

KASSITE EXERCISES: LITERARY AND LEXICAL EXTRACTS

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The development and transmission of cuneiform literature between the Old Babylonian period and the first millennium is still inadequately known and understood. The group of tablets presented here provides a small window on the riches of the literary and lexical texts used in Kassite period education. In addition to lexical extracts, the exercises include a surprising variety of texts and genres in both Akkadian and Sumerian: myths (*Inana's Descent; Enlil and Sud*), proverbs, riddles(?), *Code of Hammurabi*, omens, and incantations.

A typical Middle Babylonian exercise tablet is pillow-shaped, and measures about 7 × 4 cm. Obverse and reverse are inscribed in different directions. The obverse has a literary extract in landscape format. The reverse contains a few lines from a lexical text and is in portrait format. In many cases only the obverse or only the reverse is inscribed. Occasionally, the anepigraphic side still shows evidence of previous writing and erasure. This text type is known in numerous exemplars from Nippur and Babylon, as well as in a few exemplars from Kish (*MSL SS 1 23*), Ur (*UET 6/2 400*), Qala'at al-Bahrain (Eidem 1997: 79:319),

and perhaps Sippar (*CT 58 61 = BM 81700*), all represented by one example each. In addition, there are two or three unprovenanced exemplars known to me.¹

A related tablet type is the Middle Babylonian lentil. Obverse and reverse contain the same kinds of extracts as the pillow-shaped type. The text on the reverse is at an irregular angle to that on the obverse. The diameter is usually between 6 and 7 cm. So far, Middle Babylonian lentils are known from Nippur only, except from one exemplar from Qala'at al-Bahrain (Eidem 1997: 79:320).

Similar tablet formats are known from the Old Babylonian period, and occasionally the dating remains uncertain. On average, Middle Babylonian lentils are smaller than Old Babylonian ones. Old Babylonian lentils repeat the extract (teacher's model and pupil's copy) and very rarely contain a second exercise. In most cases Middle and Old Babylonian lentils can be distinguished easily. Old Babylonian pillow-shaped exercise tablets in landscape format are very rare, but they do exist. One type, known from Nippur only, has a model text on the left-hand side, repeated by a pupil to the right (HS 1498 = *TMHNF 3 50 = Proverb Collec-*

I wish to thank Leonhard Sassmannshausen, who drew my attention to several relevant tablets in the Philadelphia collection and beyond and made many valuable suggestions. Dr. Philip Jones contributed to the decipherment of UM 29-16-606, and obliged me with a number of poignant observations. My thanks are due to both. Responsibility for all readings and interpretations remains entirely mine.

1. NBC 7834; MAH 10828; and perhaps AO 17664 (Durand, *TBÉR 55*, edition McEwan [1986: 87]; reference courtesy L. Sassmannshausen). MAH 10828 was published in photograph by Boissier, *Bab. 9* (1926) 19–21, with pl. 1. The photograph shows that the reverse is lexical. It may contain an extract from the list of birds, but unfortunately not a single entry can be read from the photograph.

tion 2 RRRR; CBS 6498 = *PBS* 1/2 136 = *Proverb Collection* 3 V; BT 15—formerly CBS 12569—unknown exercise). Another type, also known from Nippur, is not divided into columns. UM 29-15-858 (unpublished) has two lines from the hymn *Lipit-Eštar A* (lines 98 and 100).² This piece is undoubtedly Old Babylonian. It uses elaborate, somewhat old-fashioned (Ur III-like) sign forms, in compliance with the paleography of Old Babylonian literary texts from Nippur. The format differs slightly from the average Kassite exercise tablet. The corners are more rounded, and the tablet is somewhat larger. CBS 13329 (fig. 2), here included among the Kassite literary extracts, may in fact be Old Babylonian as well. It shares with UM 29-15-858 the rounded corners. Both tablets are almost completely filled on the obverse, whereas the Kassite pieces usually leave most of the obverse empty. The Old Babylonian pieces are inscribed on the obverse only. The crosswise combination with a lexical extract on the reverse is characteristic for the Kassite exercises.³

Kassite exercise texts are often written in very bad hands. It is quite possible that many more examples are among the unattractive pieces still awaiting publication in museums all over the world. In any case this is true for the texts from Nippur and Babylon. The findspot, Merkes 25n1 in Babylon, may have yielded over one hundred examples (see below). Only one of these may be identified with certainty among the published Babylon texts.

The present contribution will focus on the Kassite exercises that are kept in the University of Pennsylvania Museum in Philadelphia and that are at least partly understandable to me. Several tablets—badly broken, badly written, or both—successfully resisted my attempts at decipherment. A

2. Reference courtesy H. L. J. Vanstiphout.

3. For Old Babylonian pillow-shaped tablets not from Nippur see the discussion in Michalowski (1981: 386–87) and (1998: 66–67).

catalogue of the published and unpublished exercises known to me is found in the Appendix.

1. Dating

None of our tablets is dated, nor do they contain personal names or subscripts. The dating of this corpus therefore depends mainly on archaeological data. In addition we may adduce paleographic and textual evidence.

1.1 Archaeological Evidence from Nippur⁴

Several tablets from our corpus were found in dated contexts. A group of exercise tablets discovered during the 12th Nippur campaign derives from ash pits in a Kassite temple (see *OIC* 23, 12–13). Most of these tablets remain unpublished,⁵ but short descriptions of format and contents are available in the catalogue by M. Civil in *OIC* 23. The tablet 3N-T195 (IM 58367) was published in *OIP* 97: 90 42. It has a Sumerian text on the obverse and a bilingual extract from *ur₅-ra* 13 (domestic animals) on the reverse. According to the catalogue the piece derives from Kassite layers (*OIP* 97: 76). The lentil-shaped exercise tablet 11N-T26 was found in the temple in the WA area in the context of Kassite pottery (*OIC* 22: 10).

Tablet 14 N 229 (*OIP* 111: pl. 98) has a slightly variant version of *ur₅-ra* 2 117–123. It was found as an isolated piece in the foundation of the Level II building in area WC-1, and was registered as a “deliberate fill” (see *OIP* 111: 120: Locus 34). The piece is therefore contemporary with, or predates the Level II building. This building was dated approximately to the second half of the thirteenth century (*OIP* 111: 23).

4. Information on 2N-T and 3N-T tablets is partly derived from field notes by F. Steele, the epigrapher of the second and third Nippur campaigns, and from a typewritten catalogue. Both manuscripts are kept in the University of Pennsylvania Museum.

5. 12N 587 was published in transliteration in *MSL* SS 1, 73. 12N 579 (*ibidem*) apparently has a different format.

Other tablets have not been found in securely dated layers, but may be identified as Kassite by other tablets found in the same context. Tablets 2N-T348 (IM 58953) and 349 (IM 57957) derive from locus TB 62-B1. Both are inscribed crosswise. Tablet 2N-T348 has a Sumerian extract on the obverse, and a few lines from *ur₅-ra* 6 (wooden objects) on the reverse. 2N-T349 has an extract from *An = Anum* I on the reverse⁶; the obverse is unidentified. The locus TB 62 level B1 is not described or interpreted in the excavation reports. This location, however, yielded various pieces of Kassite origin. Among these are Kassite administrative tablets (2N-T347 = IM 57956 and 2N-T353 = IM 57959) and a clay *kudurru* (2N-T356 = UM 55-21-62). The latter piece is clearly Kassite as was amply demonstrated by Sassmannshausen (1994). Tablets 2N-T75 (IM 57836; lentil-shaped) and 2N-T79 (A 29934) come from TB 34 B. Both combine a Gilgamesh extract in Akkadian with a few lines from the *giš* section of *ur₅-ra*.⁷ No discussion of the finds and the stratigraphy of TB 34 B is known to me. Among the tablets in this lot are two fragments of *ur₅-ra* 1 (they may, in fact, belong to the same tablet). Since the Old Babylonian Nippur version of *ur₅-ra* began with what was later tablet 3, we can be fairly certain that this lot is post-Old Babylonian.

Some of our tablets may derive from post-Kassite layers. A group of exercises was found in TA 70 IV (2N-T 343–345⁸; 357–359; 363; and 364).⁹ Most of these are known to me only from

6. Published in transliteration by Litke (1998: 20 and 27–28, source G); see §3.2.

7. 2N-T79 was published in photograph and transliteration by Tigay (1982: 297 photograph, and 266–67 transliteration), George (1999: 127–28). (Both publications ignore the reverse, which preserves traces of the lexical exercise.) 2N-T75 was published in transliteration by Falkowitz (1983/84: 37). A copy of the text, with a discussion of find-spot and related tablets, may be found in Veldhuis (1999).

8. 2N-T343 was published in *MSL* SS 1, 89; 2N-T344 in *MSL* 5, 198–199 (*NBGT X*), with corrections in *MSL* SS 1, 90.

9. A 29975; IM 57954; A 29976; IM 57961; IM 58954; IM 57962; IM 58955; and IM 58956 respectively.

the typewritten catalogue (see n. 4) and from field notes. All these tablets are reported to be inscribed crosswise on the obverse and the reverse. The locus TA level IV is associated with Neo-Assyrian rule in Nippur (see *OIP* 78: 69–70). M. Civil, however, maintains that the archaeological context of this group does not allow a precise dating (*MSL* SS 1: 89). Finally, 2N-T63 (UM 55-21-18; fig. 23) was found in area TA 20 I 3, a layer associated with the Achaemenid period (*OIP* 78: 76–77). This dating is highly improbable, both on paleographic and textual grounds. The tablet is inscribed on the reverse with a monolingual version of *ur₅-ra* 2 244–249. The piece is most likely a stray, but no specific information is available to support this conclusion.

The majority of the remaining exercises were discovered during the early Nippur campaigns (museum numbers CBS; UM 29-; N; Ni; and HS). For these tablets no useful archaeological information is available.

1.2 Archaeological Evidence from Babylon

The locus Merkes 25n1 yielded 136 tablets, apparently all school texts (Pedersén 1998a: 112). The house in which they were found is dated to the late Kassite period. Koldewey in his report on this find commented: “Viele sind gut geformte Tabletten länglichen Formats, 10×6cm groß, die auf der einen Seite in der Längsrichtung, auf der anderen in der Querrichtung beschrieben sind” (1908: 17). This is an adequate description of the tablet format under discussion. Only two tablets from this lot have been published: VS 24 41 and 93. Of these, the first belongs to our group. The second (*Atrahasis*) is most probably not of this type. Van Dijk dated both published tablets to the Old Babylonian period. This led Pedersén to propose that the whole lot may be a group of Old Babylonian exercises that survived into the Kassite period, and was in the process of being recycled (Pedersén 1998a: 112; Pedersén 1998b: 337). However, van Dijk’s dating is based upon inter-

nal evidence alone. Van Dijk emphasized the uncertainties related to Old Babylonian and Kassite paleography in his introduction (*VS* 24: 5). The format of *VS* 24 41 and the unpublished pieces described by Koldewey make a Kassite dating, consistent with the archaeological context, much more likely.

1.3 Archaeological Evidence from *Qala' at al-Bahrain*

Two of our texts, one pillow-shaped and one lentil, come from the island of Bahrain, ancient Dilmun. They belong to a group of nine mostly administrative texts that were excavated by a Danish expedition several decades ago and recently published by Jesper Eidem (1997). These texts are securely dated to the period of Kassite domination; the only period so far for which cuneiform literacy is attested in ancient Dilmun. The corpus of texts from Dilmun was considerably enlarged recently by finds by a French expedition (André-Salvini 1999). This group of about fifty pieces contains tablets dated to Agum III. As far as I know this group does not include exercises of the kind discussed here. There is, however, a fragment of a multi-column tablet that may represent a version of *Diri*.¹⁰

1.4 Paleographic and Textual Evidence

The paleographic distinction between late Old Babylonian and Kassite is notoriously difficult. Many of our tablets use, in fact, (late) Old Babylonian sign forms. However, school tablets through all ages tend to use slightly earlier forms, probably because they are considered “good,” or “classic” forms. Other tablets are written in such

10. André-Salvini (1999: 126: 163). The contents of the tablet are described by the author as sections from *ur₅-ra = hubullu* and *lu₂ = ša*. From the little that can be read from the photograph it seems more likely that it is *Diri* (sections TUG₂ and EN in the right column).

bad hands that they are hardly legible and utterly useless for paleographic analysis. The only positive paleographic evidence is the typical Kassite form of KUR found in N 4529 (fig. 9) and UM 29-16-35 (fig. 10).

Textually the lexical extracts are most useful for dating purposes. The extracts from *ur₅-ra = hubullu* show a text that is fairly close to the first millennium “canonical” recension and is rather far removed from the Old Babylonian Nippur version. The extracts in our corpus are in majority monolingual Sumerian. Monolingual copies of *ur₅-ra = hubullu* are virtually unknown in the first millennium.¹¹ In Middle Babylonian Ugarit and Emar monolingual and bilingual versions of *ur₅-ra = hubullu* existed side by side. Most probably this was the case in Kassite Babylonia as well. On the one hand, CBS 8769 (*SLT* 45) is a monolingual copy of *ur₅-ra* 14 and 15.¹² The text is no doubt Kassite in origin as demonstrated by the Kassite form of KUR in lines 20 and 22. On the other hand, HS 1828 + HS 1829 is a bilingual copy of *ur₅-ra* 8 from the same period (see *MSL* 7: 4). Similarly, *ur₅-ra* extracts in our corpus occur side by side in monolingual and bilingual formats. The majority, however, are monolingual. The bilingual examples are N 3988 (*MSL* 6: 82, S₆: *ur₅-ra* 7A; see §3.1)¹³ and 3N-T195 (*OIP* 97: 90 42: *ur₅-ra* 13). A further case of unknown provenance may be AO 17664 (Durand *TBÉR* 55: *ur₅-ra* 2), but the attribution of this piece to our corpus remains uncertain.

11. The only example known to me is *SpBTU* 3 112 (*ur₅-ra* 16).

12. Collation showed that more text is preserved than reproduced in *SLT*. Several small fragments in the box could be rejoined, showing that a) the text is monolingual and b) the reverse had *ur₅-ra* 15. The preserved part of *ur₅-ra* 14 is very close to the Ugarit/Emar version. Virtually nothing is left of *ur₅-ra* 15.

13. The Middle Babylonian date of this exercise is confirmed by UM 29-13-947 (fig. 17), which has approximately the same passage from *ur₅-ra* 7A in a monolingual version, following the same order of items (see §3.1).

Finally, one small piece of circumstantial evidence may be adduced here. 2N-T75 (IM 57836; Veldhuis 1999: 391) is one of the round tablets in our corpus. It has on the obverse a few lines from Gilgameš (in Akkadian; see §2.3) and on the reverse an extract from *ur₅-ra 5* (doors section). The extract on the obverse is followed by a number of peculiar “9” signs, with an extra horizontal wedge at the bottom. Series of such signs are known from a group of lentil-shaped exercise business documents from Kassite Nippur, recently published by Sassmannshausen (1997), who interpreted the signs as tallies, counting to ten. The presence of such tallies in one of the tablets in our corpus suggests a chronological, perhaps even contextual proximity of the two groups of school texts.

1.5 Conclusions

The texts from Qala’at al-Bahrain—only two in number—have a secure Kassite archaeological context. The Babylon texts may confidently be dated to the late Kassite period. Unfortunately, few of these texts have been published so far, so that this conclusion is of little help. The Nippur evidence is more complicated. Cole (1996: esp. Chapter 1) has recently investigated the history of Nippur. It is now generally agreed that archaeological and textual evidence for the late Old Babylonian and early Kassite period occupation in Nippur is entirely lacking. This may indicate either that the site was abandoned, or that the settlement was much reduced in size and importance. This process affected not only Nippur but all cities in Southern Babylonia. Textual evidence starts to reappear around 1400 BC. Nippur rose again to the status of a major center in the fourteenth and thirteenth century. After 1225 the settlement declined and only regained its former importance in the eighth century. During this period of decline there probably was a small population, perhaps connected to the Enlil temple. For this period of almost five centuries only a handful of texts from Nippur are known (see Cole 1996: 13 n. 50). Cole

has asserted that in the second half of the eighth century Nippur became an outpost for the Assyrian Empire. It derived its importance from its location on the border of a desert where tribal groups resisted Assyrian domination.

The history of Nippur leaves us with only a few chronological possibilities for the dating of our tablets. A late Old Babylonian origin, attractive from a paleographic point of view, is excluded. The period between 1225 and 750 is extremely unlikely, because of the paucity of textual evidence from Nippur in this period. Some of the 3N-T tablets are associated with Assyrian levels (TA 70 IV). We may therefore not entirely exclude the possibility that the crosswise format was used after 750. However, the exercise tablets that were found with the “Governor’s Archive” (*OIP* 114: nos. 114–123), securely dated to the second half of the eighth century, are closely related to the later Neo-Babylonian school tradition. They are either bilingual or in Akkadian. The text types (lists of occupations, lists of Akkadian verbal forms, the sign list *S^b*)¹⁴ all relate these exercises to later periods, and have no connection with our corpus.

Having said all that, the most likely date for our exercises is the period between 1400 and 1225 BC.

2. The Obverse Exercises

The extracts edited here are all very short, and often only partly understood. They derive their relevance from the very fact that they exist and thus attest to a large and diversified body of literature.

2.1 Code of Hammurabi

N 5489 (fig. 1) contains an extract from CH; probably §1. The reverse is anepigraphic.

14. For comparison see, for instance, the exercises from the Nabû ša Harê temple in Babylon published by Cavigneaux (1981).

šum-ma a-wi-[lum ...]
la uk-ti-i[n ...]

Another Middle Babylonian exercise that contains an extract from the *Code of Hammurabi* is MAH 10828 (Boissier, *Bab* 9, 1926: pl. 1), of unknown provenance. This latter tablet contains §7, preceded by two lines from *Lipit-Eštar A*.

2.2 Riddles

CBS 13329 (fig. 2) contains three riddles in Akkadian with their solutions. The reverse is anepigraphic. Akkadian riddles are extremely rare. As far as I know *TIM* 9 53 is the only other example. In the present text the solutions are introduced by ki-bur₂-bi, a convention known from the Sumerian riddles (Civil 1987; Cavigneaux 1996, 15). Unfortunately, two of the riddles defied my attempts at decipherment.

1 []-[x]¹-ru iš-gu-nu ki-bur₂-bi
BA AK I KU₃-tu ^dsu'en-re-me-ni
ZA-al

2 ina qi₂-bi ki-bur₂-bi
DINGIR šit-ru-ki na-bi-^den-lil₂

3 x-x bar-re ki-bur₂-bi
[]x SI.A DINGIR

The riddles 1 and 2 have personal names as their solutions. Riddle 1 is unclear to me. In riddle 2 *šit-ru-ki* probably derives from *šitruhu* = magnificent. “On the command of the magnificent god. Solution: Nabi-Enlil.” Riddle 3 may say that something is surpassing (SI.A or diri). The solution is simply, “god.”

The format of CBS 13329 slightly deviates from the rest of our corpus. The corners are more rounded and the obverse is entirely filled with text. From a paleographic point of view the piece may, in fact, be Old Babylonian, though it does not seem to relate in format or contents to other Old Babylonian texts from Nippur.

2.3 Gilgameš and Enkidu

The two pieces below that seem to belong to a version of the Gilgameš epic are difficult to understand. CBS 14167 (fig. 3) is a round exemplar. On the reverse it has a monolingual version of the first few lines of *ur₅-ra 2*. The obverse reads: ^dbil₄-ga-mes SUM[?] sa-šū[?]. The reading SUM is uncertain. The sign corresponds to the Assyrian rather than to the Babylonian form.

UM 29-16-606 (fig. 4) mentions Enkidu. The reverse is anepigraphic. Apart from Enkidu's name very little can be understood.

[...]-ab ^den-ki-du₁₀ al-[x]
[...]-[x]¹ SAL-tum i-tak-ka-lu
[...] DINGIR.MEŠ ^ri[?]l-[x]-[x]¹

Two more Kassite exercise tablets with Gilgameš extracts have recently been published (2N-T75 and 79; see Veldhuis 1999).

2.4 Proverbs: Sumerian

UM 29-15-848 (fig. 5) is a lentil shaped tablet. The obverse has a one-line extract from *The Fowler and his Wife*. This is a short story in Sumerian that was included in *Nippur Proverb Collection* 21 (Alster 1997: 253–54).¹⁵ The reverse has a monolingual extract from *ur₅-ra 3* (section ^giš^{is}hašhur; §3.1). The obverse reads: dam mušendu₃ dam-a-n[i-ir?]: “The wife of the fowler (said) to her husband:” The extract does not even encompass a complete sentence.

N 5447 is a fragment of a lentil-shaped tablet. It was published by Sassmannshausen (1997: 208 no. 22 [photograph pl. 15]). It has the first few words of *Proverb Collection* 2 113 and 114.¹⁶ The reverse is uninscribed. The fragment is unusual in

15. The same story appears in an unprovenanced collection, now labeled *Proverb Collection* 24 (Alster 1997: 274).

16. See Gordon (1959: 260–61 and 538–39), Alster (1997: 68).

that the extract is followed on the same side by an extract from (probably) *ur₅-ra* 4 (^{giš}g[u-za]). It is not certain that this piece in fact belongs to our group. If the fragment turns out to be Old Babylonian, however, it is irregular as well. The new piece allows us to reconsider the reading and interpretation of *Proverb Collection* 2 113. There are now three sources (collated):

BBB (CBS 10972+): ur lul-la GU₂ sa₆ ur-gi₇
 gu₂-haš sa₆¹⁷
 SSSS (CBS 5902): ur lul-la kun s[a₆ ...]
 N 5447: ur lul-la ʾkunʾ s[a₆ ...]

A wild dog: a fine tail; a domesticated dog: a fine neck.

The term gu₂-haš (*kutallu*) designates the back of the head. The opposition lul-la <=> gi₇ is balanced by kun₂ <=> gu₂-haš. The latter opposition may be a metaphor for a difference in character—the (standing) tail of the wild dog as indication of independence as against the neck of the more submissive domestic dog. The implication seems to be that both have their own beauty. The variant GU₂ (for kun) in BBB is either an error, caused by the similarity between the two signs, or an unorthographic writing for kun (gun₂).

The second proverb in N 5447 is probably to be read ur ki tuš-tuš ʾx-xʾ. The parallel line in BBB (entry skipped in SSSS) has ur ki tuš-bi nu-mu-zu-a. The traces in N 5447 cannot be reconciled with anything close to that.

CBS 8039 (fig. 6) has a one-line Sumerian inscription that looks like a proverb. The reverse is anepigraphic.

17. Alster's reading ur lul-la gu₂-sa₆-sa₆? is impossible. Collation confirmed Gordon's reading of text BBB. The sign KUN in SSSS is absolutely clear. In N 5447 the sign looks like MAŠ₂. However, the surface is slightly worn and the difference between MAŠ₂ and KUN may well have been obliterated.

nig₂-mu si-li-im ša₃ ga-ra-ab-zu

I will let you know my business: well-being(??)
 of the heart.

Note the syllabic writing of silim. The lack of postpositions makes the interpretation of the line uncertain. If this were a proverb, it would fit well the beginning of Old Babylonian *Proverb Collection* 1 where every single proverb begins with NIG₂. The known versions of this collection do not contain the present line. Note, however, that different versions of *Proverb Collection* 1 existed in different Old Babylonian scribal centers (see Veldhuis 2000). Our proverb may well have existed in one of those local (i.e., non-Nippur) redactions.

Another Kassite exercise tablet with a Sumerian proverb is Ni 679, published in *ISSET* 2 109. This piece was recently edited by Alster (1997: 247). For the Sumerian proverbs on the reverse of UM 29-16-561, see §3.4.

Further evidence for post-Old Babylonian proverbs in Sumerian comes from N 3395 (Alster 1997: 288–90). This is a bilingual with Sumerian and Akkadian side by side in two columns. This format¹⁸ and the poor quality of the Sumerian are indicative of a Kassite dating.

The transmission of Sumerian proverbs to the post-Old Babylonian period is most dramatically illustrated by *Proverb Collection* 7, which is preserved in a single Old Babylonian exemplar from Nippur and two bilingual fragments from the Kuyunjik collection (Alster 1997: 155). The Old Babylonian tablet consists almost entirely of proverbs known from other, more frequently copied collections. Appropriately, it begins with the first proverb from the first collection a pupil would encounter in the Nippur school (*Proverb Collection* 2).¹⁹ *Proverb Collection* 7 is the epitome of

18. See most recently van Dijk (1998: 12 n. 16), and §2.7.

19. For the curricular setting of the Old Babylonian proverbs see Veldhuis (2000).

the corpus of proverbs as taught in the Nippur Eduba. Its survival into the first millennium remains a mystery.²⁰

2.5 Proverbs: Akkadian

UM 29-15-594 (fig. 7) has a two-line extract in Akkadian on the obverse, and a monolingual extract from *ur₅-ra 3* on the reverse (^{giš}asal₂).

[a-ra]-am-mu-um ki-ma kam₂-ma-ri e-le-nu
[mu?]-[ra]-am-mu-um ki-ma up-lim mu-uh-ha
ul i-šu

The dam(?) is high like an earthen wall.
The one who leaves(?) is like a louse without a head.

The startling imagery makes any reconstruction of the broken first words rather hazardous. Instead of *arammum* one could read *karammum* (“pile of grain,” “grain storage”) in line 1. In line 2 the louse that has no head is in all probability homeless rather than decapitated. The proposed reconstruction *murammûm*²¹ is derived from the verb *ramû*. In the D stem this verb has a meaning “to leave behind, desert, leave a job.”

2.6 Omens

UM 29-13-542 (fig. 8) has a liver-omen in Sumerian on the obverse. The reverse (not copied) has an unidentified (lexical?) text in small writing and is partly erased.

tukun-bi dagal [... šu-si ...]
lu₂-bi si nu-sa₂

If there is a broadening [to the left/right of the finger]
this man will not be all right.

20. The incipit of the Neo-Assyrian version is preserved in the Sidu catalogue published by Finkel (1986) line 4.

21. I owe this suggestion to Leonhard Sassmannshausen.

In liver omens *dagal* refers to a broadening either to the left or to the right of the “finger” (Kraus 1985: 181). Omens in Sumerian are very rare, and our text is by far the oldest example. As far as I know *CTN IV 89* is the only other divinatory text in monolingual Sumerian. Among the Late Babylonian texts from Uruk there are a few bilingual examples (*SpBTU 1 85* and *3 86*).²²

There are two more pieces from our group that may contain (Akkadian) omens. *4N-T52 (OIP 97 90, 41)* is undeciphered, but each line begins with *DIŠ*. I know of *2N-T359* only from a catalogue; it may contain Akkadian omens.

2.7 Sumerian Literature

N 4529 (fig. 9) has an extract from an unidentified hymnic text. The reverse is inscribed in the typical crosswise version, but the text is almost completely destroyed. The obverse is written in an uncharacteristically nice hand. The *KUR* sign (lines 2 and 4) has the typical Kassite form. Lines 1–2 are quoted in Civil (1994: 160).

[]-ru iri za-a-kam₂ kab-di in-ga-an-gar
[nib]ru^{ki}-a sag-kal kur-kur-ra-ke₄
[] KA igi-du um-mi-a ki-en-gi-ra-ke₄
[] e₂-kur giš-gal an ki-ke₄
[] giš-hur-ra diri
[du]r₂[?] ba-gar-gar-ra-am₃

The ... of the city is yours; moreover, you have established the standard measure.

In Nippur, pre-eminent over all the lands.
[...] the leader, the teacher of Sumer,
[...] in the Ekur, the pedestal of heaven and earth
[...] the design of which is superior
[...] is the one who is seated there.

UM 29-16-35 (fig. 10) has on its obverse a few lines from *Inana's Descent* corresponding approxi-

22. Piotr Michalowski informs me that there is an omen inserted in the long version of the letter of Ibbi-Sin to Puzur-Numušda.

mately to lines 26–35 of the Old Babylonian version (see Sladek 1974: 106–7). The reverse has an extract from *An = Anum* (see §3.2). Somewhat less than half of the tablet is preserved. It is possible, therefore, that the obverse had a second column with Akkadian translations. The Kassite date of UM 29-16-35 is confirmed by the typical form of the KUR sign, obverse 5 and 6. The text of *Inana's Descent* has some interesting variants. A peculiar one is *ud-da kur-ta* [...] in 5 and 6 for *ud-da kur-še₃* (“When I [have descended] to the underworld”). This variant may have been triggered by the fact that Akkadian *ina* under circumstances may correspond to *-ta*. The text has glosses in line 1 and 5. Unfortunately, I have not been able to decipher them.

Again, most interesting about this fragment is that it exists. It provides a link between the Old Babylonian versions and the later Akkadian story. The text will be fully treated in A. J. Ferrara's edition of the composition.

- 1 []-im-DU [...] gloss: x-ma
 2 [] x šu² luh²-ha [...]
 3 ʽsukkal¹-a-ni ʽnin-šubur-ʽra¹ [...]
 4 sukka¹-mu ʽnin-šubur [...]
 5 ud-da kur-ta [...] gloss: UD ša²
 6 ud-da kur-ta [...]
 7 ʽer² di-di-da [...]
 8 [x] ʽx¹ gu₂-en-na [...]
 9 traces

Not more than two lines lost.

N 3783 + N 5031 (fig. 11) is a lentil-shaped piece with four lines on the obverse and an unidentified sign list on the reverse (§3.3). Little of the obverse may be understood. The last line, surprisingly, gives the incipit of *Lugale* (van Dijk 1983).

- nim² nim-gir₂
 ʽx² eridu^{ki} ʽx¹
 du₃-a ugu-[] ʽx¹
 ʽlugal¹-e ud me-[l]am₂-bi nir-gal₂

M. Civil has published two one-line extracts from the story of Enlil and Sud in his edition of the composition (Civil 1983: UM 29-13-495 source G; and UM 29-13-545 source J published as UM 29-13-345). Both pieces belong to our group. The reverse of both tablets is uninscribed. Other extracts from Sumerian literary texts are found on the exercises from Babylon listed below (Appendix). They include hymnic texts (Sumerian and bilingual) and bilingual narratives (Sargon and Anzu).

Sumerian literary texts from the Kassite period are still relatively rare. The usual format is bilingual, with Sumerian in the left and Akkadian in the right column. It is possible that the fragment of *Inana's Descent* presented above originally had this format.²³

2.8 Miscellaneous: Sumerian

CBS 4615 was published as *PBS* 12/1 44. The reverse shows traces of erasure. The contents of the two-line inscription on the obverse remain obscure.

dag-ga-na gi-NE []
 ʽlu₂¹ gur₄-ra tur-zu šu nam-bi-ba-ra

Upon his throne²⁴ ... [...]
 the important one should not let your small one go.

An alternative reading of the beginning of line 1 is *kala-ga-na*. The restoration *gi-izi-[la₂]* is impossible, since there are no traces of a vertical where the *la₂* would be expected. The reading *tur*

23. For two-column Kassite bilinguals see Cooper (1978: 32, with further references in the addendum on p. 164), and van Dijk (1998: 12 with n. 16). According to Michalowski (1998: 70 n. 17), CBS 15203 is a further bilingual duplicate of *Ininšagura*, possibly of Kassite date. Phillip Jones informs me that this is an interlinear bilingual.

24. Or: The bedroom ... (*dag-ga-na* for *da-ga-na?*). This was suggested to me by Piotr Michalowski.

(rather than *dumu*) in line 2 is based upon the opposition $gur_4 \Leftrightarrow tur$, as in *Lugale* 491–92 (Old Babylonian version; van Dijk [1983, I: 114–15]):

gur_4 -ra-zu tur-re-bi he_2 -gig

May it be hard to break your (the stone's) heavy pieces into small ones.

UM 29-13-543 (fig. 12) is a complete pillow-shaped tablet. The obverse contains a two-line inscription in Sumerian. The reverse is uninscribed. The writing on the obverse is ugly and at places slightly worn.

d en-lil₂-le na₄ NI BUR $\lceil X \rceil$
ni₂-te-na nu-de₆-e-ba

Because(?) Enlil did not bring his own ...

CBS 19831 (fig. 13) is a fragment that preserves the ends of two lines. The reverse is lost. The obverse contains words that are reminiscent of Sumerian royal inscriptions or royal hymns:

[-t]a[?] $\lceil ur \rceil$ -sag
[] $\lceil x \rceil$ x x-ta kala-ga

UM 29-16-383 (fig. 14) has a one-line extract in Sumerian on the obverse. The reverse has a monolingual version of *ur₅-ra* 3 (trees) section $^{gis}u_3$ -suh₅.

[x-m]u[?] sa₆ e₂ $\lceil x \rceil$ ba-an-ku₄ $\lceil \check{S}U \rceil$ $\lceil x \rceil$ [...]

... entered the house ...

2.9 Miscellaneous: Akkadian

CBS 19840 (fig. 15) is a lentil, one quarter of which is lost. The reverse is uninscribed. The obverse may contain a one-line extract from an Akkadian literary text:

UD-*ma i-la-nu r*[a-bu-tu]

When the great gods

UM 29-13-771 (fig. 16) is an almost complete tablet that has on the obverse a two-line extract from what may be an incantation in Akkadian. The reverse has *ur₅-ra* 1:100-104 (§3.1).

li-ib-bi u₃ [...]
u₂-te-bi-ka ma- $\lceil ri \rceil$ $\lceil x \rceil$ $\lceil x \rceil$ [...]

My heart and [...]
I will drown you, son of [...]

3. Reverse Exercises

Most of the reverse exercises are extracts from *ur₅-ra* = *hubullu*. In addition to this we find lists of gods, sign lists, grammatical texts, *Diri*, and proverbs.

3.1 *Ur₅-ra*

Some of our texts duplicate or nearly duplicate the text known from first millennium copies, though usually in a monolingual fashion. Thus UM 29-13-771 (fig. 16) contains the lines *ur₅-ra* 1: 100–104, with no variants:

100 [ib]ila([DUMU].NITA)
101 [dum]u gaba
102 dumu-munus gaba
103 dumu
104 dumu-dumu

Slight variants in spelling and in the order of items are common. A nice example is the lentil UM 29-15-848 (fig. 5), which has *ur₅-ra* 3 lines 40-44, omitting line 43 and swapping the lines 41 and 42.

40 gis hašhur dam-ši-lum
42 gis hašhur ba-an-za
41 gis hašhur a-ab-ba

44 ^{giš}hašhur še-gud

Occasionally we find *ur₅-ra* extracts with more substantial variation from the later standard text. We are fortunate enough to have two partly duplicating extracts from *ur₅-ra* 7A. The one is bilingual (N 3988; used in *MSL* 6: 93–94 as V₆), the other monolingual (UM 29-13-947; fig. 17). They contain the section ^{giš}gan-nu-um (pot stand) and related words.

In order to compare the Kassite exercises with the first millennium version of *ur₅-ra* 7A, we need to reconsider the composite text as published in *MSL* 6. This edition is much confused through the inclusion there of our tablet N 3988. This tablet—as we will see below—represents a tradition that differs considerably from the first millennium recension. Once this text is taken out, a much more homogeneous tradition appears:²⁵

128=128 ^{giš}gan-^{ga-an}-nu = *ka-an-nu*129=131 ^{giš}gan-nu-sag-du = MIN *ša₂*
DINGIR.MEŠ130=132 ^{giš}gan-nu-ki-UD = MIN *ša₂ maš-*
*ka-nu*131=133 ^{giš}gan-nu-^{tu-la₂}tu₂-la₂ = MIN *ša₂*
*bur-ti*132=134 ^{giš}ce-pi-ru^{ebir}(DUG) = MIN *ša₂ me-e*133=135 ^{giš}-^{min}ebir-kaš = MIN *ša₂ ši-ka-ri*134=136 ^{giš}-ebir-ga = MIN *ša₂ ši-iz-bi*135=137 ^{giš}-^{ma-a}ma₂ = MIN *ša₂ me-e*136=138 ^{giš}-ma₂-^{ma-qu-ur}gur₈ = MIN *ša₂ ši-*
*ka-ri*137=139 ^{giš}-DUG-gub-ba = MIN *ša₂ me-e*138=140 ^{giš}-kaš-sag-gub-ba = MIN *ša₂ ši-*
*ka-ri*139=141 ^{giš}-zabar^{za-ba-ar}-gub-ba = MIN *ša₂*
MIN140=129 ^{giš}gan-nu-gu-la = MIN *ni-sa-an-*
*nu*141=130 ^{giš}gan-nu-tur = *kan-du-ru-u₂*142=142 ^{giš}-ZA.^{hal-bi}SUH = *kan-nu ša₂ bur-*
*tum*143=143 ^{giš}-KU-^{tu-ru}KIB = *sih₂-tum*144=144 ^{giš}-KU-^{da-ri}dara₅(KIB) = *par-ri-ka*145=145 ^{giš}-dag^{da}-si =ŠU-*u*

The correspondences between N 3988, UM 29-13-947, and the composite first millennium text may be tabulated as follows:

N 3988	UM 29-13-947	<i>Ur₅-ra</i> 7A
1 ^{giš} gan-nu = <i>ka-an-nu</i>		128
2 ^{giš} gan-nu-gu-la = <i>ša ŠE-[im]</i>	1	
3 ^{giš} gan-nu-gu-la = <i>gu-un ni-sa-nu</i>	2	140
4 ^{giš} gan-nu-a = MIN	3	
5 ^{giš} gan-nu-a = <i>ša me-e</i>	4	
6 ^{giš} gan-nu-ga = <i>ši-iz-[bi]</i>	∅	
7 ^{giš} gan-nu-kaš = <i>ša ši-[ka-ri]</i>	5	
8 ^{giš} gan-nu-tur = <i>kam-du-r[u-u₂]</i>	6	141
9 ^{giš} gan-nu-ki-sig = <i>mat-qa-n[u]</i>	7	130?
10 ^{giš} ma-at-gan = MIN	8	
11 ^{giš} gan-nu-sag-ga ₂ = <i>ša DINGIR.[MEŠ]</i>	∅	129

25. The line numbers are those used in the updated edition of *ur₅-ra* 7A, prepared by the author for the PSD project. The old line number in *MSL* 6: 93–94 is found after the = sign. Variants are disregarded. The new reconstruction is con-

firmed by BM 37928; BM 49649; and BM 66830. These and other Neo-Babylonian exercise texts were kindly made available to me by P. Gesche and M. Civil.

12	giš ¹ mat-gan = MIN	9	
13	giš ¹ [e-bi-ir]DUG = MIN	10	132
14	giš ¹ maš-gan = ša maš-ti- ¹ u ¹		
15	giš ¹ KAŠ = ša ši-ka-ri		
16	giš ¹ ma ₂ = MIN		135
17	giš ¹ ma ₂ -gur ₈ = MIN		136
18	giš ¹ DUG-gub-ba = MIN		137
19	giš ¹ zabar-gub-ba = MIN		139
20	giš ¹ hal-bi ¹ halbi ₅ (LAL ₂ .GIŠGAL) = [MIN?]		142
21	giš ¹ du-rum ¹ duru ₄ (KIB) = si[h ₂ -tum]		143
22	giš ¹ da-ra ¹ dara ₅ (KIB) = MIN p[a-ar-ri-ku]		144
23	giš ¹ da- ¹ ag ¹ dag = [x ¹]-[...]		145

UM 29-13-947 (fig. 17) duplicates the lines 2–13 of N 3988, with some minor orthographic variants (gan-nu-um for gan-nu; ma-at-gan for mat-gan and e-bi-ir for ^{e-bi-ir}DUG), and skipping the lines 6 and 11. The first millennium text is only loosely related.

Even further removed from first millennium *ur₅-ra*—and, indeed, from all known versions of this text—is UM 29-15-944 (fig. 18). This tablet, written in a very cursive hand, is inscribed on both sides. The obverse has not been deciphered. The reverse has a list of pigs (šah₂).

The exercise includes terminology for both wild (1–3) and domestic pigs (4–11). In the *ur₅-ra* tradition domestic and wild animals are treated as two separate categories in tablets 13 and 14 respectively. Pigs are always classified with the wild animals. The item <šah₂> iri nita (line 4), though attested in administrative contexts,²⁷ is very rare in the lexical tradition.²⁸ The terms for a pregnant sow, a sow that had piglets, sexually mature and immature sows (6–11), are entirely unattested otherwise in lexical texts. The terminology for the various procreative stages, however, is well-known

		<i>ur₅-ra</i> 14
1	šah ₂ si-mur-rum	171 šah si-mur-ra = ŠU-u
2	nam-ni ak-a	172 šah nam-en-na ak-a = bit-ru-u ₂
3	giš-gi	161 šah giš-gi = šah-ha-pu
4	iri nita	
5	MUNUS.TAB.KUN ²⁶	183 megida ₂ (TAB.KUN) = ša-hi-tu
6	MUNUS.TAB.KUN ša ₃ «U»	
7	ša ₃ -peš-šu	
8	u ₃ -tu	
9	nu-MIN	
10	zu-zu	
11	nu-MIN	

26. The spelling of megida₂ (sow) with MUNUS is otherwise unknown to me.

27. In the so-called Šulgi-simtum archive (Ur III) the term is šah₂ (nita₂/munus) iri, which functions in opposition to šah₂ (nita₂/munus) giš-gi. The terminology is most conve-

niently collected in the glossary in Hilgert (1998) under šah₂.

28. The only (partial) parallel that has come to my attention is the entry šah₂ iri in YBC 4679 rev. iv 2 (unpublished). This is a large Old Babylonian tablet of unknown provenance with six columns on both sides (the last column on the re-

from *ur₅-ra* 13, where it is applied to ewes, cows, jennies, e.g. The resulting passage in our exercise is unparalleled in the lexical tradition, though it is created out of the building blocks provided by *ur₅-ra*.

The lexical series *ur₅-ra* is by far the most common exercise in our corpus. Not all of these exercises are edited here, since they mostly adhere closely to the text published in *MSL*. They are identified below in the Appendix. The version of *ur₅-ra* we find in these texts is at most places close to the first millennium “canonical” version. There is, however, enough evidence that *ur₅-ra* in the Kassite period was still variable and fluid, and that the process of standardization had not yet produced a rigidly frozen text.

3.2 God Lists

Two different god lists are represented in our corpus: *An = Anum* and the *Weidner God List*. Five lines from the Weidner list²⁹ are found in the lentil-shaped exercise UM 29-15-976 (fig. 19). It contains the lines 7–11 with no variants:

- 7 [] ^dgibil₆
 8 [] ^dli₉-si₄!
 9 [] ^dnin-sikil-la (sic; not la₂)
 10 [] ^dnanna
 11 [] ^dsu'en

The text may have contained glosses. There is a vertical line before the DINGIR signs. Theoretically there is some space for glosses to the left of this line, an area now destroyed. Another extract from the Weidner list is UM 29-15-970. The obverse of this piece has an unidentified text in Akkadian (fig. 20). The reverse is much too eroded to be copied. The traces, however, may be identified with lines 68–69; 71–72 and 75 of the Weidner list:

- 68 [^d] AK
 69 [^dtaš]-[^rme^l-tum
 71 ^dmi-uš-HI
 72 ^dištaran(KA.DI)
 75 ^ddi-kud

An = Anum (edited by Litke 1998) is equally represented by two tablets. UM 29-16-35 (fig. 10) has *Ištar's Descent* on the obverse (§2.7) and on the reverse *An = Anum V* 196–206, skipping 201 (section ^dma-nun-gal):

- 196 [^dnin-gu₂-har]-[^ran^l-na = []
 197 [^d]^rnin-ti^l-HAL = u[dug e₂-a-ke₄]
 198 [^d]^rdu-lum = dumu-[a-ni]
 199 ^dup-lum = ŠU
 200 ^dMIN UH = MIN MIN a-[...]
 202 ^de-tu-ra-am-mi = sukka^d[x^l] [...]
 203 ^dŠU-sa₂-dug₄-ga = ŠU
 204 ^dgiš-šu = KUR [...]
 205 ^dgiš-gir₃ = KUR [...]
 206 ^dgiš-gu₂ = [ŠU]

The left-hand column corresponds with the standard text as edited by Litke. The right hand column—where preserved—has more deviations. In lines 200, 204 and 205 Litke's text has simply ŠU.

Another tablet of our group that extracts *An = Anum* is 2N-T349 = IM 57957. This exemplar was used by Litke 1998 as source G for tablet 1. In the 2N-T field catalogue the piece is described as a “lexical text of Kassite type; obv list of gods rev (X-wise) vocab?? (half of tablet missing).” This corresponds well to the format of the tablets in our group, though we rather expect the god list to appear on the reverse.

Other sources for *An = Anum* of probable Kassite date are 12 N 595 (unpublished exercise text; Civil, *OIC* 23: 120) and 14 N 259 (*OIP* 111: pl. 103). Fragment b of the latter piece preserves pronunciation glosses for the Marduk section of tablet 2 195–205. The three fragments of 14 N 259 were found in secondary context in Level I pit B. The pit itself is of uncertain date, but the tablets

verse is not used). It has a monolingual list of domestic animals (*ur₅-ra* 13) followed by a short extract from *ur₅-ra* 14. The item is found among regular šah₂ items.

29. Treated most recently by Cavigneaux (1981: 79–99).

found there are presumed to derive from the Level II building, dated to the Kassite period (see Zettler, *OIP* 111: 23).

3.3 Other: Sign Lists, *Diri*, Grammatical Lists

Our corpus so far contains three sign lists, two from Nippur and one from Qala'at al-Bahrain. All of them appear on lentil-shaped tablets. None of these may be related to one of the traditional sign lists (*S^a*, *Ea*, etc.).

CBS 8554 (fig. 21) has an unidentified one-line exercise on the obverse. The piece is damaged and written in a very cursive hand, so that only a few signs may be identified with reasonable certainty. The lines 3–5 of the reverse read:

3 U
4 GALAM
5 NE

N 3783 (fig. 11) has an unidentified exercise on the obverse (see §2.7). The sign list on the reverse reads:

1 \lceil KU₆-tenû \lceil ¹
2 KU₆-tenû
3 10
4 20
5 30
6 ŠE
7 TIR
8 UZ

The Bahrain example (Eidem 1997, 79: 320) contains a list of complex signs. The legible items include E₃, ZI/ZI.[LAGAB], and ZI/ZI.[LAGAB] (lines 3–5).

CBS 7884 contains an extract from *Diri*. This text will be treated by Civil in his edition of the series.³⁰

30. For Kassite-period *Diri* see also n. 10.

The grammatical extracts known to me have all been published in transliteration in *MSL* 4; *MSL* 5; and *MSL SS* 1 (see the Appendix below: 2N-T343; 2N-T344; 2N-T357; and 12N 587).

3.4 Proverbs³¹

UM 29-16-561 (fig. 22) contains a two-line extract on the obverse. The text is broken beyond recovery. The reverse has three proverbs in Sumerian. The writing is very cursive and difficult to read. Only the third section has been deciphered, thanks to a parallel in *Proverb Collection* 2:

9	sag sig ₂ sar-ra	A head that grows hair
10	sig ₂ ba-an-tuku-tuku-a	is having hair;
11	u ₃ še' ri-ri	and when grain is collected
12	^d ašnan	Ašnan
13	ba-an-diri-diri	will make it plenty
14	e-še	they say.

This is a near duplicate of *Proverb Collection* 2: 134.³² The first clause was translated by Alster (1998: 70) as “he who shaves his head” (following Gordon 1959: 541). In texts concerning the leather industry, however, kuš sig₂ SAR has been identified as hide with hair (see Stol 1980–1983: 531 with references to earlier literature; and van de Mierop 1987: 144–45 sub kuš-a-GAR-nag-a, and 146 sub kuš-sig₂-mu₂).

Conclusions

In format the texts discussed above may be understood as an early form of the extract tablets that were used in Neo-Babylonian schools.³³ Neo-Babylonian extract tablets usually combine a short quotation from a literary or sub-literary text (Akkadian or bilingual) followed by several lexical extracts, typically ur₅-ra = *hubullu*. Unlike the

31. For proverbs on the obverse see §2.4 and 2.5.

32. Major variants in the new text: sag sig₂ sar-ra for sag sar-ra; and u₃ še' for u₃ lu₂ še.

33. Many examples are published in *MSL SS* 1 and *OECT* 11.

present corpus, the Neo-Babylonian texts were conceived as a single exercise, continuing from the obverse to the reverse. There are several other differences in both form and content between the two groups. The Kassite lexical extracts are usually, though not always, monolingual Sumerian, whereas their Neo-Babylonian counterparts are always bilingual. Kassite exercises never contain more than one lexical extract. Sumerian literary extracts are common in the Kassite group, but not among the Neo-Babylonian tablets (with the exception of bilinguals). Educational practices and needs no doubt changed over this long period of time; the practice of combining short literary and lexical extracts on a single tablet remained.

Taken separately, the pieces presented above are rather uninformative and of little importance for literary history. As a group, however, they demonstrate the richness of the written tradition in the Middle Babylonian period. In summary, the Nippur Kassite curriculum included at least the following text types:

- lexical texts, including god lists (on the reverse)
- technical texts (divination; *Code of Hammurabi*)
- proverbs
- traditional Sumerian literature (*Enlil and Sud*; *Lugal-e*; *Inana's Descent*; *Lipit-Eštar A*)
- “new” Sumerian texts
- Akkadian incantations
- Akkadian literature

Proverbs are found both on the obverse (§2.4 and 2.5) and, in one case, on the reverse (§3.4) of tablets. As an obverse exercise the proverbs are grouped with the literary and technical extracts. As a reverse exercise they fall into one category with lexical texts and god lists. Interestingly, this ambivalent categorization corresponds to the curricular slot of proverbs in Old Babylonian education. In the Old Babylonian scribal school proverbs were taught between lexical lists (first phase) and literary exercises (second phase). The two phases may be distinguished by the typology of the tablets used. Old Babylonian proverbs are

found on both “lexical” and “literary” tablet types.³⁴ In the Kassite period they may have had a similar transitional status.

The Kassite period is held responsible for much of the creativity underlying the new first millennium Akkadian literature. None of this literature has appeared so far in the exercises. In fact, those exercises that may be connected with known compositions refer back to the Old Babylonian literary tradition, rather than point forward to the first millennium. This may not be surprising. School curricula tend to be conservative, and may not include anything new or revolutionary.

Quite a few of the literary extracts are in Sumerian. It is known that a small selection of the Old Babylonian literary corpus survived into the first millennium. *Lugale*, *Angin*, *Enlil and Sud*, and *Enki and Ninmah* are examples of compositions that are primarily known to us in Old Babylonian copies, but also exist in first-millennium bilingual exemplars.³⁵ The existence of such texts in one form or another in the Kassite period is expected. Thus the incipit of *Lugale* in N 3783+ and the quotations from *Enlil and Sud* do not come as a surprise.

For cultic laments such as *balags* and *eršahun-gas*, the situation is the reverse. They are frequently attested in late bilingual copies, but are relatively rare in the Old Babylonian corpus. They were not used in the core curriculum of the schools in Nippur and Ur, our main sources for Old Babylonian Sumerian literature. Many of the extant examples may come from northern centers (e.g., Sippar, Kish; Michalowski 1987). The transmission-history of the cultic laments may well be very different from that of the compositions mentioned above. It is possible that some of our exercises contain extracts from cultic laments,³⁶ but no certain identifications have been made so far.

34. See in more detail Veldhuis (2000).

35. Several more compositions are listed by Michalowski (1987: 38–39).

36. See 2N-T343 and 2N-T358 below in the catalogue. I know both pieces only from descriptions.

A special case in the transmission history is *Inana's Descent*. An Akkadian version of the myth, known as *Ištar's Descent*, is attested in Middle and Neo-Assyrian copies. The Akkadian text is not simply a translation of *Inana's Descent*, but rather an abbreviated retelling of the story. Various aspects of the Akkadian version, in particular Dumuzi's role at the end, are not understandable without broader knowledge of the mythological background.³⁷ Stories about Inana/Ištar and Dumuzi were simply around, they were known, and could be freely referred to in other compositions, as was already the case in the Old Babylonian period.³⁸ The new Kassite fragment (UM 29-16-35), far from being a free rendering, is very close to the Old Babylonian version of *Inana's Descent*. It shows that the interest of this scribe—or his teacher—is not primarily, or at least not only, in the mythological material as such, but in the preservation and transmission of a Sumerian literary text. Notwithstanding this, the Sumerian version of *Inana's Descent* was forgotten soon afterwards.

The brief school exercises were hardly the main vehicles for the transmission of Sumerian literature during the Kassite period. Other text types, capable of containing larger portions of text existed. Very few such tablets have come to light so far. Most important are the two-column bilinguals (see n. 23). Such tablets are known for instance for *Angin*, *Ininšagura*, and the Inana hymn recently edited by van Dijk (1998).

This latter text belongs with *Ininšagura* and *Inana's Descent* to a group of three Inana-compo-

sitions which survived the end of the Old Babylonian period, but apparently did not make it to the first millennium. Given the scarcity of our evidence, it is impossible to say whether this is significant or not. In general, the reason or reasons why some texts survived and others did not is in need of a thorough investigation. The Ninurta texts *Lugale* and *Angin* were probably transmitted because of the importance of Ninurta for the royal ideology of the Assyrian kings. *Enki and Ninmah* and *Enlil and Sud* may have survived as mere academic rarities.

Of considerable interest is the Sumerian liver omen (§2.6). There is no tradition in Sumerian divinatory literature, so the conclusion must be that the omen was translated from the Akkadian. The technical vocabulary of Middle Babylonian divinatory texts was usually written in Sumerograms anyway,³⁹ so that this was a relatively small step. In its own small way the fragment shows an active interest in Sumerian on the part of the scribes. Since traditional and practical considerations are clearly out of the question here, we must explain the unusual choice for Sumerian in terms of prestige.⁴⁰

Sumerian did not merely survive the Kassite period. Fragmented as our evidence is, it shows that Kassite schools actively preserved the lexical and literary traditions of the past, and fostered the Sumerian language as a precious and prestigious heritage.

37. See the analysis by Reiner (1985: 29–49).

38. Closely related to *Inanna's Descent* are *Dumuzi's Dream* and *Dumuzi and Geštinanna*. Recent editions of both texts are found in Black (*et al.* 1998–).

39. See Kraus (1985) for the Middle Babylonian omen reports and their technical vocabulary.

40. Leonhard Sassmannshausen reminds me in this connection that Kassite royal inscriptions and brick inscriptions use Sumerian. See for instance the Kurigalzu statue published in *Sumer* 4/1 Plates I–IX.

APPENDIX
CATALOGUE OF MIDDLE BABYLONIAN EXERCISES

The following catalogue provides basic information about the Middle Babylonian exercises of the format described above known to me. The bibliography is kept to the absolute minimum. For 2N-T and 3N-T tablets the information on contents often derives from Steele's field notes and the typewritten catalogue referred to in n. 4. Numerous additional Nippur exemplars both pillow-shaped and round, were found during the twelfth campaign. Most of these remain unpublished. They were catalogued by M. Civil in *OIC 23* and will be treated by him in full in his *Lexical Texts from the Eleventh-Thirteenth Nippur Campaigns* (announced in *OIC 23*: 112). Since there is little point in repeating the terse information found in *OIC 23*, only 12N 587, partly published in *MSL SS1*, is included here.⁴¹

Nippur

Pillow-shaped Tablets

Museum #	Publication	Obverse		Reverse	
		content	language	content	language
2N-T63	fig. 23	∅		<i>ur₅-ra 2</i>	sum
2N-T79	Tigay 1982: 297 ⁴²	Gilgamesš	akk	<i>ur₅-ra 3-7</i>	sum
2N-T343	<i>MSL SS 1</i> : 89	liturgical	sum	grammatical	bil
2N-T344	<i>MSL 5</i> : 198 ⁴³	lament	bil	grammatical	bil
2N-T345		Dumuzi/Inana	bil	lexical	
2N-T348		literary	sum	<i>ur₅-ra 6</i>	sum
2N-T349	Litke 1998: 20	?		<i>An = Anum</i>	bil.
2N-T357	<i>MSL 4</i> : 170	hymn	sum	grammatical	bil
2N-T358		lament	sum	?	
2N-T359		omen?	akk	?	
2N-T363		literary	sum	lexical	sum?
2N-T364		literary	sum	lexical	
3N-T195	<i>OIP 97 90</i> : 42	literary	sum	<i>ur₅-ra 13</i>	bil
4N-T52	<i>OIP 97 90</i> : 41	omens?	akk?	∅	
12 N 587	<i>MSL SS 1</i> : 73	literary	sum	grammatical	bil
14 N 229	<i>OIP 111</i> : 98	∅		<i>ur₅-ra 2</i>	sum
CBS 4615	<i>PBS 12/1 44</i>	proverb	sum	∅	
CBS 6405	<i>SLT 143</i>	∅		<i>ur₅-ra 3</i>	sum
CBS 7133		literary	sum	∅	
CBS 7884 ⁴⁴		literary	sum	<i>diri</i>	bil?
CBS 8039	fig. 6	proverb	sum	∅	
CBS 13329	fig. 2	riddles	akk	∅	

41. Almost all the numbers in the ranges 12N 577-599 and 651-655 may belong to our corpus.

42. See now George (1999: 127-28).

43. See *MSL SS 1 90*.

44. This text was temporarily unavailable in the University of Pennsylvania Museum.

CBS 13330		unidentified	akk?	lexical	sum
CBS 19823 ⁴⁵		erased		ø	
CBS 19831	fig. 13	literary	sum	lost	
HS 1781	<i>RT</i> 19: 62, no.4 ⁴⁶	ø		<i>ur₅-ra</i> 2	sum
N 1486		unidentified	akk	ø	
N 3988	<i>MSL</i> 6: 82 S ₆	ø		<i>ur₅-ra</i> 7A	bil
N 4516		unidentified	?	lexical	sum
N 4529	fig. 9	hymn	sum	fragmentary	
N 5489	fig. 1	<i>Code of Hammurabi</i>	akk	ø	
N 7662		unidentified	sum?	ø	
Ni 679	<i>ISCT</i> 2 109	proverb (19 E 2)	sum	ø	
UM 29-13-6 ⁴⁷		unidentified	?	lexical sum	
UM 29-13-322		unidentified	sum	ø	
UM 29-13-495	<i>JAOS</i> 103: 47 G	<i>Enlil and Sud</i>	sum	ø	
UM 29-13-542	fig. 8	omen	sum	unidentified	sum?
UM 29-13-543	fig. 12	literary	sum	ø	
UM 29-13-545	<i>JAOS</i> 103: 48 J	<i>Enlil and Sud</i> ⁴⁸	sum	ø	
UM 29-13-771	fig. 16	incantation?	akk	<i>ur₅-ra</i> 1	sum
UM 29-13-947	fig. 17	erased		<i>ur₅-ra</i> 7A	sum
UM 29-15-594	fig. 7	literary	akk	<i>ur₅-ra</i> 3	sum
UM 29-15-854		unidentified	akk	<i>ur₅-ra</i> 16 (single line)	sum
UM 29-15-883		unidentified	sum?	ø	
UM 29-15-944	fig. 18	unidentified	sum	<i>ur₅-ra</i> 14	sum
UM 29-15-970	fig. 20	unidentified	akk	<i>Weidner God List</i>	sum
UM 29-16-35	fig. 10	<i>Inana's Descent</i>	sum	<i>An=Anum</i> V	bil
UM 29-16-338	fig. 24	erased		<i>ur₅-ra</i> 13	sum
UM 29-16-383	fig. 14	literary	sum	<i>ur₅-ra</i> 3	sum
UM 29-16-528		unidentified	sum?	ø	
UM 29-16-561	fig. 22	broken		proverbs	sum
UM 29-16-596		unidentified	akk	ø	
UM 29-16-606	fig. 4	Gilgameš (Enkidu)	akk	ø	

45. This tablet contains no text. The obverse has a single erased line. The format of the tablet conforms with the other pillow-shaped pieces.

46. The identification of Scheil's text in *RT* as HS 1781 is virtually certain. I know HS 1781 from a photograph and from

an unpublished copy by Hilprecht. Scheil's text was used in *MSL* 5: 65–66 as V₈.

47. According to the catalogue of the Babylonian Section this fragment joins the missing fragment UM 29-13-4.

48. Published as UM 29-13-345.

49. Edition McEwan (1986: 87).

Round Tablets

Museum #	Publication	Obverse		Reverse	
		content	language	content	language
2N-T75	<i>BiOr</i> 56: 391	Gilgameš	akk	<i>ur₅-ra</i> 5	sum
11N-T26	<i>OIC</i> 22 140:18	traces		<i>ur₅-ra</i> 8	sum
CBS 8554	fig. 21	unidentified		sign list	-
CBS 14167	fig. 3	Gilgameš	?	<i>ur₅-ra</i> 2	sum
CBS 19840	fig. 15	literary	akk	∅	
N 3783 + N 5031	fig. 11	literary	sum	sign list	-
N 5048		unidentified	?	unidentified	?
N 5447	<i>BaM</i> 28: 208	proverbs/giš	sum	∅	
UM 29-13-79		unidentified	?	∅	
UM 29-15-848	fig. 5	<i>Fowler & his Wife</i>	sum	<i>ur₅-ra</i> 3	sum
UM 29-15-976	fig. 19	∅		<i>Weidner God List</i>	sum

Texts from Other Places

Babylon probably yielded more than hundred examples of pillow-shaped exercise tablets, all from late Kassite context in Merkes 25n1 (see above §1.2). *VS* 24 41 is known to derive from this find-spot. The table below contains several more pieces from Babylon published in *VS* 24. For most of these (*VS* 24 15; 38; 39; 72; and 75) the excavation number is lost, so that we cannot be certain about the exact provenance. They may all come from Merkes 25n1. Based on the copy, *VS* 24 76 may have the same format, but it does not belong to this same lot. According to *VS* 24 the tablet derives from Merkes 27o2. Pedersén does not treat this locus in his discussion of archives and libraries from Merkes. (Pedersén 1998a: 108–12 and 1998b). *VS* 24 76 may be an isolated find.

A further text that at first sight might appear to be a case in point is *OECT* 11: 59. The obverse has an extract from *ur₅-ra* 6 (copied by van der Meer in *Iraq* 6 no. 51). The reverse has an “incantation written across the tablet” (Gurney, *OECT* 11: 8). Upon collation, however, the fragment proved to be a slightly unusual Neo-Babylonian exercise. Paleography and the formal characteristics of the lexical section support this conclusion. The relevant characteristics are: horizontal dividing lines between sections; a vertical dividing line between the Sumerian and the Akkadian column; and glosses written on the line in the same seize as main text. The copy in *Iraq* 6 seems to indicate that the lexical extract is monolingual. This, however, is not the case. Though the Akkadian side is largely broken, enough is there to see that it contains the standard translations.

None of the tablets below has been collated, except for NBC 7834 and *MSL* SS 1: 23. For the pieces that are not inscribed on both sides the attribution to our present corpus must remain uncertain.

Round Tablet

Eidem 1997: 79:320	Qala'at al-Bahrain	∅	sign list (complex signs)	-
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Pillow Shaped

Publication or Museum no		Provenance	Obverse		Reverse	
			content	language	content	language
VS 24 15	Babylon		hymn?	sum	lu ₂ = ša	bil
VS 24 38	Babylon		temple hymn	sum	∅	
VS 24 39	Babylon		temple hymn	bil	∅	
VS 24 41	Babylon		royal hymn	bil	∅	
VS 24 72	Babylon		Anzu	bil	∅	
VS 24 75	Babylon		Sargon	bil	∅	
VS 24 76	Babylon		literary	sum	∅	
UET 6 400	Ur		literary	akk	ur ₅ -ra 13	sum
Eidem 1997 319	Qala'at al-Bahrain		∅		?	sum
MSL SS 1 23	Kish		∅		ur ₅ -ra 8	sum
CT 58 61	Sippar?		literary	sum	∅	
Boissier <i>Bab.</i> 9 pl. I	Unknown		<i>Lipit-Eštar A and</i> <i>Code of Hammurabi</i>	sum akk	lexical	sum
NBC 7834	Unknown		(few broken signs)		ur ₅ -ra 4	sum
TBÉR 55: AO 17664 ⁴⁹	Unknown		∅		ur ₅ -ra 2	bil

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Fig. 1. N 5489 obv. (rev. anepigraphic)

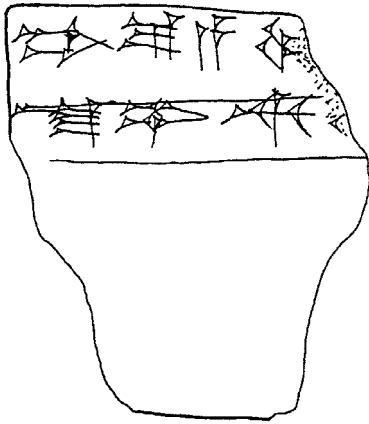


Fig. 2. CBS 13329 obv. (rev. anepigraphic)

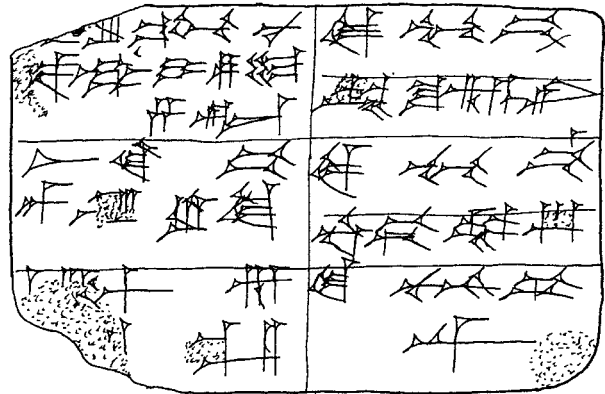


Fig. 3. CBS 14167

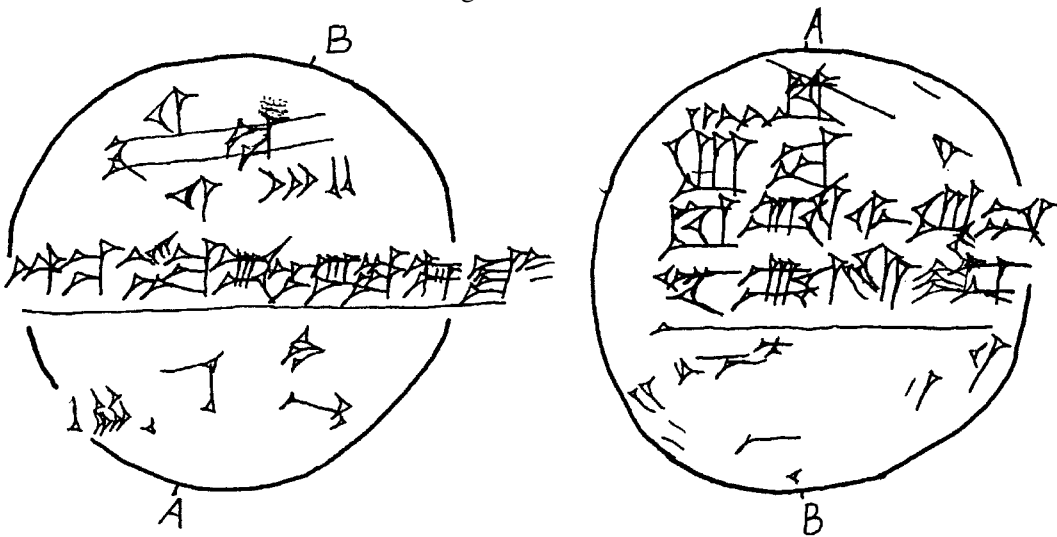


Fig. 4. UM 29-16-606 obv. (rev. anepigraphic)

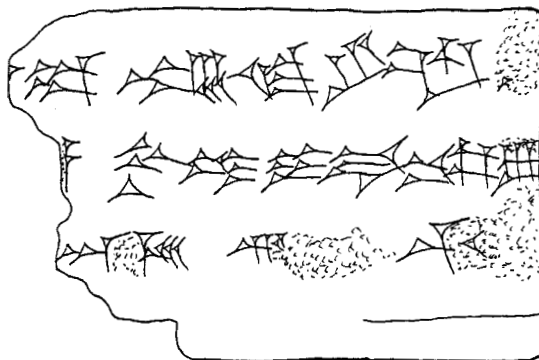


Fig. 5. UM 29-15-848

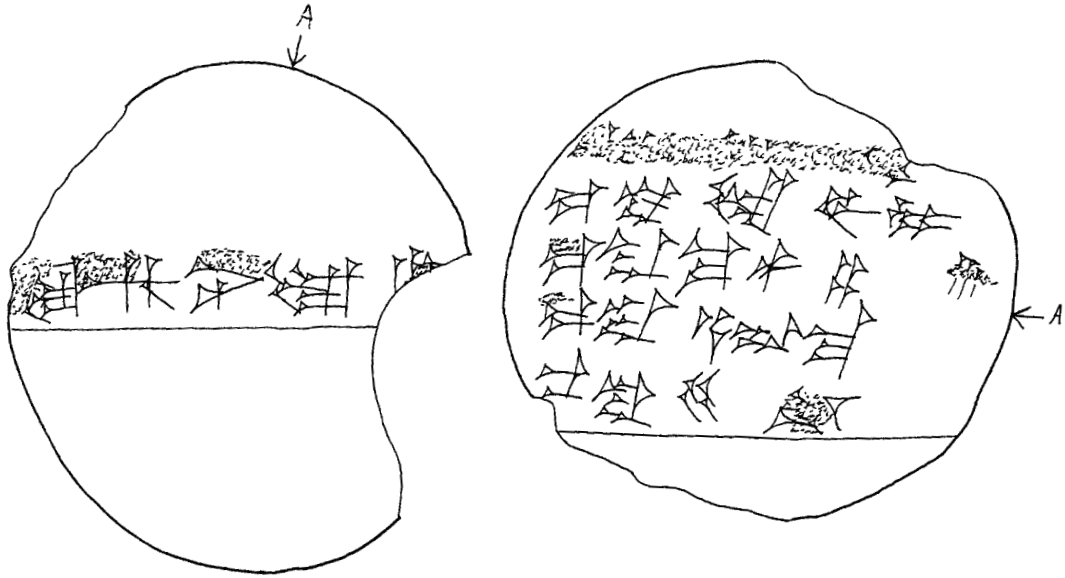


Fig. 6. CBS 8039 obv. (rev. anepigraphic)

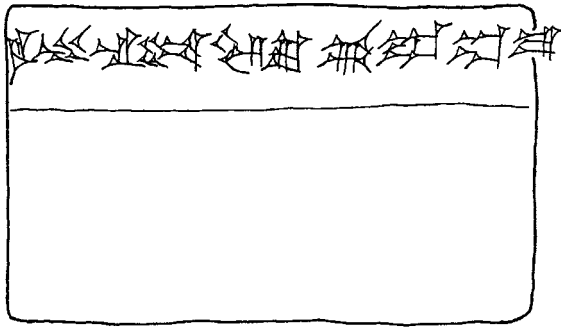


Fig. 7. UM 29-15-594

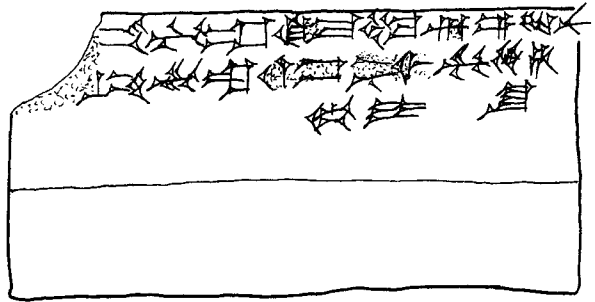


Fig. 8. UM 29-13-542 (rev. worn and partly erased)

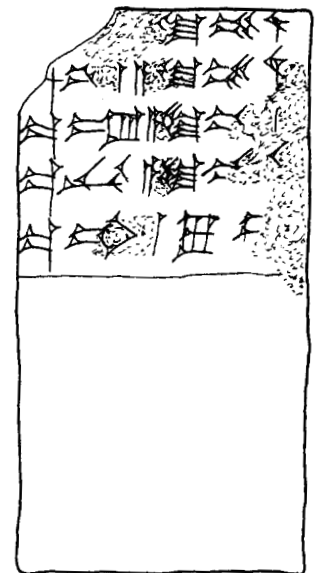
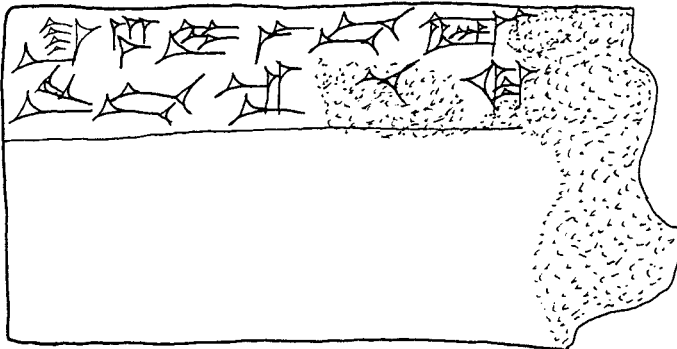


Fig. 9. N 4529 obv. (rev. broken)

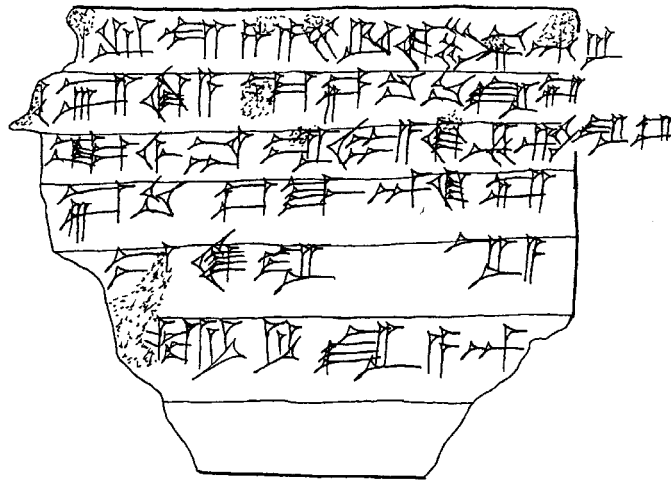


Fig. 10. UM 29-16-35

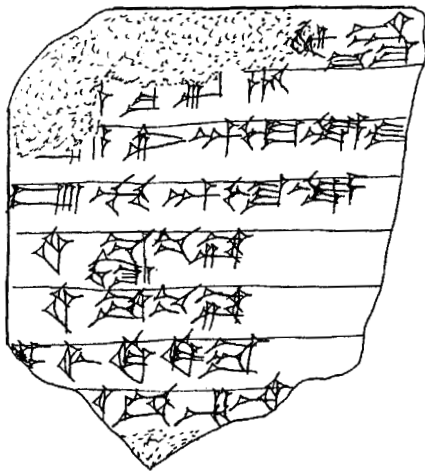


Fig. 11. N 3783 + N 5031

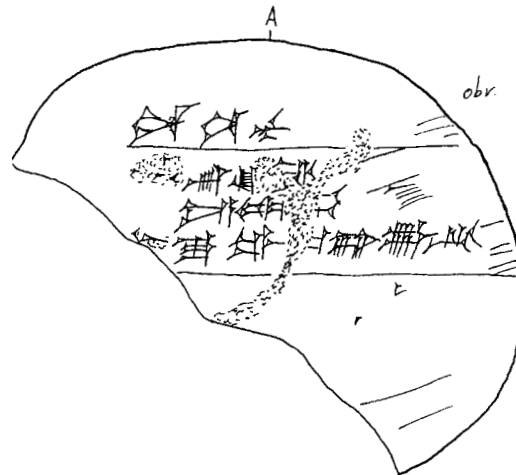


Fig. 12. UM 29-13-543 obv. (rev. anepigraphic)

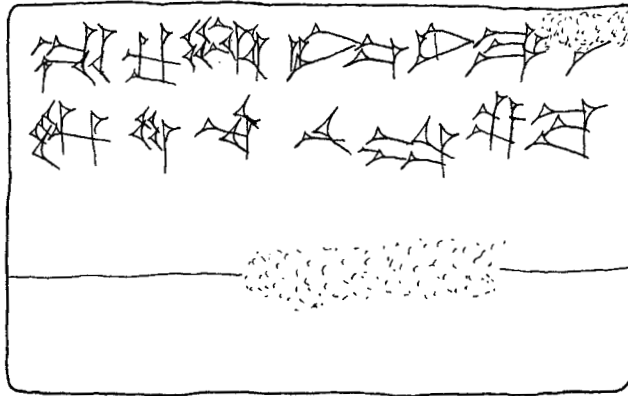


Fig. 13. CBS 19831 obv. (rev. broken)

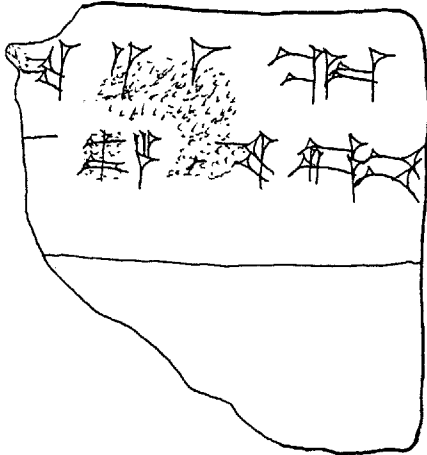


Fig. 15. CBS 19840 obv. (rev. anepigraphic)

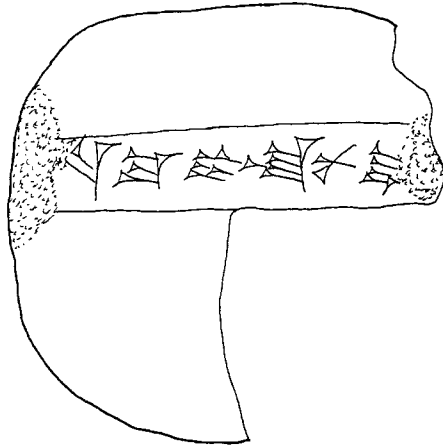


Fig. 14. UM 29-16-383

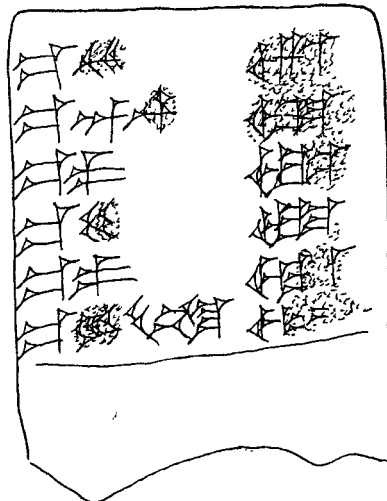
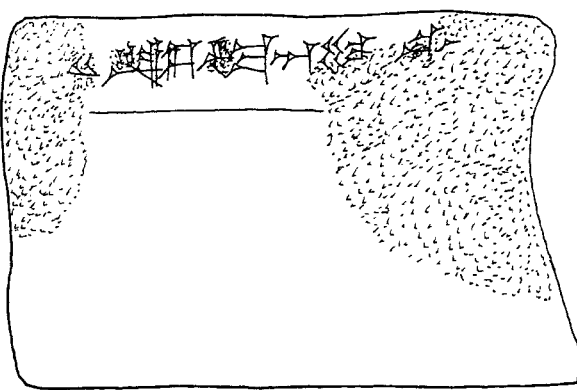


Fig. 16. UM 29-13-771

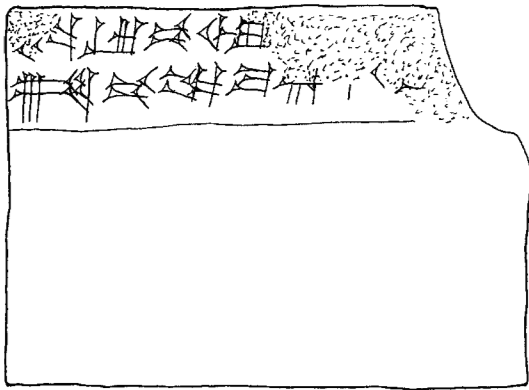


Fig. 17. UM 29-13-947 rev. (obv. erased)

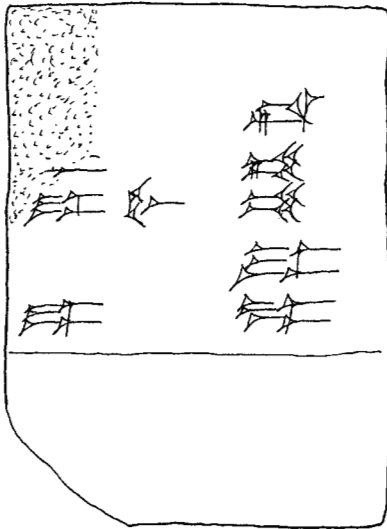
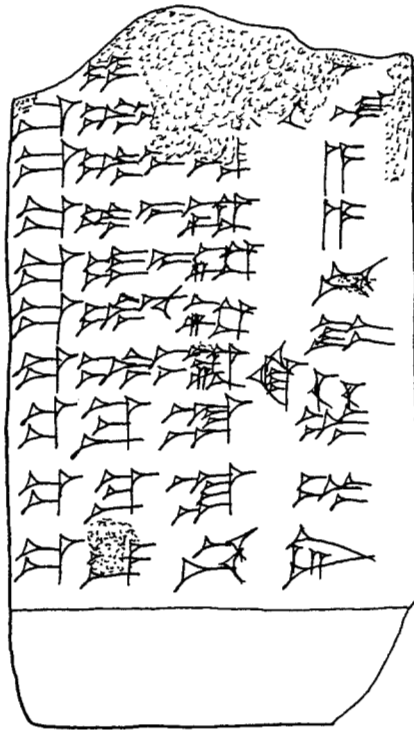


Fig. 18. UM 29-15-944

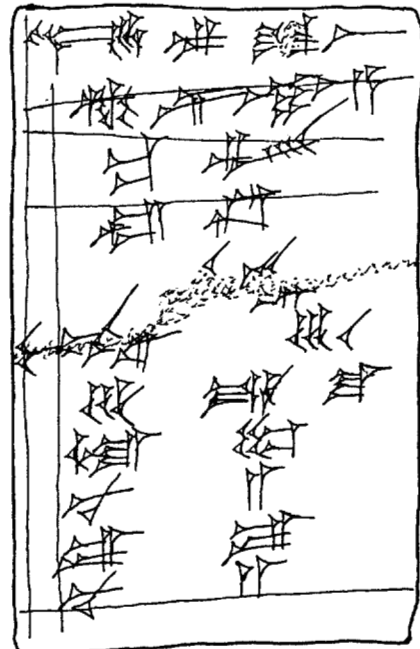
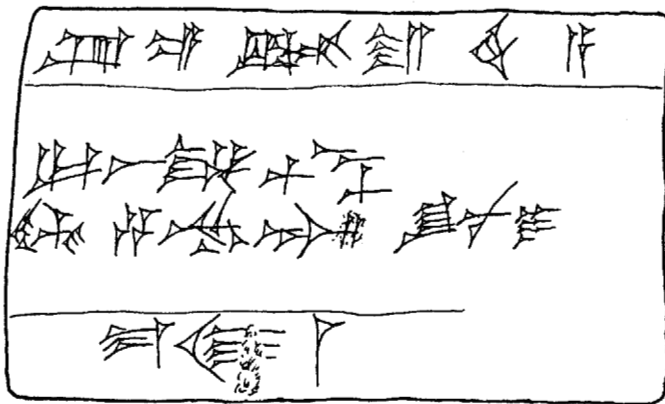


Fig. 19. UM 29-15-976 rev. (obv. anepigraphic)

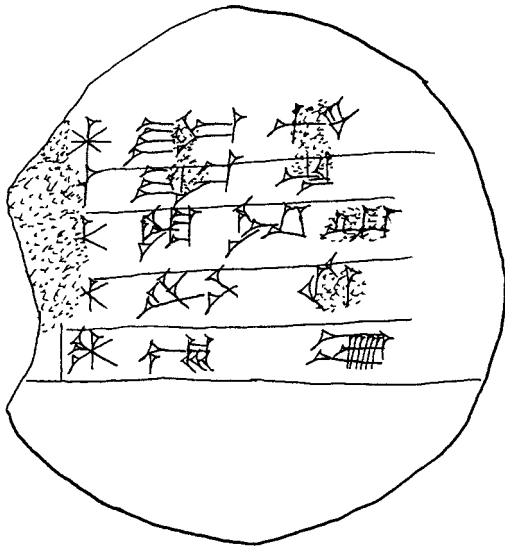


Fig. 20. UM 29-15-970 obv. (rev. eroded)

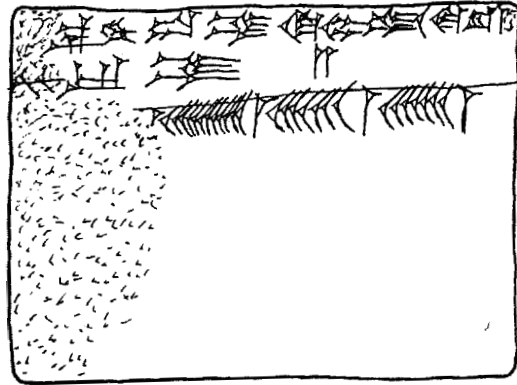


Fig. 21. CBS 8554

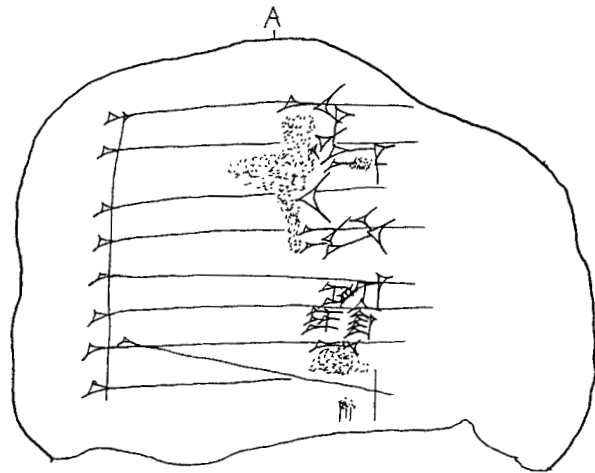
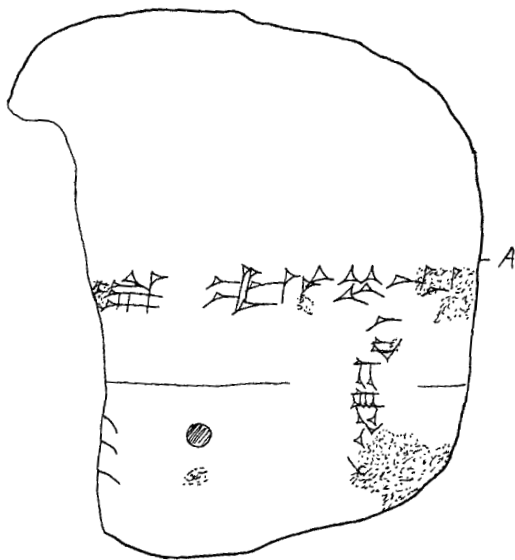


Fig. 22. UM 29-16-561

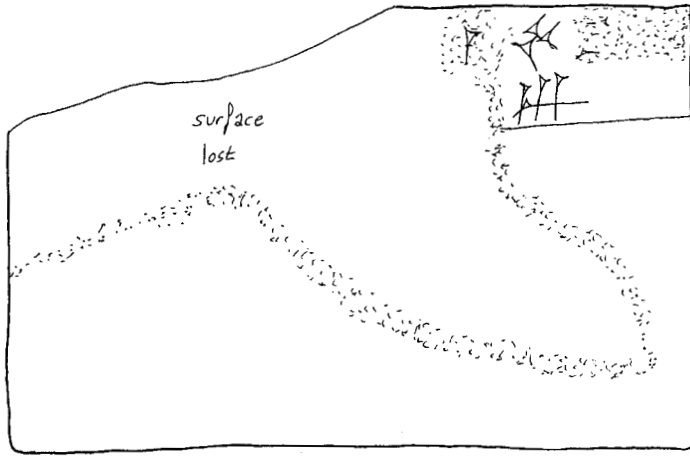


Fig. 23. 2N-T63 (UM 55-21-18)
rev. (obv. erased)

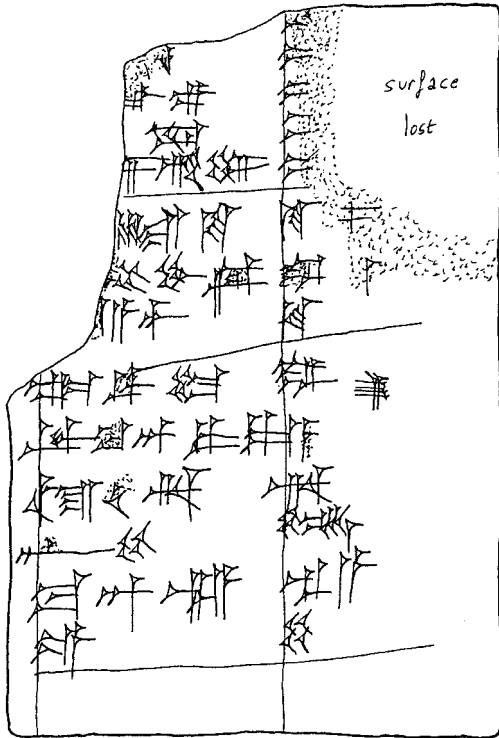
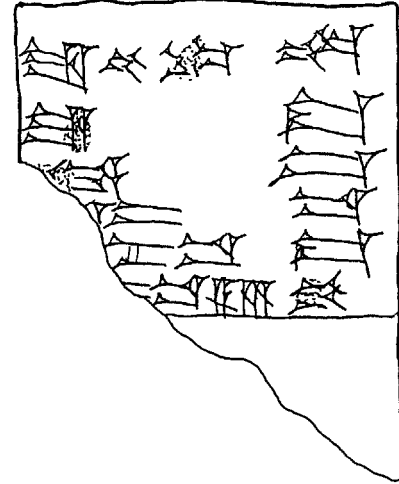


Fig. 24. UM 29-16-338 rev. (obv. erased)

