Uses and Misuses of Ancient Mediterranean Sources

Edited by
Chiara Meccariello and
Jennifer Singletary

Mohr Siebeck

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12

Uses and Misuses of Ancient Mediterranean Sources

Erudition, Authority, Manipulation

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Introduction

Chiara Meccariello and Jennifer Singletary

The use of material from sources is a key feature of both texts and artifacts throughout the ancient Mediterranean world. Strategies such as quotation, citation, and reference to sources; the combination, incorporation, redaction, translation, and copying of source material; or the attribution of information or inspiration to historical or fictional sources are detectable in a variety of ancient texts and artistic productions. Especially in texts pertaining to religion and myth, citing sources, whether historical or supernatural, is a common strategy to imbue texts with authority, antiquity, or sacredness. The use of source material also highlights writers' access to knowledge and tradition and emphasizes their scholarly or literary acumen, while simultaneously legitimating, contesting, or manipulating the knowledge that is disseminated through its reuse. In addition, ancient sources have also been employed in later times for an equally wide variety of purposes, from liturgical to popular, from historical reconstruction to forgery, from scholarly analysis to creative reinterpretation.

The basic premise of this volume is that the use of ancient Mediterranean sources, both in antiquity and in modern times, is a fruitful area for examination by both Classicists and scholars of the ancient Near East and Hebrew Bible, and that attention to the way sources are used in different contexts improves our understanding of the myriad of ways in which this phenomenon plays out. Interdisciplinary dialogue between these fields already informed the development of a scientific approach to sources in the late eighteenth century, when the work of Johann Gottfried Eichhorn in the field of source criticism of the Hebrew Bible served as a model for Friedrich August Wolf's deconstructivist approach to the Homeric text, which, in turn, laid the foundation for the fundamental if now largely outdated practice of *Quellenforschung* among Classical philologists of the nineteenth century.[1] The contents of this volume are a step towards an increasingly interdisciplinary approach to this topic, by encouraging cross-cultural comparison through the juxtaposition of essays that examine the use of sources in a wide range of cultural and historical contexts.

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[1] Grafton/Most/Zetzel 1985: 18–26; Most 2016: 935.

This introduction, co-authored by a Classicist and a scholar of the Hebrew Bible and ancient Near East, briefly showcases some of the possibilities for such comparative work. The subsequent sixteen essays examine the use of sources in and from ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia, Israel, Greece, and Rome in different historical contexts that span more than four millennia. Aside from the obvious and long-recognized benefits of an attention to unique cultural contexts, examining a phenomenon that occurs across cultures in individual historical periods is an essential first step to facilitate effective comparison.[2] Phenomena that occur cross-culturally exhibit characteristics that are both similar to other exemplars and unique to their individual textual and social-historical contexts. Cross-cultural comparison is thus worthwhile for a variety of reasons: it can usefully serve to highlight similarities and differences, spur new questions, and enable the formation and refinement of explanatory theories in scholarship.[3] We hope that the essays in this volume will form fodder for additional comparative work on this topic in the future; the remainder of this introduction is one such effort in this direction.

The complex nature of the use of ancient Mediterranean sources in both antique and modern times is encapsulated by the history of the Greek thinker Euhemerus. Euhemerus himself is a somewhat paradoxical figure. His name made it into modern dictionaries, as the eponymous representative of what was later perceived as a philosophical theory, Euhemerism, or, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary* definition, "The method of mythological interpretation which regards myths as traditional accounts of real incidents in human history". But Euhemerus's work, and even his historical identity, are largely mysterious to us. As is the case with several ancient Greek authors, we only have fragmentary remains of his writing, and not one single word-for-word quotation.

The way in which one of our major witnesses to his work introduces him is a good illustration of the complexities of source use in antiquity:

The ancient author Euhemeros, who came from the city of Messene, gathered together the deeds of Jupiter and of others thought to be gods and wove together a historical narrative from commemorative tablets and sacred inscriptions that were kept in the oldest temples and especially in the temple of Jupiter Triphylios. The commemorative tablet there

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[2] As Smith 2000: 239 suggests, the "requirement that we locate a given example within the rich texture of its social, historical, and cultural environments that invest it with its local significance" must be the first step in the four "moments in the comparative enterprise".

[3] Bodel and Olyan summarize such benefits of comparative work in the introduction to their edited volume: "Comparison has the potential to generate new questions and novel insights; it can lead us to a more nuanced understanding of the category of religious behavior that interests us by revealing points of similarity as well as difference; and it can enable us to distinguish that which is common to a larger Mediterranean and West Asian cultural sphere from that which is particular to one or another cultural setting" (Bodel/Olyan 2008: 3–4). See also the similar benefits of comparison across the ancient Near East, as well as pitfalls to be avoided, outlined by Stökl 2012: 5–7 and Nissinen 2017: 43–50.

claimed that a gold column had been set in place by Jupiter himself, on which column he recorded his deeds so that it would be a memorial of his deeds for posterity. Ennius translated and followed this historical account. These are his (Ennius's) words: "There Jupiter gives rule of the sea to Neptune, so that he would rule over all islands and over all places bordering the sea".[4]

Here Lactantius, a Christian writing in Latin in the early fourth century CE, uses a second-century BCE translation by the Latin poet Ennius of the work of Euhemerus, which in turn is a Greek fourth/third-century BCE narrative account allegedly interwoven out of epigraphic records, including one put up by the god Jupiter – that is, Zeus himself – as a perennial monument to his own deeds.

There are several degrees of separation between the reader of this passage and the ultimate alleged original source, Zeus, and potential for distortion lurks at every step. Going through the various layers of this stratification of sources, we encounter several intriguing issues.

First, Lactantius's report of Ennius's words. These were only available to him in a prose version, probably not coinciding with Ennius's original translation, which might well have been in verse; at any rate, scholars have shown that several fragments quoted by Lactantius cannot possibly be literal quotations of Ennius's work.[5] Lactantius's own religious agenda is also, potentially, grounds for suspicion: Euhemerus features in a book entitled *De falsa religione*, which sets out to demonstrate that pagan religion is false, and leverages Euhemerus's work precisely to this purpose.

Second, Ennius's translation. This was a rendering in another language and context, and perhaps medium (verse vs. prose), presumably with some kind of artistic intent and/or ideological engagement; and we know enough of Latin translations of Greek originals in this and later periods to expect a far greater amount of freedom than in what we consider translation today.

Third, Euhemerus himself. He claims to be drawing on inscriptional records of historical deeds: but did he really find such a glaring proof of the real origins of the gods, one that had been standing in place for a long time, though remaining unnoticed and unable to dismantle the whole of Greek religion? Is this a fictional claim of Euhemerus, a rhetorical construct, or even a forgery?

And finally, at the bottom of our pile of layers, we find none other than Zeus, in Euhemerus's view a human being deified after death, who is supposed to have recorded his own *res gestae* as a monument for future readers – if such an individual existed, can we trust his account of his own exploits?

When confronted with this intricate web of sources, the modern reader is likely to be easily led to incredulity by different factors. One factor would certainly be our presumable reluctance to believe in a historical Zeus whose deeds

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[4] Lactant. *Div. inst.* 1.11.33–34 = Euhemerus, test. 3a + fr. 19 *BNJ* (all translations of Euhemerus's fragments and testimonia are by Christensen 2014, at times slightly adapted).

[5] See especially Laughton 1951.

became the stuff of Greek mythology, which of course might go hand in hand
with our reluctance to acknowledge Zeus's existence *tout court*; but other factors
also come into play. For example, the numerous (alleged) stages of transmission,
and the fact that of this long and complex process we only see the tip of the ice-
berg, while all the named sources are lost: we have no Ennius, no Euhemerus,
and of course no inscribed column put up by Zeus. Another factor may be our
disenchanted take on human ability and willingness to report sources faithfully,
not only when their use is part of a specific agenda, as in the case of Euhemerus's
revolutionary assertions and of Lactantius's Christian exploitation of them, but
also when sources are simply translated, summarized, or even cited. Last but not
least is our awareness of the existence of fictional and quasi-fictional literature,
with its array of rhetorical devices, and its inherent keenness to invention and
distortion – indeed, despite the title *Sacred Register* (*hiera anagraphe*), many
scholars now see in Euhemerus's work a philosophical-religious treatise in the
format of a utopian novel, a fictional first-person account of the author's journey
to the places where he uncovered the gods' true nature.[6]

   This may all seem clear to the modern scholar. But what about the ancient
reader? Believing in Euhemerus's account seems to us an act of faith comparable
to believing in Zeus, and admittedly Euhemerism was not so widespread in antiq-
uity as to encourage one to deem his sacred history a masterpiece of persuasion or
an ideological success. But an epitome of Lactantius's work, prepared by the au-
thor himself, introduces a summary treatment of the same Euhemerus story that
we have seen in the full version by naming two linchpins of its credibility, namely
rerum fides, "the trustworthiness of facts", and *temporum vetustas*, "antiquity".[7]
Obviously this well serves Lactantius's religious agenda, to which Euhemerus's
alleged proof of the non-divinity of pagan gods is a precious ally; but *fides rerum*
and *vetustas* are key concepts here, and they are used precisely because they are
known to be effective. In particular, resorting to an epigraphic source is an attest-
ed *topos* in demonstrations of reliability, and it is easy to see why: an inscription
is a tangible object, often associated with templar contexts; it is an original po-
tentially available for the public to see, against which anyone could theoretically
check an author's claims. As to antiquity, the older the source, the closer it is, at
least chronologically, to the event itself, and the more likely it is to be or to directly
derive from an autoptic account; and even if an old written record may undergo
material decay, and a report of a very old account may be affected by the familiar
telephone game effect, antiquity of the ultimate source is widely and persuasively
used to boost an argument. These elements certainly helped to characterize Eu-
hemerus's sources as good ones and to create an impression of diligent research
or, to put it in Augustine's words, "*historica diligentia*".[8]

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   [6] On the scholarly debate on the genre of this work see Winiarczyk 2002: 19–27.
   [7] Lactant., *Epit.* 1.11.33–34 = Euhemerus T 3b.
   [8] August., *De civ. D.* 6.7 = Euhemerus T 4g.

Ultimately, we may find that our response to a passage like Lactantius's is largely different from the expected response of his contemporary readers. Among them, the density of named sources in Lactantius's passage may have inspired, rather than a sense of remoteness from the original account, one of admiration for Lactantius's knowledge, erudition, and familiarity with textual resources; and this could have proven key to persuasion. As for Euhemerus himself, it is significant that Lactantius's and other Christian authors' keenness to trust and exploit his work is in striking contrast with the less flattering portrayal of this author in non-Christian Greek literature. Plutarch, for example, refers to his account as "quackeries" (φενακισμοί), and accuses him of "having himself constructed copies of an unbelievable and non-existent mythology", thereby "sowing atheism over the whole of the inhabited earth".[9] Plutarch's motive is as religious as Lactantius's, but the different religious view leads to a different approach to Euhemerus's alleged use of inscriptional records: for Plutarch, the fact that no other has ever seen these records is suspicious, and he concludes his brief treatment of Euhemerus by denying – pretty much like modern scholars – the very existence of the places where Euhemerus purports to have found them.

The example of Euhemerus showcases some of the crucial aspects of the use of ancient sources tackled in the three sections of this volume, from the discovery and preservation of past knowledge to the complex intertwining of source use and authorization strategies, to the adaptation of old sources to new contexts. References to a written copy of the Torah in two texts from the Hebrew Bible as well as two later parabiblical texts highlight similar issues.[10]

Though a number of scholars have suggested that one of the key hallmarks of Judaism, as distinct from earlier Israelite or Judean religions, is the central role given to the written Torah,[11] the literary and rhetorical strategies used by biblical and parabiblical writers to construct and disseminate the Torah as the authoritative text *par excellence* are just beginning to be explored.[12] The oldest text that seems to reference the written Torah as a single, unified entity is the narrative of its discovery by the high priest Hilkiah, and subsequent delivery to King Josiah, in 2 Kings 22–23. In this biblical text, the protagonists call for radical religious innovations that claim to be based on this supposedly newly recovered copy of the Torah, which they cast as reforms or restorations of older Israelite and Yahwistic practices. This tale imbues the Torah with both a special antiquity and authority, bolstered by the support of the religious establishment (represented by the high priest), confirmed through divination by the prophetess Huldah, accredited by the educated elite (the scribe Shaphan), and decreed as authoritative

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9 Plut. *De Is. et Os.* 23.360A = Euhemerus T 4e.
10 Jennifer Singletary thanks Prof. Reinhard Kratz for many productive discussions about these texts during her time at the Collaborative Research Centre 1136.
11 Collins 2017, Lee 2011, Satlow 2006.
12 Otto 2017.

by the royal house. Yet, the specific contents of this supremely authoritative work are not recorded here, either through direct quotation or even paraphrase. What exactly Shaphan read to Josiah, and Josiah read to the populace, is a mystery.

The report of the reintroduction of the laws of the Torah by Ezra in Ezra 7–10 and Nehemiah 8 also includes the instigation of radical religious innovations that claim to be based on antique prescriptions and practices from a written copy of the Torah. But though the reading of its contents in public is described in these texts as well, the exact contents remain unknown. In 1 and 2 Maccabees, again the foundation of a major religious reform (cast this time as a polemic against Greek religion, Hellenism, and Hellenized Jews) is presented as a reinstatement of older, more original practices, and a written Torah is cited, but not directly quoted or paraphrased, to prove this assertion. Compare this text to the Letter of Aristeas, which takes a different stance regarding Hellenization: this pseudepigraphic work seeks to legitimate the Greek translation of the Torah by relating a legendary tale of its miraculous completion by 72 unanimous priests. Both these parabiblical stories continue to use the rhetorical technique of attributing unique antiquity and authority to their sources to justify what are actually sharp departures from previous practice, without revealing many key details about the source itself.

These four texts share a number of common features: they all present innovations in religious practice as restorations of older, more original practices based on a particular antique text; they all describe the public reading of the written Torah's contents to an audience who are portrayed as previously unaware of its contents. Yet each of these texts was composed in a different context, and each also purports to depict different historical settings. Each text thus reveals the features of the Torah the different writers found most significant and thus chose to highlight for their audiences, providing a lens into a variety of strategies for legitimating and authorizing the text, as well as the development of these strategies over time. Much about who composed these texts and why, however, remains unclear, as do the contents and form of the Torah(s) they reference. What documents made up the Torah(s) described in these four texts? Is the Torah referenced in 2 Kings 22 co-extensive with some version of Deuteronomy, or is it referring to a version of the larger Pentateuch? What was most likely included in Ezra's Torah? In Judas Maccabeus's? To which version of the Septuagint does Aristeas refer, and what did its Hebrew *Vorlage* look like? We can only speculate, yet how, why, and in what forms the written Torah became authoritative for different communities is crucial to our understanding of how Judaism eventually became known as a "religion of the book".

These examples from ancient Greece, the Hebrew Bible, and parabiblical texts have several enticing commonalities: for example, a narrative of discovery, which is so construed as to imbue the recovered source with antiquity and authority; the rooting of religious innovation or contestation in an antique text;

and different reactions of different writers to the same source, either in select-ing and highlighting what is most relevant or in the overall assessment of the source. These, of course, only represent a fraction of the many aspects and fac-ets of the use of ancient Mediterranean sources that beg examination. The re-mainder of this volume discusses many more. The essays that follow are based on papers delivered at the international conference "'As It Is Written'? Uses of Sources in Ancient Mediterranean Texts", held in Göttingen in October 2018 as part of the activities of the DFG-funded Collaborative Research Centre 1136, Bil-dung und Religion in Kulturen des Mittelmeerraums und seiner Umwelt von der Antike bis zum Mittelalter und zum Klassischen Islam. The volume also includes contributions based on papers delivered at the workshop "(Mis)use of Sources: Ancient and Modern", organized by Jennifer Singletary at the 64th Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale (Innsbruck, July 2018), as well as two additional contributions solicited by the editors to ensure balanced representation of the various fields.

Building on these two events, the overall purpose of this book is to explore uses and misuses[13] of ancient Mediterranean sources in a variety of periods, places, and contexts, focusing on strategies of incorporation of derivative ma-terials as a key to understanding the dissemination of religious and mythological knowledge.[14] Of course we make no claim to comprehensiveness, either in the geographical and chronological coverage or as regards genres and topics. What this volume offers is rather a series of case studies displaying multiple approach-es to and perspectives on the ways in which various writers dealt with ancient Mediterranean sources.

Section A, "Preserving, Archiving, and Detecting Sources", includes essays that focus on the use of sources in historical periods ranging from the Neo-Baby-lonian period in Mesopotamia, to Imperial Rome, to Early Christian Egypt, and explore issues such as the preservation and archiving of earlier works or tradi-tions in ancient texts as well as modern scholarly techniques to detect textual quotations. Marie Young and Tonio Mitto ("In Search of Former Kings: Copy-ing Sîn-kāšid's and Sîn-iddinam's Inscriptions in the Neo- and Late Babylonian Periods") contribute new editions of three school copies of royal inscriptions from the Neo-Babylonian and Late Babylonian periods, analyzing what they re-veal concerning which aspects of the originals the apprentice scribes copying them studied most intensively. Laura Carlson Hasler ("Citation, Collection, and the Protection of Memory in 2 Maccabees") analyzes citation practices in 2 Mac-

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[13] By "misuse" of a source – an umbrella term with no pretense of reflecting the views of an-cient writers or readers – we mean any intentional or unintentional departure from the source that entails a significant change in the source's message.

[14] The inclusion of Greek mythological texts alongside more undisputedly religious texts is based on their role in preserving and disseminating knowledge on deities, heroes and heroines, and their interrelations. See e. g. the definition of myth in Louden 2006: 9.

cabees, arguing that these help to form a culturally vital archive in the wake of destruction. Georgios Vassiliades ("Livy and the Legends of Rome's Foundation: A 'Double Standard' Approach") investigates the inclusion of legendary materials in Livy's account of the early history of Rome, showing that the historian, while programmatically avoiding confirming or refuting the validity of myths, exploited the mythical tradition so as to endow his narrative of Rome's foundation and early expansion with religious authority. Nereida Villagra ("Source Citations in the Scholia to the *Odyssey*: References, Subscriptions, and the Mythographus Homericus") explores a tantalizing collection of Greek mythological narratives related to specific lines of the Homeric poems. By investigating the regular mention of authorities in the subscription of each narrative, Villagra highlights the combination of different sources into self-standing narratives as a typical feature of Imperial mythography. So Miyagawa and Heike Behlmer ("Quotative Index Phrases in Shenoute's *Canon* 6: A Case Study of Quotations from the Psalms") illustrate the use of a quantitative method of corpus and computational linguistics – the historical text reuse detection program TRACER, developed by the Göttingen Centre for Digital Humanities – for the investigation of biblical text reuse in the works of the Egyptian Christian abbot Shenoute and his successor Besa.

In Section B, "Authority, Divinity, and Power", five scholars explore Egyptian, Mesopotamian, and Graeco-Roman texts with a view to elucidating both the use of divine words and strategies of authorization based on the employment of sacred, secret, or other sources construed as authoritative. Carlos Gracia Zamacona ("Divine Words in the Ancient Egyptian Coffin Texts [c. 2000–1500 BCE]") proposes a classification of the interactions between gods and the deceased in a corpus of ancient Egyptian mortuary texts of a mostly dialogical nature, the so-called Coffin Texts, demonstrating that divine words are especially used to endorse the deceased in transitional or difficult moments or to equate them with the gods, thereby equipping them with a "powerful tool for legitimation". Gina Konstantopoulos ("'These Are of the Mouth of Ea': The Divine Origin of Incantations and the Legitimation of the Exorcist's Craft") examines the ways in which *āšipūtu*, or the craft of the exorcist, is legitimated through association with Ea and Adapa in ancient Mesopotamia. Szilvia Sövegjártó ("Source Texts as Authority Constructions: A Conceptual Approach to the Old Babylonian Literary Discourse") analyzes intertextual relations between the bilingual manuscript CBS 11341, Sing a Song for Šulgi, and the Šulgi hymns known as "fictional autobiographies". Ilaria Andolfi ("A Writing Hard to Wash Out: A Reassessment of the Story about Acusilaus and his Bronze Tablets") explores, through the case of the Greek mythographer Acusilaus, the *topos* of attributing the mythological, genealogical or historical content of one's own writing to a material source, such as bronze tablets, as a way to demonstrate access to secret and authoritative knowledge. Finally, Francesca Boldrer ("*Sacra … canam*: Propertius's Aetiolog-

ical-Religious Poetry and His Use of Sources") investigates Popertius's "Roman elegies" with a view to bringing to light the poet's antiquarian and comparative research and at the same time to unveiling the strategies he used to underscore his own divine inspiration.

Section C, "Manipulating and Adapting Sources: Ancient to Modern", explores free reuses of sources and adaptation of sources to new contexts and media, both in antiquity and in modern times. Michael Chen ("Adapting Ancient Egyptian Healing Spells onto Late Period Statuary") examines the complexities of the adaptation of texts onto religious objects in the case of Egyptian healing statues of the Late period (c. 664–332 BCE). Inscribed with magical texts drawn from a known corpus, these statues reveal visual strategies for the adaptation or manipulation of the healing spell texts so as to enhance their efficacy as healing objects. David P. Wright ("The Covenant Code Narrative: Neo-Assyrian Influences and Context") identifies texts within the Pentateuch that belong to a narrative associated with the law collection found in Exodus 20:23–23:19 (the Covenant Code), building on his thesis that this collection was created using the Laws of Hammurabi as a primary source, and arguing that the Covenant Code was contextualized through its placement within a larger narrative. Mathias Winkler ("The Book of Proverbs: Sources Become Invisible") discusses the selection, manipulation, and concealment of Egyptian materials and source attribution in different versions of the book of Proverbs. Przemysław Piwowarczyk ("Using the Scriptures in Documentary Letters from Western Thebes") analyzes scriptural quotations in Coptic monastic letters from Western Thebes in Egypt (sixth to eighth century CE), focusing on manipulative strategies such as decontextualization, conflation, and free creation of scriptural passages. Silvia Gabrieli ("Enuma Elish: A Glorious Past and a Curious Present") highlights different transmission strategies used in both ancient and modern times for the Babylonian Epic of Creation, particularly in contemporary media. In the last essay in this section, Dustin Nash ("Assyriology and the Allosaurus: Sources, Symbols, and Memory at the Creation Museum and Ark Encounter") also discusses contemporary uses of ancient Mesopotamian sources, focusing on the use, or perhaps more accurately misuse, of Assyriological material at the Creation Museum in Kentucky.

Our contributors focus primarily on texts that are related to the realm of religion. In the context of our work at the Collaborative Research Centre 1136, we worked to initiate a collective reflection on how textual products that presuppose and disseminate knowledge about religious and mythological contents reuse and repurpose existing knowledge, thereby functioning as links in more or less long and variously configured transmission chains. These transfers of knowledge, which could take place in different contexts (for example within families, religious institutions, political centers, or educational institutions), belong to the realm of education as conceptualized by the Collaborative Research Centre 1136,

which encompasses formal education, processes of socialization, as well as "the development of reflection on God, the world, and the self (according to the German concept of '*Bildung*')".[15]

Three main aspects have emerged from our contributors' work that are worth special mention here as particularly interesting areas for future comparative research. First, a recurring tension between tradition and innovation appears to underlie the use and manipulation of sources that inform the transfer and dissemination of religious knowledge. On the one hand, citing sources helped ancient writers to connect to the past and anchor their work in accepted traditions. The use of sources is, in this sense, a form of authorization, and underlines a writer's competence and cultural capital. At the same time, source manipulation, adaptation of sources to new contexts, and deconstruction and reconstruction of source materials were often tools for innovation, as authors tried to legitimize or even mask departures from tradition by referencing the same authoritative, traditional sources they sought to go beyond.

Second, as several of the essays in this volume show, many of the processes of knowledge transfer encoded in written texts were reserved for elite recipients, an even more restricted group than the already restricted number of literates. In some cases, a small elite was the only actual addressee of a given text (Chen), or highly educated recipients were the only ones who could understand the subtlety of the use of sources (Winkler) or unmask deliberate manipulation or free use of sources. This raises many important questions about how the use of sources worked with respect to different audiences, intended or actual.

Third, a number of essays highlight the importance of materiality in a physical or metaphorical sense. For example, the insertion of long quotations in a narrative may function as a virtual surrogate for physical archive spaces (Carlson Hasler); while the attribution of the content of one's own writing to a material source such as a bronze tablet may be used to demonstrate access to secret, ancient, or elitist knowledge (Andolfi); and the written word may be adapted to the materiality of iconographical media so as to achieve new effects (Chen). The interplay of text and material culture is another important avenue for future research on the use of sources.

Through these and other insights, we hope the following contributions will show that what is a somewhat unsettling and humbling truth – that in the study of antiquity we are often bound to refraction and mediatedness with regard to our sources – can turn into a challenging and exciting research tool, which ultimately allows us to glimpse the mentality surrounding several links in the transmission chain.

For the food for thought and new research directions that these essays have offered to us, we would like to thank the DFG-funded Collaborative Research

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[15] Gemeinhardt 2017: 327.

Centre 1136 "Education and Religion", which has not only funded the conference "'As It Is Written'? Uses of Sources in Ancient Mediterranean Texts", Singletary's attendance of the 64th Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, and the publication of this volume, but also provided an ideal environment for interdisciplinary dialogue. Finally, our warmest thanks for the continuing, generous support to this project and beyond go to the Centre's director, Professor Peter Gemeinhardt.

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Section A.

Preserving, Archiving, and Detecting Sources

In Search of Former Kings

Copying Sîn-kāšid's and Sîn-iddinam's Inscriptions in the Neo- and Late Babylonian Periods

Marie Young and Tonio Mitto[1]

When examining an ancient society's *régime d'historicité*,[2] i. e. the way in which it conceptualized its own past, present, and future, the results are necessarily fragmentary, as we have to rely on the remains of what certain members of this society chose to commit to writing. That being said, the extant written documentation from ancient Mesopotamia gives the impression that it was the cuneiform writing system itself, the signs, their shapes, and their various levels of reading, that stood at the heart of historical reflection, fundamental to the way that the inhabitants of the land between the two rivers perceived their historicity. This focus on writing is hardly surprising, bearing in mind the lasting nature of the writing materials chosen, in particular for royal inscriptions.

While one aspect of the connection between writing and perception of history, namely the study and employment of archaic sign forms is already attested in the second millennium BCE,[3] it is especially in the first millennium that an increased interest in ancient documents becomes apparent. A particularly famous testament to this is king Ashurbanipal's boastful claim that he could read "cunningly written text(s) in obscure Sumerian (and) Akkadian that are difficult to interpret" and "inscriptions on stone from before the Deluge".[4] That Ashurbanipal

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[2] Cf. Hartog 2003.

[3] This is illustrated by copies of syllabaries with archaizing cuneiform sign forms found at Assur, Ugarit, and Emar; see Roche-Hawley 2012: 135. Roche-Hawley links them to the use of archaizing signs and monumental/official writing.

[4] K 2694 + K 3050 (CDLI: P394610), I 17–18 = Novotny 2014, no. 18 (Ashurbanipal L⁴), translation following the one in Novotny 2014, no. 18.

was not the only one to take an interest in these antiquities is illustrated by the archaeological evidence of several collections kept in temples and palaces.[5]

In addition to the study of ancient documents in the first millennium, it was not unusual for contemporary kings to have their own royal inscriptions written in a ductus that made them appear as if they had been written some two thousand years before their time.[6]

In most instances, they had to rely on their scholars to draw up new inscriptions with archaizing script, or to study the actual ancient inscribed bricks, foundation documents, or inscribed statues of former rulers that came to light during temple renovations.[7] A vivid example of this can be found in a letter from Ašarēdu, an astrologer at the Neo-Assyrian court, to the king (Esarhaddon or Ashurbanipal):

Now then I have written and fetched from Babylon an ancient tablet made by King Hammurapi and an inscription from before King Hammurapi.[8]

Previous studies on the subject of copying ancient inscriptions have suggested diverse reasons for scholars like Ašarēdu to copy such texts.[9] First, they might have done so for archival purposes, that is, to preserve the content of a crumbling original.[10] Second, their aim might have been to serve the legitimization of the king by using ancient sources for new royal inscriptions: Original tablets found during renovation work on a temple would be reinterred in the foundations together with a new inscription of the present king, while their copies would be kept in palace or temple collections to aid in the composition of new accounts of a king's deeds.[11] Third, a tablet might have been copied out of a scholarly interest in the past on the part of scribes and kings, linked to religious or magical subjects.[12] It is worth noting, however, that not all of these apparent copies of ancient inscriptions had a real original, but were in some cases composed by scholars in order to contribute to the construction of an idealized past (*fraus pia*).[13]

While Ašarēdu's letter shows that court scholars corresponded with kings on the topic of ancient documents, it is also an interesting piece of evidence for their

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[5] See the examples given in Glassner 2005: 13.

[6] Cf., e. g. the famous East India House Inscription of Nebuchadnezzar II (BM 129397).

[7] The renovation of temples was a royal prerogative *par excellence* in Mesopotamia; see Schaudig 2010.

[8] ABL 255 = SAA X 155 o. 7–13 [*a*]*dû ṭuppu labīru ša Ammurapi šarru* [*ē*]*pušu malṭaru* [*ša*] *pāni Ammurapi šarri kī ašpuru ultu Babili attašâ*, translation after SAA X. The letter dates from the reign of Esarhaddon or Ashurbanipal.

[9] For lists of known first millennium copies of royal inscriptions, see Paulus 2018: 143–157; Radner 2005: 245.

[10] Cf. Paulus 2018: 142; Edzard 1983: 64–65.

[11] See Bartelmus/Taylor 2014: 121; Radner 2005: 234–244; Schaudig 2003: 450–454.

[12] See Beaulieu 2010, esp. 10; Hallo 2006; Radner 2005: 249–250; Wasserman 1994; Joannès 1988; Sollberger 1967: 103.

[13] See Bartelmus/Taylor 2014; Schaudig 2003; Jonker 1995: 174–176.

wide spectrum of competences: Although Ašarēdu's main duty was analyzing celestial omens, he was also involved in finding and deciphering documents of possible interest to his sovereign. That he was able to do so was clearly a result of a scholar's extensive and, what we would call today, interdisciplinary education. When learning how to cope with ancient tablets, apprentice scribes could make use of special syllabaries that presented archaic and contemporary sign forms side by side.[14] But to put their theoretical knowledge to practical use, they also copied old royal inscriptions as part of their studies. This is well attested in the Babylonian documentation of the first millennium BCE.[15]

In the present article, we would like to add to the available sources for this phenomenon by offering editions of three school copies of royal inscriptions from the Neo-Babylonian and Late Babylonian period, and draw attention to what they can reveal about the aspects of the originals that were studied by the apprentice scribes copying them. The first two tablets (BM 33344 and BM 91081) bear an inscription of the Urukean king Sîn-kāšid from the nineteenth century BCE, celebrating the construction of the Eanna temple. The third tablet (AO 17635) is a copy of an inscription of Sîn-iddinam about the erection of the city wall in Mashkan-shapir. Both inscriptions have in common that they involve a list of tariffs, that is, idealized prices of goods during the reign of the respective king.[16] It seems as if inscriptions containing these price lists were popular choices to be copied.[17] It is not clear why this was the case. Perhaps it was because these passages were comparatively easy to understand, or maybe they were copied because of their historical information. In any case, we will try to demonstrate that with a single exercise, apprentice scribes were able to practice different skills, of which the study of paleography was only one.

1. Two First Millennium Copies of a Sîn-kāšid Inscription

The two tablets edited here copy the Sîn-kāšid inscription edited as no. 8 in the RIME 4 volume, which celebrates the construction of the Eanna temple in Uruk.[18] Edmond Sollberger and Jean-Robert Kupper already mentioned the ex-

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[14] Petra Gesche lists the school tablets BM 37957, 53147, and 60185+ that contain excerpts from palaeographic syllabaries (Gesche 2001: 72–74). SpTU 4, 212, and 216 also present archaizing signs next to their Late Babylonian equivalents. Many manuscripts of the paleographic Syllabar A were available in Nineveh and Ur, but they seem to be library exemplars rather than school tablets.

[15] For the use of royal inscriptions in the school curriculum, see Paulus 2018: 142; Bartelmus/Taylor 2014: 121; Radner 2005: 245–246; and Edzard 1983: 64–65.

[16] On these tariffs see the bibliographical references in Charpin et al. 2004: 861 n. 1595.

[17] Cf. also BM 33345, a copy of a royal inscription by the Ur-III king Šū-Sîn, which might also involve a list of tariffs.

[18] I. e. RIME 4.4.1.8.

istence of these Neo-Babylonian copies, but only gave a summary of both colophons.[19] Actually, the similarities of both texts suggest that they could belong to the same school tradition, and that they might even come from the same place. Even though the manuscript BM 33344 was known, it does not appear in the edition of Douglas R. Frayne in RIME 4.[20] Twenty-five original versions of the inscription are known from Uruk on about nineteen distinct cones and nails. They were found in the palace of Sîn-kāšid, and in the Eanna temple.[21] After the publication of the edition in RIME 4, three additional witnesses of the inscription have become known: (1) a cone from the Museum of Montserrat,[22] (2) a steatite tablet from a private collection,[23] and (3) a fragment of a single-column tablet from Uruk.[24] While the archaeological context of the latter suggests a dating to the fifth to fourth century BCE,[25] there is no colophon that lets us safely exclude the possibility that it is in fact an Old Babylonian original still studied in the first millennium.[26]

1.1. Manuscript A: BM 91081

Acquisition number: 1882-5-22, 356
CDLI: P365463
Previous copy: Pinches BOR 1, pp. 8–11; and King, CT 21, pl.13.

The find context is unknown. Hormuzd Rassam bought the tablet in 1882 and it may come from illegal excavations in Babylonia.[27] The colophon testifies that the copy was made from "a diorite stele, property of the Ezida", that is, the temple of the god Nabû in Borsippa. It also mentions the name of the copyist, a certain Nabû-balāssu-iqbi, descendant of Miṣirāya. The family clan Miṣirāya is well known in Babylonia in the second half of the first millennium BCE. Of the twenty-eight attestations of family members registered in the database *Prosobab*,[28] the majority comes from northern Babylonia, especially from Babylon.[29]

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[19] Sollberger/Kupper 1971: 231, inscription IVD1g.
[20] Frayne 1990: 453–54.
[21] See the catalogue in RIME 4: 453.
[22] MM 710.008; edition: Marquéz Rowe 1997: 78.
[23] CDLI: P480737.
[24] W 22720, 4 = SpTU 4, 126.
[25] Area U18, Level III, see Clancier 2009: 395.
[26] The preserved part of the reverse is blank; see von Weiher 1993: 19. He takes the fragment to be an Old Babylonian original.
[27] Leichty 1986: xvi–xxxvii, 135.
[28] Waerzeggers/Gross 2019.
[29] From the administrative tablets: Sixteen individuals come from Babylon, three from Sippar, two from Borsippa, two from Ur, four attestations from a broken or unclear context, one person comes from Kār-Tašmētu, and another one from Ālu-ša-mê-Bīt-Bēl-kāṣir. Other tablets written by members of this family are: SBH 14, BM 47736, BM 59569, BM 78878, and 79.b.1/79 (Nabû *ša ḫarê*). SBH 14 and BM 78878 seem to date from the Hellenistic period. The scribe of

It should be stressed that several individuals from this family were lamentation priests (*kalû*).[30] Thus, it seems possible that Nabû-balāssu-iqbi himself could have become a *kalû*. Among the most attested professions for Neo-Babylonian and Late-Babylonian copyists of royal inscriptions is that of the lamentation priest.[31] This is hardly surprising as *kalû*s were actively involved in the rituals accompanying the renovation and building of temples, so it is obvious that they were ideally positioned to copy newly discovered foundation documents.[32] Additionally, their specialized training in Sumero-Akkadian bilinguals provided them with the necessary language skills to successfully decipher and copy ancient written artifacts.

1.2. *Manuscript B: BM 33344*

Acquisition number: Rm 3, 17
CDLI: –
Previous copy: –

The find context is also unknown for this manuscript. The tablet arrived with several others from Babylon and Borsippa. According to Erle Leichty,[33] there is a good chance that this tablet comes from Borsippa as well. Edmond Sollberger mentioned the text twice in 1967[34] and 1971.[35] Edmond Sollberger and Jean-Robert Kupper offered a translation of the colophon, which was followed by Jean-Jacques Glassner.[36] A certain Balāṭu, son of Baliḫî, apprentice scribe, copied the text on the third December 603 BCE (21.VIII.2 Nbk II). The preserved part of the tablet contains the first seven lines of the inscription on the obverse, and its last line and a colophon on the reverse.

79.b.1/79 is a certain Nabû-balāssu-iqbi, son of Ina-tēšê-eṭir, descendant of Miṣirāya, but it is impossible to establish a sure connection between him and the scribe of BM 91081, since we do not have the father's name of the latter.

[30] Bēl-uballissu, an apprentice lamentation priest, descendant of Miṣirāya, wrote the tablet SBH 14 (balaĝ am-e bára-an-na-ra) "in order to sing it", for his father, Bēl-ana-bītīšu. In addition, BM 59569, an Emesal prayer (Šuila ur-saĝ úru ur₄-ur₄) is the product of Nabû-mukīn-zēri, lamentation priest of Marduk, descendant of Miṣirāya; see Gabbay 2014: 247, 274.

[31] See, e. g. BM 119014, a copy of a *kalû* of Sîn of a Amar-Sîn's baked brick found in the debris of the Egišnugal of Ur, next to some construction inscriptions of Sîn-balāssu-iqbi, the governor of Ur, under the reign of Ashurbanipal; see Frayne 1997: 256–257; RIME 3/2.1.3.11. Furthermore, the tablet No. 2499 is the product of a *kalû* of Ištar and Nanāya from Uruk; it belonged to the library of the descendants of Sîn-lēqi-unninni from the Bīt Rēš in Uruk. It is a copy of a Šimbar-šipak's building inscription, first king of the Sealand; see Goetze 1965.

[32] See Ambos 2004.

[33] Leichty 1986: xxix–xxx. For Rassam's excavations in Borsippa, see Reade 1986.

[34] Sollberger 1967: 107.

[35] Sollberger/Kupper 1971: 231.

[36] Glassner 2005: 13 n. 58.

1.2.1. Transliteration and Translation[37]

A	B		
o. 1	o. 1	ᵈlugal-bàn-da	(o. 1–4) For the god Lugalbanda, his personal
o. 2	o. 2	diĝir-ra-ni-ir	god, for the goddess Ninsun, his mother,
o. 3	o. 3	ᵈnin-sún	
o. 4	o. 4	ama-a-ni-ir	
o. 5	o. 5	ᵈsuen-*kà-ši-id*	(o. 5–8) Sîn-kāšid, king of Uruk, king of the
o. 6	o. 6	lugal unugᵏⁱ-ga	Amnānum, provider of the Eanna,
o. 7	o. 7	lugal *am-na-nu-um*	
		(B: *remainder of o. broken*)	
o. 8		ú-a é-an-na	
o. 9		u₄ é-an-na	(o. 9–10) when he built the Eanna,
o. 10		mu-dù-a	
o. 11		é-kankal é ki-tuš	(o. 11–13) built for them the Ekankal, their
o. 12		šà-ḫúl-la-ka-ne	house, abode of rejoicing,
o. 13		mu-ne-en-dù	
o. 14		bala nam-lugal-la-ka-ni	(o. 14–r. 7) during his kingship, according to
r. 1		3 še gur-ta	the market value of his land:
r. 2		12 ma-na sík-ta	3 *kurru* of barley, 12 minas of wool, 10 minas
r. 3		10 ma-na urudu-ta	of copper, 3 *sūtu* of vegetable oil cost one she-
r. 4		3 bán ì-ĝiš-ta	kel of silver.
r. 5		ganba ma-da-na-ka	
r. 6		kù-babbar 1 gín-e	
r. 7		ḫé-éb-da-sa₁₀	
r. 8–9	r. 1′	mu-a-ni mu ḫé-ĝál-la/ḫé-a	(r. 8–9) May his years be years of abundance.
		(B: *written in one line*)	

Colophons

Manuscript A

r. 10	gaba.ri na₄.rú.a *šá* ⁿᵃ⁴esi	Copy of a royal inscription of diorite stone.
r. 11	níg.ga é-zi-da ᵐag-tin-*su-iq-bi*	Property of Ezida. Nabû-balāssu-iqbi, son of
r. 12	a ᵐ*mi-ṣir-a-a iš-ṭur*	Miṣirāya wrote (it).

Manuscript B

r. 2′	*ki-ma pi₄* ⁿᵃ⁴na.rú.a ⁿᵃ⁴esi libir	According to an old inscription of an old stele
	mu.sar.e libir.ra ᵐ*ba-la-ṭam*	of diorite stone, Balāṭu, the apprentice scribe,
r. 3′	dub.sar bàn.da dumu ᵐ*ba-li-*	son of Baliḫî, studied (it) carefully and wrote
	ḫi-i ú-ṣa-ab-bi-ma iš-ṭú-úr	(it).

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[37] The lack of textual variants between MSS A and B makes it possible to transliterate the inscription in composite form and only to present the colophons separately. Translation based on Frayne 1990: RIME 4.4.1.8.

r. 4′	^{iti}apin.du₈.a u₄.21.kam mu.2.kam	Twenty-first *Araḥsamna*, second year of Nebuchadnezzar (II), king of the totality, son of
r. 5′	^d*na-bi-um-ku-du-úr-ri-ú-ṣu-úr* lugal ki.šár.ra	Nabopolassar, king of Babylon.
r. 6′	dumu ^d*na-bi-um*-ibila-*ú-ṣu-úr* lugal ká.dingir.ra^{ki}	

1.2.2. Remarks

The two copies are very similar, the only difference in the preserved part being that the scribe of Manuscript A wrote the last two signs of the inscription, ḫé-a, in a new, indented line (r. 9), while in Manuscript B, the whole phrase mu-a-ni mu ḫé-ĝál-la ḫé-a was fit into one line (r. 1). This slight divergence however might still fall within the boundaries of what was considered a faithful copy of an original. The Old Babylonian ductus was skilfully imitated by both scribes with little variation, judging from the lines preserved on both manuscripts. Given that both colophons mention a diorite stele as *Vorlage*, one might be tempted to view both tablets as being based on the same physical object. This then might have been an object like the aforementioned steatite tablet from a private collection.[38]

(o. 1) The sign TUR of Manuscript A looks like what we might expect on stone inscriptions. This corresponds well with the information from the colophon; see above.

(o. 4) Manuscript A looks at first glance as if the space between the signs had been less carefully calculated, but it is possible that the scribe actually copied the layout of the original. The scribe of Manuscript B seems to have gone to great lengths to space his signs evenly throughout each line.

Colophons:

The colophon of Manuscript A is written with a rather coarse Neo-Babylonian ductus. The signs are wide, the sign GABA could be archaizing (r. 10). As for the other signs, it is possible that their extended width was an attempt to make them look more like the signs of the Old Babylonian inscription. Their overall appearance might, however, also be due to the scribe's lack of experience. By comparison, the colophon of Manuscript B exhibits a meticulous hand, perhaps indicating a more advanced stage of training.[39]

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[38] CDLI: P480737.

[39] For apprentices' handwritings see Gesche 2001: 56. Note however Worthington (2012: 29), who stated that it would be overly simplistic to think that a scribe is an apprentice only on the basis of his clumsy handwriting.

Manuscript B:

(r. 9) The name spelling of the scribe with the mimation -*am* created an archaizing effect. The name is written normally ^m*ba-la-ṭu* in contemporary administrative texts.[40]

(r. 10) The expression *uṣabbi* is derived from the D-stem verb *ṣubbû* for which Edmond Sollberger proposed the meaning "to survey, to obtain comprehensive view".[41] The same expression can be found in a copy from Sippar of a royal inscription of Puzur-Eštar's son, r. 7–9: *ki-ma pí-i* ^na₄na.rú.a libir.ra *šá ina* uru *sip-pár*^ki ^m*re-mu-tum* dub.sar bàn.da dumu ^m*su*-x-[…] *ú-ṣab-bi-ma is-su-*[*uḫ*], "according to an old stele from the city of Sippar, Rēmūtu, the apprentice scribe, son of […], studied it carefully and copied it out".[42] The verb also appears several times in Nabonidus's inscriptions.[43]

(r. 11) The writing of the date is to be taken into consideration. The scribe chose to use the full spelling of the month *Araḫsamnu*, which is rare in colophons or administrative texts.

(r. 12) The sign ŠÁR[44] in ki.šár.ra is archaizing, as is the spelling of ki.šár.ra itself. This royal title is rarely used for the Neo-Babylonian kings. To our knowledge, it only appears in one other colophon, that of a tablet dated to March–April 596 BCE (XII.8 Nbk).[45]

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[40] For the attestations of the name see the database *Prosobab* (Waerzeggers/Gross 2019) and Tallqvist 1905: 19.

[41] Sollberger 1977: 107 n.1; and *AHw*: 1107b–08a, s. v. "ṣubbû(m)".

[42] BM 38947, cf. Sollberger 1967: 106–107. The colophon of KAR 177, a hemerological treatise from Assur, also features the verb *ṣubbû* with the meaning "to survey", albeit in a different context (IV 25); see Hunger 1968, no. 292: 3.

[43] Schaudig translated the verb with "überprüfen" in a passage where Nabonidus affirms that he himself verified the cella and the pedestal of Šamaš in the remains of the Ebabbar temple before rebuilding the sanctuary on top of the ancient structures; see Schaudig 2001: 2.9.1 I 39. In the Larsa Cylinder of Nabonidus, before restoration work at the Ebabbar began, scholars were detailed to examine the foundations and supervise (*ṣubbû*) the appropriate actions; see Schaudig 2001: 2.11.1 II 57.

[44] For another attestation of archaizing ŠÁR in a colophon, see Jiménez 2016: 234 n. 20, where it is employed with the unusual sound value *ta₈* in the verbal form *lā itabbal*(*a*) "may he not carry off".

[45] K. 9288 is the first tablet of the series *kunuk ḫalti,* which is concerned with stone amulets; see Schuster-Brandis 2008: 192–193. The title lugal ki.šár.ra, "king of the totality", is also attested in an administrative document preserved in Istanbul and dated to the second year of Nebuchadnezzar II: Ni 2577; see *RlA* 2: 219b; as well as Stevens 2014: 73 n. 32, who cited Seux 1967: 308–312. For archaizing script and spelling in administrative texts see Joannès 1988; Levavi 2018, nos. 105 and 140. The author of the texts no. 105 and no. 140 in Levavi 2018, Nabû-bān-ahi, is a well-attested official of the Eanna temple during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar. He twice used a special blessing formula written in archaizing script at the end of his letters. Certainly, his degree of literacy is to be linked to his family ancestor Ekur-zākir, the ancestor of the exorcists in Uruk. On this character see Frahm/Jursa 2011: 4–5 (they read the name Nabû-tabni-uṣur).

2. Copying Sîn-iddinam's Inscription
in the Neo- or Late Babylonian Period

The tablet AO 17635 was purchased by the Louvre in 1934. Stemming from the market of antiquities, it is impossible to determine its exact find context. Nevertheless, the other tablets acquired at the same time (catalogue numbers AO 17613–AO 17664) seem to form a homogeneous corpus known as the archive of the descendants of Absummu from Nippur.[46] One of the family members, Enlil-bēlšunu, was an exorcist. His son, Ninurta-aḫḫē-bulliṭ, the main protagonist of the archive, is attested between 394–366 BCE (Artaxerxes II 11–39). He bears the title of brewer of the Ekur in the sources. His brother Zēr-kitti-līšir is also mentioned in several documents, including literary texts. He bears the title of apprentice scribe (*ṭupšarru ṣeḫru*) in AO 17662, a text dated to the twenty-fourth of December 365 BCE (4.X. Artaxerxes II 40). In 1992, Francis Joannès asserted that the tablet AO 17635 was part of a set of exercises representing the basic elements of the practical and intellectual apprenticeship of a member of the Nippurean clergy during the Achaemenid period.[47]

The tablet is a copy of an inscription of the Old Babylonian king Sîn-iddinam, which celebrates the erection of the city wall of Mashkan-shapir (modern Tell Abu Duwari). In 1989, the excavations of the site revealed some 146 clay barrel fragments, including 51 inscribed fragments with the same inscription.[48] Piotr Steinkeller proposed that these clay barrel fragments were intentionally gathered in the same place after the destruction of the city wall.[49]

If this is true, it could mean that the scribe of AO 17635 may still have been able to find his *Vorlage* in Mashkan-shapir. The city was abandoned after the Old Babylonian period, and it was only reoccupied during the Parthian period.[50] The ruins of the city were located thirty kilometers north of Nippur, so it is not impossible that inhabitants of the region visited the tell.

The tablet is inscribed in a single column in portrait orientation, a layout commonly used for school copies of royal inscriptions from the first millennium BCE.[51] It was also a traditional layout for stone foundation tablets.[52] This

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[46] Gabbay/Jiménez 2019: 68; Jursa 2005: 111–12; and Joannès 1992: 87.

[47] Joannès 1992: 94.

[48] See Steinkeller 2004a: 135–36. As Steinkeller (2004a: 137) states, it is difficult to reconstruct the exact number of complete barrels that these fragments constitute, but it must have been between nine and twelve.

[49] Steinkeller 2004a: 135.

[50] Steinkeller 2004b: 29.

[51] The same layout is known for almost all the school copies, and the tablets edited above, BM 91081 and BM 33344, also confirm it. For more examples, see Paulus 2018: 143–149; Hallo 2006; Sollberger 1967. The Old Babylonian copies of royal inscriptions were mostly written on two-column tablets.

[52] See, e. g. the layout of an inscription of Sîn-iddinam on a limestone tablet: 41.222 (Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore), edited by Hallo 1967: 97–99.

arrangement of the text contrasts with the layout of the barrel fragments found at Mashkan-shapir, which arrange the inscription in two columns. Thus, it may be that the copyist did not deem the two-column format necessary information to include. On the other hand, we cannot exclude the possibility that a different artifact served as his original.[53]

AO 17635 is 7.9 cm wide, 13.4 cm long, and 3.5 cm thick. Both sides are inscribed, each containing nineteen lines. The scribe certainly tried to harmonize the number of lines on the obverse and reverse. He copied almost all the lines of the first column of the original clay barrel, but only the first eighteen lines of the second original column. The lines II 18–35 are missing. It is difficult to say whether this omission was a deliberate choice or if it reflects the poor condition of the original, which in any case can be inferred from the frequent use of *ḫepi* glosses in the extant passage.[54] The cuneiform signs average 0.5 cm in height. Generally, the sign forms reflect what one would expect from an Old Babylonian royal inscription, although a few deviations can be observed.[55] A reconstruction of the state of the Old Babylonian inscription copied by the scribe is proposed in figure 4 at the end of this article.

2.1. *Transliteration and Translation*[56]

i 1	o. 1	[u₄ en] gal	(o. 1–5) [When] the great [lord,
1	2	[ur-saĝ ᵈner]gal	the hero Ner]gal, in his over-
2	3	⸢uruᵏⁱ⸣-⸢ni⸣ [maš-gán]-šabra(*erasure*)ᵏⁱ	flowing[!] heart verily caused his city [Mashkan]-shapir to rise.
3	4	šà ḪAR-⸢bé⸣ gi₄-a-⸢na⸣ šà **gú**-bé gi₄-a-na	
4	5	zi-dè-eš mu-un-è-[a]	

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[53] There are attestations for Neo-Babylonian or Late Babylonian apprentice scribes being taught how to write on barrel-shaped artifacts: Foster (2003) has published an interesting example of six such objects from the Late Babylonian period, made by young apprentices to practice how to inscribe them with an archaizing ductus.

[54] For *ḫepi* glosses see Worthington 2012: 25–27.

[55] For these deviations see the remarks to the individual lines, esp. to o. 4.

[56] Of the two columns to the left of the transliteration, the first corresponds to the line numbers of the composite text in Steinkeller 2004a: 140–143 and the second one to the respective position in AO 17635. The transliteration generally only reproduces the first-millennium copy. Where it deviates from the original inscription, the respective lines of the Old Babylonian version are transliterated in indented lines and the differences marked by bold font face. Arrows (→) indicate continuing lines. The translation of the tablet is based on the one given by Steinkeller with slight adjustments: The parts of the text that were not copied by the scribe of AO 17635 are translated in round brackets. Superscript exclamation marks indicate words translated from the original inscription that were not copied accurately in AO 17635. For reasons of reader-friendliness, we have left out the larger sections that the scribe omitted from his copy.

5	6	bàd-bi ki sikil-l[a]	(o. 6–9) and (with this words that cannot be changed) he grand-ly decr*broken*(eed)! [to] erect its city wall i[n] a virgin place (and) *broken*(to expand) its dwellings,
6	7	gal-bi dù-a-[da]	
7–8	8	ki-tuš-bi *ḫe-pí* [(…)] ki-tuš-bi **daĝal-la-da** **inim nu kàm-me-da-na**	
9	9	⌜maḫ⌝ bí-**NI-UD** *ḫe-pí* [(…)] mah bí-**in-du₁₁-ga-a**	
10–11	10	⌜u₄⌝-ba ᵈsuen-i-**NI**-na-⌜am⌝ u₄-ba ᵈsuen-i-**din**-na-am **nita kala-ga**	[th]en Sîn-iddinam!, (the power-ful male),
12	11	⌜ú⌝-a úrim^ki-⌜ma⌝	the provider [of] Ur,
13	12	lugal larsa^ki-[ma]	king [of] Larsa
14	13	lugal ⌜ki⌝-en-gi uri-⌜ke₄⌝ lugal ki-en-gi **ki**-uri-ke₄	king of Sumer and Akkad
15	14	lú é-babbar é ᵈutu-ke₄	(o. 14–15) [the one who] built the Ebabbar, the house of Utu,
16	15	mu!-un-dù-[a]	
17	16	i₇**SÙḪ** i₇ daĝal-la i₇**idigna** i₇ daĝal-la	(o. 16–17) who excavated the Tigris!, the broad river,
18	17	mu-un-ba!-al-a	
19	18	**KI.AN.MÙŠ!** maḫ **nidba** maḫ	(o. 18–r. 1) who greatly perfec-ted! the splendid offerings! of the Anunnaki gods–this being I,
20	19	ᵈa-nun-na-ke₄(*erasure*)-ne	
21	r. 1	⌜**KI**⌝ gal bí-in-du₇-me-[en] **šu** gal bí-in-du₇-a-me-en	
22	2	a-rá gal-gal ki-[bi]	(r. 2–3) [because] I sought all the great things that are appropriate for [that] place,
23	3	mu-da-kíĝ-kíĝ-[ĝá-aš]	
24–25	4	**MU** daĝal-la-ĝu₁₀ tùm-tùm-[bi] **éren** daĝal-la-ĝu₁₀ tùm-tùm-bi	and because I [had the tr]ue [expertise] of mustering my vast troops!,
	r. e.	[zi-d]è-eš m[u-zu-a]-ĝu₁₀-<šè>	
26	5	**BÀD**-bi ᵈner[gal] **nam**-bi-**šè** ᵈnergal	(r. 5–7) because! of that, Nergal,
27–31	6	(*empty*) (*5 lines not transliterated*)	(…)
32–33	7	uru^ki-**a**-ni maš-gán-šabra^ki *ḫe-pí* [(…)] uru^ki-ni maš-gán-šabra^ki **ki kù-ga** →	[In order that] [the wa]ll of his city Mashkan-shapir, *broken*(the pure place), may rais[(se!)] its head,

33–35	8	[bà]d-bi˹ saĝ BI [(x x) x]	(with joyous heart he made com-
		→ bàd-bi s[aĝ] íl	plete the building instructions
		šà ḫúl-la-ni-ta	for me.)
		á áĝ-ba ḫa-ma-ni-in-til	
36–37	9	[u₄]-ba igi-4-ĝál-la ugn[im	[Th]en, [hav]ing mobilized one-
		kalam-ma-ĝu₁₀]	fourth of the ar[mies of my land],
38–40	10	[u]m-mi-zi iti-da u₄–30-k[a x x x d]u₈	for one month, for thirty days,
		um-mi-zi	[I had them make bri]cks.
		iti-da u₄–30-ka	
		sig₄-bi ḫé-em-mi-du₈	
41–42	11	bàd gal-bi ᵈner[gal]	That great wall – "Ner[gal] de-
		bàd gal-bi	stroys the enemy lands˹ [for me]"
		ᵈnergal →	(is its name.)
42–43	12	**RAB** erím x-[ma]-˹sì˺-sì˺-ke˹ [mu-bi-im]	
		→ **kur** erím ḫa-ma-sì-sì-ke	
		mu-bi-im	
ii 1–3	13	ù-**ZU** mu-˹bi˺ gal-bi [ḫé-em-mi-sa₄]	In triumph˹ (I named it) grandly
		ù-**ma** mu-bi	with this name. (When the great
		gal-bi ḫé-em-mi-sa₄	wall) of Mashkan-shapir I erec-
		u₄ bàd gal	ted [...]
4–10	14	maš-gán-šabra<ᵏⁱ> [m]u-dù-˹a˺ [x x x x]	
		(*empty*) (*6 lines not transliterated*)	
11	15	mu-**un**-˹sa₆˺-sa₆-[ga-ĝá-a]	(r. 15–16) [When I] made every-
		u₄ bala du₁₀-ga mu(-)sa₆-sa₆-ga-ĝá-a	thing prosperous – in the days of
11–12	16	u₄ bala du₁₀-ga : še 3 gur-˹ta˺-[**àm**?]	sweet reign: 3 *kurru* of barley,
		še 3 gur-ta	
13	17	zú-lum 10 gur-ta-à[**m**?]	10 *kurru* of dates,
		zú-lum 10 gur-ta	
14–16	18	sík 15 ma: ì-ĝiš 2(**bán**)-ta : →	15 minas of wool: 2 *sūtu* of vege-
		→ ì-**ḪUL 3(bán)**-t[a-àm]	table oil, 4˹ *sūtu* of lard˹
		sík 15 **ma-na-ta**	
		ì-ĝiš 2(bán)-ta	
		ì-šáḫ **4(bán)**-ta-àm	
17	19	[gan]ba šà úrimᵏⁱ	in the market of Ur (...)
		(*empty*)	
		(*26 lines not transliterated*)	

2.2. Remarks

(o. 3) The sign AL of ŠABRA contains an extra vertical and oblique wedge at the end. This seems to be a kind of dittography.

(o. 4) The scribe mistook the sign ḪAR for GÚ, which is probably due to their similar shape. The sign GI$_4$ is one instance of a number of signs scattered throughout the tablet that look "too archaic to be true", even against the setting of the already archaic sign forms of the original. Other such examples are ŠEŠ (o. 11), GI (o. 13), MU (o. 15), and possibly SUM (r. 12) and SA$_6$ (r. 15). These signs raise doubts about the scribe actually copying their exact shape directly from the original. Rather, one might suspect that he "improved" upon the ancientness of the text by employing hyperarchaic signs that he took from paleographic sign lists. For example, the sign MU (o. 15) looks more like a sign of the Middle-Babylonian period. This form of the sign is well known from kudurrus.[57] It is possible that the scribe knew it from syllabaries with older cuneiforms signs.[58] Other hints at the tablet not being a mere facsimile of the original are given by the use of rather cursive sign forms in other instances, cf. MU (r. 3), BI (r. 8) or ŠEŠ (r. 19):

MU: 　　BI: 　　ŠEŠ:

Both of these changes to the original presuppose that the scribe was able to identify the signs in question.

(o. 8) As the *ḫepi* gloss indicates, the original was broken for this passage, so the scribe of AO 17635 could not copy the remainder of what would have been i 7–8 in the original.

(o. 9) The scribe's misreading of this line adds to the evidence that the original was broken in this area. Before the *ḫepi* gloss, he wrote maḫ bí-NI-UD for maḫ bí-in-du$_{11}$-ga-a. He may have misread the beginning of the sign KA as the sign UD, or else his aim was to give as close as possible an approximation of the extant traces on the original. If this is true, it might also serve as an explanation for the sign NI instead of IN, that is, without the *Winkelhaken*.[59] For a similar case of only partially copying of a sign, see the commentary on r. 8.

(o. 10) The erasure close to the sign EN suggests that it might have been written a first time, but then erased and repositioned more appropriately. What should be the sign DIN was apparently misread as NI.[60] After this line, the scribe omitted the phrase nita kala-ga, which might either indicate that it too was broken in the original, or else that he simply skipped the line when reading it.

(o. 13) The toponym ki-uri "northern Babylonia" is virtually always written with the sign KI in Old Babylonian royal inscriptions. The shortened version with just the sign URI however appears in bilingual compositions from the first

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[57] E. g. U 19, a kudurru found among other objects in the *gipāru* of Nabonidus in the city of Ur, employs the same form of the sign MU. Paulus dated it to the reign of Adad-shuma-iddina (1222–1217) or Adad-shuma-usur (1216–1187); see Paulus 2014: 798–802.

[58] Cf. the paleographic syllabaries CT 5, pl. 9 = K. 2839+ (CDLI P238184), o. ii 14; and CT 5, pl. 15 = 1882–05–22, 571 (CDLI P237218), ii′ 14′–15′.

[59] Cf., e. g. Steinkeller 2004a: 148, fig. 78.

[60] See for comparison Steinkeller 2004a: 150, figs. 86–87.

millennium.[61] That the scribe of AO 17635 omitted this KI might be the result of him following the writing that he was familiar with, see also the commentary on o. 19, r. 7, and r. 15.

(o. 16) The scribe copied SÙḪ instead of IDIGNA, which again is probably best explained by the similar shape of the two signs in the Old Babylonian ductus.

(o. 18) The scribe apparently could not identify the sign PAD of the *diri* compound NIDBA (PAD.AN.MÙŠ). He instead copied the sign as KI.

(o. 19) Before the last sign of this line, there are traces of an erased sign. The scribe possibly started writing the sign NE too close to the others and then decided to shift it so that it would become aligned with the last signs of the previous lines. It might also be the case that he, familiar with the *plene* writing of the plural suffix {ene} as it occurs frequently in first-millennium bilingual compositions, actually started off writing ᵈa-nun-na-ke₄-**e**-ne. He possibly then realized that the original did not feature the sign E and erased it. For similar phenomena, see the commentary on o. 13, r. 7, and r. 15.

(r. 1) What in the original was the sign ŠU seems to be KI in AO 17635. Also, the scribe omitted the A in bí-in-du₇-a-me-en. Whether the latter was already omitted in the original or only by the copyist himself cannot be ascertained.

(r. 4) The first sign of the line, MU instead of ÉREN, might be a case of *aberratio oculi*, as the MU appears at the beginning of the previous line. The scribe also copied the ensuing line of the original on the right edge of the tablet. Why he might have done so is not clear. It is possible that he inserted this line only later.

(r. 5) Line 26 of the Old Babylonian version has nam-bi-šè ᵈnergal. The variant BÀD-bi ᵈnergal in AO 17635 could either be the result of a reading error on the part of the copyist, or of a variation on the original barrel. The former scenario might be explained by the likely poor state of preservation of the line (consider that the following five lines were apparently destroyed in the original, see the commentary on r. 6), the latter by some kind of contamination with bàd gal-bi ᵈnergal in lines 41–42 of the original.

(r. 6) This line is empty, which was the scribe's way of indicating that a larger portion of the original (in this case lines i 27–31) was badly damaged, see also the commentary on r. 14.

(r. 7) The ḫepi gloss in combination with the omission of the next line in AO 17635 again underlines the bad state of the original. The scribe also added an A between KI and NI. Given that the analytical writing -a-ni for the possessive suffix {ani} is a common trait of first-millennium bilingual texts, it is pos-

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[61] Cf., e. g. the Elevation of Ishtar (Hruška 1969: 489) IV B 33–34: ki-in-gi uri! // *ma-a-ti šu-me-ri u ak-ka-di-i*. This equation is also attested in lexical lists, cf., e. g. K 2035a+ (MSL XI: 55), o. ii 5: ki-in-gi(-)uriᵏⁱ = *māt* MIN(*šumerî*) [*u akkadî*]. It might be that the whole phrase ki-in-gi-uriᵏⁱ was understood as one word, requiring only one determinative at the end. This then might explain why the KI in between ki-in-gi and uri vanished in these forms.

sible that the scribe added the extra sign because he recognized the grammatical morpheme. See also the possible explanation of the erasure in o. 19 and the insertion of UN into the prefix chain in r. 15. Again, however, these examples might originate in variants on the object from which the scribe copied the inscription.

(r. 8) The sign BI after BÀD is written in a rather cursive ductus. This contrasts with what should be the beginning of ÍL, but is copied as a fully-fledged Old Babylonian monumental BI. The end of the line is broken, so one cannot exclude the possibility that the scribe copied the other half of said ÍL as well. In any case, the empty space left after this second BI seems to indicate that he did not identify it as being part of the sign ÍL. Its elaborate shape might again be the result of the scribe's supposed endeavors to document the traces of half-broken signs as accurately as possible, see also the signs NI and UD in o. 9.

(r. 10) Lines 38–40 of the original combined in the same line. As the scribe elsewhere uses gloss markers to indicate his own conflation of separate lines in the original (cf. r. 16–18), this seems to indicate that the lines were already combined into one on the scribe's source. The end of the sign DU_8 is visible on the right edge. However, considering the remaining space in AO 17635, it seems as though he omitted line 40 of the original, possibly because it was broken.

(r. 12) The first sign of this line, transliterated here as RAB, takes the place of KUR in the original. It might, however, also be understood as an unfinished NE, which is the next sign of the line. A further possibility would be that the original had a variant, namely GÚ in addition to or instead of KUR, cf. for comparison the line kur gú-érim-ma-ĝá from a similar inscription of Sîn-iddinam.[62] The sign after ÉRIM does not seem to be the expected ḪA. One might consider ḪÉ instead, but too little is preserved to be certain. For some unknown reason, the SÌs are written upside down.

(r. 13) What should be the sign MA looks like the sign ZU, a confusion that can arise from an archaically shaped MA with a vertical wedge at the front. In view of the lack of space at the end of the line, the scribe most likely omitted line ii 3 of the original. Considering that there are no gloss markers to indicate a deliberate conflation of lines ii 1–3 of the inscription (see the commentary on r. 10 and r. 18), it seems as though they were already written in one line on the original. This might also explain why line ii 3 was omitted.

(r. 14) After maš-gán-šabra, the scribe omitted the sign KI. The line was most likely broken and the scribe therefore only copied the remaining signs. The space left after the line must have meant that part of the original was broken. In fact, lines ii 5–10 of the original are not copied in AO 17635.

(r. 15) The writing of the signs SA_6 is peculiarly complex. For other such sign forms, see the commentary on o. 4. Furthermore, the scribe seems to have reversed the order of the syntax of line 11 of the original, where one would expect

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[62] Volk 2011: 71, MS 5000 iii 28.

u₄ bala du₁₀-ga mu sa₆-sa₆-ga-ĝá-a. The addition of the UN could either be a variant in the original, or a deliberate insertion by the scribe, who might have aimed to make explicit his understanding of the sign sequence as a prefix chain; cf. similar instances in o. 19 and r. 7. Whether this was the original meaning of the line is not clear; cf. Steinkeller's translation "During my sweet reign of good *years*" (Steinkeller 2004a: 142, emphasis added).

(r. 17) The signs GUR and TA appear to be stretched horizontally. Their extended width was probably employed to fill the line evenly.

(r. 18) The sign MA is used here to abbreviate the word ma-na. This abbreviation was also used in Neo-Babylonian and Late Babylonian administrative documents.[63] Two gloss markers separate u₄ bala du₁₀-ga from ì-ĝiš and ì-šáḫ, most probably indicating that the designated phrases were written in different lines on the original. The passage reading ì-šáḫ 4(bán) on the original was likely damaged, as is suggested by their erroneous rendering as ì-ḪUL 3(bán) in AO 17635.

(r. 19) Under the sign KI there is an imprint of some kind of cloth, which must have come into contact with the tablet during or shortly after the copying process, when the clay was still wet. The original inscription mentions Larsa (larsam^ki) in addition to Ur (úrim^ki). Yet this toponym and also the entire remainder of the composition, a total of twenty-six lines, were omitted by the scribe. It is impossible to determine whether this was due to variation in or bad state of the original, or the personal choice of the copyist.

3. Conclusions

The three tablets edited here exhibit a fair amount of similarities: All three of them copy inscriptions of Old Babylonian kings that include a list of tariffs, and all three do so by imitating the ductus of the original. The first two, BM 91081 and BM 33344, are meticulous facsimiles of well-preserved original(s). While the features of the copies themselves do not reveal much about the circumstances under which they were drawn up, their colophons hold valuable information on when, where, and by whom the original inscription was studied.

The third tablet, AO 17635, although unfortunately lacking a colophon, allows for glimpses into how the scribe approached copying the royal inscription: Apparently, he was faced with the challenge of a severely damaged original. While he was able to copy most of the extant text accurately, a few copying mistakes show that he could not understand every single sign (o. 4, o. 18, r. 12). The fact that he used both archaizing and contemporary, much more cursive signs, how-

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[63] Cf. *MZL*²: 361, no. 552. An example would be CT 44, 84, a list of allocations to the *kalû* of the Esagil temple in Babylon. The document is dated to May–June 312 BCE (Antigonos 6).