

Szumma awilum agrlam iggar... Starobabilońskie kontrakty najmu siły roboczej w muzeach europejskich British Museum (Londyn), Musée du Louvre (Paryż) i Vorderasiatisches Museum (Berlin)

The aim of the research is to draw up a comprehensive overview of the contract for the hire of workforce during the Old Babylonian Period based on cuneiform tablets stored in Western European museums, the British Museum (London), the Musée du Louvre (Paris) and the Vorderasiatisches Museum (Berlin). Documents of this type were the subject of my research in the monographic book published in 2015 year "Złoto Mezopotamii. Najem siły roboczej w Babilonii okresu starobabilońskiego, XIX – XVII w. przed Chrystusem" (Gold of Mesopotamia. Hiring of workforce in the Old Babylonian Period (19th-17th century BC). Unfortunately, this was based on numerous published texts from various collections in the world and only some unpublished texts from the British Museum. These come mainly from the city of Sippar in Northern Babylonia dated from the period beginning with the reign of Hammurabi to the fall of the dynasty (1792 - 1595 BC). Therefore, for the comprehensive overview of the contract for the hire of workforce in this period, it is necessary to analyse numerous documents contained in the other two great collections of cuneiform texts of Western Europe. Some of them have been edited a hundred years ago, in the series *Textes Cuneiformes du Louvre* (volumes 1, 10, 11) and *Vorderasiatische Schriftdenkmäler* and among them there are also some contracts for the hire of workforce. In these collections there are, however, numerous texts not yet published, and not even explored scientifically. In the vast majority they are also economic documents and there is no doubt that one can find some contracts for the hire of workers among them. What is especially important they also come from Babylonia from that period (19th -17th century BC). An analysis of these sources may help to obtain a full picture of the contract for the hire of men and the hiring procedures in this period in relation to the economic, social and legal issues in ancient Mesopotamia in the first half of the 2nd millennium BC.

The reason for taking this issue in this project is the desire to complement the image of the contract of hire of labour during the Old Babylonian Period, because due to the scarcity of records it remains incomplete as well as the fact that they come basically from one city, i.e. Sippar in Northern Babylonia. Sources known from other cities, Babylon, Dilbat, Larsa and Ur are not many but they enrich the source material and fill the gap somehow. Although the number of contracts from Sippar is impossible to balance, the tablets from the other cities can significantly affect the overall picture, especially in perspective of the evolution of the contract in the three consecutive centuries (19th - 17th centuries BC). What is noteworthy, the documents from Paris and Berlin come from not only other cities but also from slightly earlier period, so they greatly widen our perspective. However, the project also aims at further search for hire contracts in the British Museum, because a large part of the collection of cuneiform texts deposited there was not previously included in published catalogues and not studied by scholars. In accordance with what is known among Assyriologists large part of this material comes also from the Old Babylonian Period and among them certainly there are documents concerning the hire of workforce, very important phenomenon in the economy of this area in the whole its history.

The planned research will rely on reviewing unpublished, or completely unknown texts in museums mentioned above. Once they are identified, they will be read and photocopied. In the next stage these documents will be prepared for edition in the form of a hand-copies drawn up by one of the investigators, plus transliteration, translation and commentary covering philological as well as social, economic and legal issues. This will give full picture of the character and the role of the contract for the hire of workforce in this period. The final publication will contain both copies, transliterations, translations and comments to the text along with the lists of sumerograms and vocabulary of Akkadian and in this way it will give opportunity to make full use of this material for other scholars.