpublished part of the Old Babylonian archives excavated by the Babylonian Expedition.

¹ Except for HS 1752 (text no. 10), which is a fragment of a multi-column tablet containing some legal cases (the nature of which – real or scholastic – is not easy to establish).

² For a list of published model contracts see Spada 2014: 1 fn. 6, with the addition of Spada 2012 (one tablet from the Lloyd E. Cotsen Cuneiform Tablets Collection) and Bodine 2015 (six tablets from the Yale Babylonian Collection; cf. also the reviews to his volume in Charpin 2017 and Spada 2017b). For an edition and translations of the corpus of model contracts see the Old Babylonian Model Contracts project (OBMC, <http://oracc.org/obmc>), directed by G. Spada (in particular, the writer is preparing the edition of the corpus of model contracts housed in the Schøyen Collection, Oslo, and in the Rosen Collection, Cornell University).

2. Organization of the volume

The prisms and the tablets here presented have been arranged according to the classification of the school tablets: first Prisms, then Type I tablets and finally Type II tablets.³

After the catalogue, and the concordances of the HS number and the museum numbers of the duplicates, most of which are unpublished, there is the edition of the entire corpus, with transliteration, translation and commentary.⁴

The volume contains extensive indexes of personal names, deities, toponyms and a glossary, not only of the HS texts, but also of their duplicates used in the commentary.

The plates at the end of the volume offer handcopies and photographs of all the HS tablets.

³ Two tablets, HS 1752 and HS 2916, are not easily assigned to a specific type in the classification of the school exercises.

⁴ Four to five Type II tablets present on the reverse one of the advanced lexical lists which were studied in the third phase of the Old Babylonian curriculum. The writer offers here only a transliteration of those lexical extracts, without any translation or commentary (moreover they have not been included in the final indexes); for their full edition see a forthcoming TMH volume by J.C. Crisostomo (*Lexical Texts in the Hilprecht Collection*).