

## PREFACE

In many museums the holdings of cuneiform tablets are primarily dated to the Ur III Dynasty and the Neo-Babylonian period. This is also the case for the Yale Babylonian Collection which contains more than 12,000 Ur III tablets.

Most of these texts are of economic and administrative nature and may seem dull and repetitive, apparently providing little new information. Despite their fixed format many of them constitute a challenge in interpretation, provide for new grammatical constructions or new words, and enlighten us about the general administrative practices. The sheer amount of writing done daily helps us to better understand the bureaucratic activity of each city and the systems that made the bureaucracy function.

As more information has become available, our interpretation of the Ur III administration has become more precise. Cataloguing and publishing Ur III texts is decisive for the reconstruction of the administration and the life of this society, and the edition of the overwhelming amount of tablets from the Yale Babylonian Collection is crucial in this task.

Some of these tablets were collated many times, and all plausible readings were thoroughly checked in order to achieve the best results. We wish to thank Dr. Elisabeth Payne for further collations on difficult and doubtful passages. Understanding the seal inscriptions was equally important in our research and we hope to present exact readings of the inscriptions.

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