

A Bibliography for Cuneiform Mathematical Texts

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During the course of my research on a book entitled *Cuneiform Mathematical Texts as a Reflection of Everyday Life in Mesopotamia*, I became quickly aware of the difficulties involved in amassing an adequate bibliography in order to study the mathematical tablets. Articles generally appear in journals accessible to either Assyriologists or to mathematicians; cross-citations are a rare occurrence. The bibliographical handbooks, though useful, underscore the various difficulties the scholar faces in finding an adequate reference tool to study the individual tablets. For example, the "Keilschrift Bibliographie," published annually in *Orientalia*, updates the bibliography of the ancient Near East by language and or geographical area and by topic. However, it usually omits articles found in mathematical journals. Similarly, Rykle Borger, in his three-volume *Handbuch der Keilschriftliteratur* (1967–1975), is very methodical in citing Assyriological literature but generally omits history of mathematics journals from his bibliography. In volumes 1 and 2 Borger cites references under each book or article; however, in order to use this bibliography effectively, the reader must already be acquainted with the secondary literature. In volume 3 Borger organizes his bibliography by subject matter (§141 "Mathematik, Astronomie, Metrologie" in this particular instance) and alphabetically by author; here the reader must check each source to determine its relevance to his research. Kenneth O. May in *Bibliography and Research Manual of the History of Mathematics* (Toronto and Buffalo, 1973) includes both Assyriological and mathematical articles in his reference guide, but he organizes the volume along the lines of Borger's *Handbuch der Keilschriftliteratur*, volume 3; that is, under broad subject categories, namely "Babylonian," "Sumerian," "Ancient Mathematics," "Old Civilizations," and alphabetically according to author. Jöran Friberg in *A Survey of Publications on Sumero-Akkadian Mathematics, Metrology and Related Matters (1854–1982)* (Göteborg, Sweden 1982), includes both Assyriological and mathematical articles but organizes his bibliography by date with brief reviews. It is useful as "a brief historical survey of what has been published during the last 125 years, or so, in various books and journals, on the subject of 'Sumero-Akkadian mathematics, metrology and related matters'" (p. xiii). However, once again the reader must already be acquainted with the secondary literature of the mathematical problem texts in order to use this book in less than its entirety. Up to now, a tablet-by-tablet bibliography that includes both Assyriological and mathematical references has not been compiled.

In addition, the basic volumes of cuneiform mathematical texts were written at least 25 years ago:

- a. Bruins, E. M., and Rutten, Marguerite. *Textes mathématiques de Suse*, MDP 34. Paris: Librairie orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1961.
- b. Neugebauer, Otto, and Sachs, Abraham J. *Mathematical Cuneiform Texts*, AOS 29. New Haven: American Oriental Society and the American Schools of Oriental Research, 1945. Reprint 1986.
- c. Neugebauer, Otto. *Mathematische Keilschrifttexte*, 3 vols. Berlin: Verlag von Julius Springer, 1935–1937.
- d. Thureau-Dangin, François. *Textes mathématiques babyloniens*. Leiden, 1938.

Though these volumes often included copious notes and bibliographies for the individual tablets, a bibliographical update is long overdue.

This article is an excerpt from a bibliography of mathematical cuneiform texts, which is an index to a longer work in progress (see above). Included here is a survey of the literature to date on (1) Otto Neugebauer and Abraham J. Sachs, *Mathematical Cuneiform Texts*, AOS 29 (New Haven: American Oriental Society and the American Schools of Oriental Research, 1945, reprint 1986) (cited hereafter as *MCT*) and on (2) the coefficient lists. These two units were selected in order to present an updated bibliographical tool that could be useful to both Assyriologists and mathematicians.

The reference list for *MCT* is organized by museum number. Here, each tablet entry includes photo, copy, and bibliography; the first item in the *MCT* bibliography is the text edition. The reference list for the coefficient lists, is also organized by museum number and includes photo, copy, and text edition; however, the bibliography for the coefficient lists is not organized on a tablet-by-tablet basis (i.e., by museum number); the bibliography for the coefficient lists refers to the coefficient lists in their entirety because of the overlapping nature of the information contained in the lists.

Note that the abbreviations “ibid.” and “op. cit.” are avoided so that the reader may select references for any tablet without being forced to examine the entire bibliography or even the entire tablet entry. All abbreviations of books, periodicals, etc., are standard and can be found in *The Assyrian Dictionary* (Chicago, 1964-).

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NO MUSEUM NUMBER NOTED

Copy: Scheil, Vincent. “Tablettes susiennes.” *RA* 35 (1938), pp. 92–103.

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A 24194

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A 24195

Photo: *MCT*, pl. 42.
 Copy: *MCT*, pl. 16.
 Bibliography:
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K 8705

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MLC 1354

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YBC 4186

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YBC 4652

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YBC 4663

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YBC 4666

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YBC 5037

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YBC 7284

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