

# Cultures and Societies in the Middle Euphrates and Habur Areas in the Second Millennium BC

5 – 7th December 2013, University of Tsukuba

## Scribal Education and Scribal Tradition

### December 5th (Thursday):

(Building of Master's Programs in Humanities and Social Sciences, 4F, Room 8A409)

13:00 – 16:30

**Jun Ikeda** (University of Tsukuba)

*Japanese Logosyllabic Writing: A Comparison with Cuneiform Writing*

**Niek Veldhuis** (University of California, Berkeley)

*Old Babylonian School Curricula*

**Grégory Chambon** (Centre François Viète)

*Metrology and Scribal Traditions*

**Shigeo Yamada** (University of Tsukuba)

*Old Babylonian School Exercises from Tell Taban*

### December 6th (Friday):

(Advanced Research Building A, 1F, Room A107)

10:00 – 12:30

**Alexa Sabine Bartelmus** (Universität Marburg)

*The Role of Babylon in Babylonian Scribal Education*

**Amanda H. Podany** (California State Polytechnic University)

*The Conservatism of Hana Scribal Tradition*

**Daisuke Shibata** (University of Tsukuba)

*The Local Scribal Tradition in the Land of Mari during the Middle Assyrian Period*

14:00 – 16:30

**Yoram Cohen** (Tel Aviv University)

*Scribal Traditions at Emar*

**Mark Weeden** (SOAS, University of London)

*Hittite Scribal Tradition and Syria*

**Wilfred H. van Soldt** (Universiteit Leiden)

*School and Scribal Tradition in Ugarit*

18:00 – 20:00

Reception at Soup-Factory Restaurant (Area 1, University of Tsukuba)

## Emar Workshop: History and Chronology of Emar (organized by Jun Ikeda)

### December 7th (Saturday):

(Building of Master's Programs in Humanities and Social Sciences, 4F, Room 8A409)

9:00 – 12:00

**Masamichi Yamada** (Chuo University)

*The Emar Texts: Their Chronological Framework and Historical Implications*

**Yoram Cohen** (Tel Aviv University)

*Problems in the History and Chronology of Emar*

# CULTURES AND SOCIETIES IN THE MIDDLE EUPHRATES AND HABUR AREAS IN THE SECOND MILLENNIUM BC

5TH-7TH DECEMBER 2013, UNIVERSITY OF TSUKUBA

## PROGRAM AND ABSTRACTS

### December 4 (Wed)

**18:00-20:00:** Welcome Party at University Hall Restaurant

### SCRIBAL EDUCATION AND SCRIBAL TRADITION

**December 5 (Thu)** Building of Master's Programs in Humanities and Social Sciences, Room 8A409

**13:00-16:30**

S. Yamada, Opening Address

J. Ikeda, "Japanese Logosyllabic Writing: A Comparison with Cuneiform Writing"

N. Veldhuis, "Old Babylonian School Curricula"

(break)

G. Chambon, "Metrology and scribal traditions"

S. Yamada, "Old Babylonian School Exercises from Tell Taban"

**December 6 (Fri)** Advanced Research Building A, Room A107

**10:00-12:30**

A. Bartelmus, "The Role of Babylon in Babylonian Scribal Education"

A. Podany, "The Conservatism of Hana Scribal Tradition"

(break)

D. Shibata, "The Local Scribal Tradition in the Land of Mari during the Middle Assyrian Period"

Lunch

**14:00-16:30**

Y. Cohen, "Scribal Traditions at Emar"

M. Weeden, "Hittite Scribal Tradition and Syria"

(break)

W. van Soldt, "School and Scribal Tradition in Ugarit"

D. Shibata, Concluding Remarks

**18:00-20:00:** Reception at Soup-Factory Restaurant

### EMAR WORK SHOP: HISTORY AND CHRONOLOGY OF EMAR (organized by J. Ikeda)

**December 7 (Sat)** Building of Master's Programs in Humanities and Social Sciences, Room 8A409

**9:00-12:00** (time and program provisional)

M. Yamada "The Emar Texts: Their Chronological Framework and Historical Implications"

Y. Cohen, "Problems in the History and Chronology of Emar"

Lunch and the excursion to the Shinto-temple at Mt. Tsukuba (until 17:00)

## ABSTRACTS

**Thursday, 5<sup>th</sup> December**

Scribal Education and Scribal Tradition

**Jun Ikeda** (University of Tsukuba)

**“Japanese Logosyllabic Writing: A Comparison with Cuneiform Writing”**

It is well known in scholarly circles that early Japanese and early Akkadian writing systems exhibit striking parallels. For instance, both employ logograms and syllabograms, and these two types of letters can be mixed within a single morpheme. Logograms represent lexemes, while syllabograms tend to spell out grammatical morphemes. Syllabograms can also be used as phonetic complements to the verb both in Akkadian and Japanese. The logograms are often both polysemic and polyphonic in both systems. Both have “diri” compounds. Moreover, both shifted from a monographic logography into a spelling-based polygraphic system.

The aim of my talk is to familiarize Assyriologists with the early Japanese writing system and to discuss some similarities and differences between the two scribal traditions. I will present examples of early Japanese writing systems in the transliteration system in accordance with the Assyriological convention (i.e. kanji-logograms are transliterated according to their on (Chinese-like) values in non-italic upper case, and kana-syllabograms, in italic lowercase) so that any Assyriologist can feel the similarities intuitively.

**Niek Veldhuis** (University of California, Berkeley)

**“Old Babylonian School Curricula”**

The curriculum of the Old Babylonian scribal school (or Eduba) at Nippur has been reconstructed in some detail by using exercise tablets that date to the eighteenth century BCE. This reconstruction is not necessarily valid for other places or for other centuries of the Old Babylonian period. Indeed, it will be demonstrated that the teaching programs in early Old Babylonian Uruk and in late Old Babylonian Sippar-Amnanum differed considerably from each other and from the one at Nippur.

The concept curriculum implies some form of standardization in learning goals and learning methods and it usually also implies enforcement of this program by some kind of authority. Most researchers today would agree that neither palace nor temple was involved in developing or enforcing an educational policy. The question, therefore, is: is there still any basis for utilizing the concept "curriculum" when we talk about Old Babylonian scribal education? Is there any sense of unity behind the variety, and if there is no central educational authority – how can this unity be explained?

The question will be approached by employing practice theory, as developed by Pierre Bourdieu, and the interrelated concepts of field, habitus, and capital.

**Grégory Chambon** (Centre François Viète)

**“Metrology and Scribal Traditions”**

Metrology, numeracy and literacy have been intertwined since the beginning of writing at the end of the fourth millennium BC. The first archaic signs are for the most part notations for numbers or measure units used for quantifying and managing goods and products in the ancient administrations.

It will be argued in this talk that the examination of measures in the ancient Near East needs not

restrict itself to the quantitative reconstruction of daily life for economic history. Measure units in the cuneiform texts are not only « tools » that allow to record quantitative and numerical data directly from the concrete world but also « products » of scribal cultures with their own conventions and local traditions. Therefore, they result from processes depending on scribal choices within a social and cultural context.

In order to investigate this link between scribal practice and metrology, we will focus our attention on three case studies, based on different epigraphic sources: the Old Babylonian metrological lists used for scribal training, the royal correspondence of the kings of Mari during the Old Babylonian Period and the administrative texts from Emar and its vicinity during the 13th century BC, which enable us to discern various modes of scribal practices on the way in which measures were expressed"

**Shigeo Yamada (University of Tsukuba)**  
**“Old Babylonian School Exercises from Tell Taban”**

Two tablets of Old Babylonian school exercise were discovered in the 2005 summer season of Japanese excavation at Tell Taban, Syria. One of them is a syllable exercise on a well-preserved large fragment of a square tablet, and the other is a metrological text on a rectangular tablet, whose fragments were joined into one piece in 2010. Moreover, in 2009, a fragment of Weidner God List, apparently originating from the same period, was found on the mound surface; the text was published by Daisuke Shibata in 2009 (Iraq 71). This paper examines the contents and characteristics of the syllable exercise and the metrological text. Then, it considers the traits of the scribal education at Tell Taban exemplified by these texts as well as the Weidner God List fragment, in comparison with the school exercises uncovered at other sites in Mesopotamia and Syria. The examination reveals that the school “curriculum” at the city of Tabatum (Tell Taban) is similar to that recovered at Sippar, which was likely diffused westward into a wide area in Jazira and Syria in the latter half of the second millennium BC. The expected direct origin of the scribal tradition of Tabatum is supposed to have been the major cities of Terqa and Mari, as suggested by the style of legal texts, the month names and other cultural traits attested in other documents found at Tell Taban.

**Friday, 6<sup>th</sup> December**  
**Scribal Education and Scribal Tradition**

**Alexa Sabine Bartelmus (Universität Marburg)**  
**“The Role of Babylon in Babylonian Scribal Education”**

Considering the major role that Babylon played in Ancient Near Eastern politics during large parts of the 2nd millennium BCE (as capital of the First Dynasty of Babylon, the Kassite Dynasty, and – despite of its name – probably even the Second Dynasty of Isin), it is very likely to assume that important steps in the development of Babylonian scribal education took place there, especially after the South of Babylonia had been largely abandoned during the rule of Samsu-iluna and the Nippur scribal schools had come to a temporary end.

However, so far only a few relevant sources have been published and therefore we know almost nothing about Babylon’s position in the history of Babylonian scribal education prior to the first millennium when the school curriculum of the whole of Babylonia had already been unified and texts dealing with Babylon’s city god Marduk were playing a prominent role in it.

Based on a corpus of school tablets stemming from a Late Kassite context in Babylon (listed in Pedersén’s catalogue of archives and libraries of Babylon [2005] as “M6”) that I was kindly allowed to

deal with in my dissertation on Sumerian in the Kassite Period by the “Vorderasiatisches Museum Berlin”, it is now possible to show that Kassite Babylon perfectly fills the gap between the slightly different school traditions of Old Babylonian North and South and the more or less uniform curriculum of Babylonia in the first millennium BCE.

**Amanda H. Podany** (California State Polytechnic University, Pomona)

**“The Conservatism of Hana Scribal Tradition”**

When the first documents dating to the kings of the Syrian land of Hana were published, at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century, they were generally believed to have been written during the Old Babylonian period. This is understandable; the documents included many OB clauses and terms. Not until quite recently, when contracts were published that had the same Hanaean formulas, but combined with Middle Assyrian eponyms, did it become clear that the conservatism of the scribes who had lived in the region of Hana was remarkable. For more than four centuries they continued to include the same components when drawing up a contract, and in some cases the same exact legal formulas. My paper will explore this scribal conservatism, examining which features of Hana scribal tradition remained the same through all those centuries, almost as though frozen in time, which features changed, and which features changed and then, to some extent, returned to their earlier forms.

The paper will also examine some possible reasons for the archaizing tendencies of the Hana scribes, and will suggest comparisons with other contemporary kingdoms. A number of recent publications have increased the number of Hana texts that are available for examination. These include documents from Tell Taban and from Terqa, along with a Middle Assyrian document from the reign of Tiglath-Pileser I.

**Daisuke Shibata** (University of Tsukuba)

**“The Local Scribal Tradition in the Land of Mari during the Middle Assyrian Period”**

The Middle Assyrian texts uncovered in the excavations at Tell Taban, ancient Tābetu, which was the capital-city of a semi-independent client state called the Land of Māri, contribute to our knowledge of the regional state apparatus in Assyria during the late second millennium B.C. First of all, it was revealed by the texts that client states, governed by local dynasties, existed alongside the provinces as an integral part of the Assyrian state. Furthermore, the ruling dynasty of the Land of Māri did not hail from Aššur, but had a local origin. The local dynasty reaches back (at least) into the Mittani period and subsequently adapted to the Assyrian conquest of the Habur region, by ‘Assyrianizing’ while continuing to rule their small territory around Tābetu. On the other hand, the cuneiform texts from Tell Taban reveal continuity in cultic tradition from the Old Babylonian to the Middle Assyrian period as well. Thus, it appears that the local dynasty was ‘Assyrianized’, while keeping local traditions. In this paper, I would like to examine the scribal characteristics of the Middle Assyrian texts from Tell Taban in consideration of the ‘Assyrianization’ on the one hand and the continuity of local tradition on the other hand.

**Yoram Cohen** (Tel Aviv University)

**“Scribal Traditions at Emar”**

This paper will present the two main scribal traditions found at Emar on the Euphrates. First, the Syrian scribal tradition and the Syro-Hittite scribal tradition will be chronologically situated in relation to one another and in absolute dating terms. This will be followed by a description of the two traditions, as the particulars of each tradition will be highlighted. The script-types, dating systems, legal formulae,

witness lists, writing conventions of private names, and sealing practices of both traditions will be presented and evaluated. Emphasis will be given to the school curriculum typical of each tradition. The literary texts, among which are the notable wisdom compositions, the so-called 'Ballad' and 'Hear the Wisdom,' will be assessed with a view of the scribal and literary traditions of Syria during the Late Bronze Age. Finally, the individual scribes of each tradition will be introduced—the Syrian scribes versus the Syro-Hittite scribes, who mainly consist of the most famous family in the city, the Zu-Bala-s.

**Mark Weeden** (SOAS, University of London)

**“Hittite Scribal Tradition and Syria”**

The notion of “tradition” itself is difficult when the preserved remains of writing from the ancient world represent such a tiny fraction of the total output. Modern scholarship has recently tended to eschew study of traditions of cuneiform writing or of the transmission of texts in favour of the study of bodies of local practice and use-contexts. In the case of the relationship between Hittite scribal practices and Syria the question of influence is particularly complicated. While it is generally accepted that the Hittites inherited cuneiform writing from Syria, they upheld a broad level of contact with all the major powers of the time. It is often difficult to disentangle specifically Syrian elements of shared practice in Anatolia, or of Hittite shared practice in Syria, from general developments in cuneiform writing practice across the whole of the cuneiform world.

This contribution will consider some older and more recently observed correspondences between Hittite and Syrian writing practices distinguishing three phases: the early period of the initial borrowing of the script; the period of interaction with the Empire of Mittani; relations with the Middle Euphrates during the 13th century BC; and three types of interaction: punctual interaction exemplified by individual textual artefacts; isolated aspects of writing practice that may be the issue of punctual contact; global developments in writing practice. While global developments in Hittite writing practice seem possibly connected with exposure to Mittanian scribal culture there do not seem to have been similarly global developments in the writing practices of Syria through exposure to Hittite cuneiform culture. This may have to do with the different social and situational use-contexts of Hittite and Syrian cuneiform, and pertains in spite of the fact that the Hittites exercised power in the region.

**Wilfred H. van Soldt** (Universiteit Leiden)

**“School and Scribal Tradition in Ugarit”**

This paper will try to present a general picture of scribal education in Ugarit and the traditions that played a role in it. First I will discuss the various archives where school texts in Mesopotamian cuneiform were uncovered and what role the palace played as we can deduce from the archives found in this large building and in the private houses. Then we will look at the different formats in which the school texts were written and what this can tell us about the curriculum followed in Ugarit. Another important facet in the scribal training is that of the different genres that were used in the education and how we can distinguish the various stages of the scribal training. In the discussion of the curriculum we will also look at the schools that we can identify and their content in order to see what role they played, in particular which part of the curriculum was taught most of all in these schools. After this we will look briefly at the teachers and their students, their relations, their products and who was teaching who. The discussion of the curriculum is completed with a comparison between the syllabic school texts and their alphabetic counter parts. Recently, new ideas have been put forward which are important to know how the students mastered these two scripts. Finally, we will look at how the school texts probably reached Ugarit and what can be said about the way students had to learn the complicated material, in particular whether they had to memorize everything that they learned or that they copied from a written *vorlage*.

**Saturday, 7<sup>th</sup> December**

Emar Workshop: History and Chronology of Emar

**Masamichi Yamada** (Chuo University)

**“The Emar Texts: Their Chronological Framework and Historical Implications”**

The currently accepted chronological framework of the Emar (legal) texts has greatly modified the old one, arguing for the presence of another local dynasty, partial changes in the succession order of the kings, and a chronological discrepancy between the Syrian- and Syro-Hittite-type texts (ca. 1380-1250 vs. 1275-1175 B.C.). However, a careful analysis of the relevant texts does not support those modifications. The present study shows a ‘new’ framework for the chronology of the Emar texts of both types (ca. 1275-1175 B.C.) and, based on this, overviews the historical events recorded in those texts.

**Yoram Cohen** (Tel Aviv University)

**“Problems in the History and Chronology of Emar”**

This paper will re-assess the various suggestions currently held regarding the chronology of the archives of Emar. The main discussion will revolve around the chronological relationship of the Syrian documents vis-à-vis the Syro-Hittite documents found in the city archives. Attention will be given to the absolute dating of these two textual groups and the implication of their dating to intra-regional politics. The role of the Emar kings, the Hittite officials, such as the “Overseer of the Land,” and the Zu-Bala family from the earliest records of Emar to its fall will also be considered.

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