

**Book Introduction:
Wakaha Mori, Hajime Yamamoto, and Yumiko Murakami,
*Cuneiform Tablets, Collections in the Kyoto University Museum,
No. 9 (The Kyoto University Museum, 2022)***

**森若葉、山本孟、村上由美子編著
『楔形文字粘土板』(京都大学総合博物館収蔵資料目録第9号)
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This volume publishes the contents of the cuneiform tablets housed in the Kyoto University Museum, which were first received by the Department of Literature, Kyoto Imperial University, in 1915 as a donation from Dr. C. J. Ball of the University of Oxford, as well as contents from the two tablets presented to the museum by Prof. A. H. Sayce and Prof. G. Uchida. The volume is authored by two Research Fellows of CISMOR, Dr. Wakaha Mori and Dr. Hajime Yamamoto, with the participation of Dr. Yumiko Murakami of the Kyoto University Museum. At the end there is an postscript by Prof. Emeritus Kazuya Maekawa of Kyoto University, explaining the history of the tablets' collection at Kyoto University Museum.

The collection in the volume includes 60 tablets that are all presented in photos, transliterations, and translations. The tablets are written in cuneiform script in the Sumerian, Akkadian, and Hittite languages. The volume is bilingual, where the informative text and translations appear in both Japanese and English.

The book opens with a foreword presenting the history of the collection and how it came to be in the museum. It also mentions that a large number of the Sumerian tablets were already transliterated and translated in 1928 by Yomokuro Nakahara in the first publication of Sumerian tablets in Japan. Thanks to the enormous advances made since then in cuneiform studies, particularly the Sumerian language, this new reading gives the tablets a clearer meaning and better places them in historical context. Next, the authors give a chronology of the treated texts as well as a map of the regions from which they originated according to their contents [pp. 10-11].

The volume is then divided into two main parts. The first part includes photos of the tablets in the following order: Sumerian (Tablets no. 993-2 through 993-52; 993-54 & 55)

and Akkadian (Tablets 993-X-two tablets; 993-90) [pp. 14–71]. The second part includes copies of the texts, their transliterations, and their translations [pp. 78–153]. After the two main parts, an appendix, a postscript, a catalogue and scholarly references are added [pp. 154–167]. Let me describe each part in detail.

The first part displays color photos of each tablet from six angles (obverse, reverse, and each of the edges) to permit full reading of the tablet. The photos are high-resolution, and the signs can be seen clearly (scans made by Cultural Images Archive Co., Ltd., headed by Dr. Ari Ide, Faculty of Engineering, Kyoto University). Each tablet is numbered with the running numbers of the volume after the museum number (993-). Next, museum information is presented: the language of the tablet, its provenance, and its date. The content of the tablet is also described, such as “Receipt for Barley” or “Withdrawal of Livestock,” as well as the size of the tablet. At the end of this part, there are two additions: one that includes photos of five tablets produced by the same scribe from the city of Umma, and which the authors found interesting to comment about, and the other that presents four tablets that are copies (i.e., models) of four originals, which were made by a Japanese company for sale around 1930. Today these models, housed in the museum, are used for teaching.

The second main part includes the meticulous work of hand-drawn copies of all tablets prepared by Dr. Mori and Dr. Yamamoto. Each copied tablet has four rubrics: 1) a hand-drawn copy of the tablet’s obverse and reverse sides as well as its edges if attested; 2) details of provenance, period, language, size, content, and previous publication; 3) transliteration of the signs; and 4) translation [pp. 78–139]. Following this section, a separate section of hand-drawn copies is devoted to the seals impressed on 26 tablets of the collection [pp. 140–153]. All of the seals are impressed on Sumerian tablets, the majority of which are from Umma. The copy shows the position of the impression on the tablet and its transliteration, translation, and whether it has been previously published. Pages 154–158 include four previously published tablets based on the publication of Nakahara 1928 and Hamada 1923, without new photos. Three of these tablets are in the Sumerian language and one is in the Hittite language. The tablets are presented in the same format: 1) a photo from the original publication, 2) suggested provenance, period, language, content, 3) transliteration, and 4) translation.

The translations of the tablets in a bilingual format offer scholars an additional resource for interpreting administrative records, mainly from the period of the Sumerian Ur III dynasty. The Sumerian records offer insights into the transfer of commodities from storehouses within the royal administration for the temples and the gods, as well as the palace and officials. The two main cities mentioned are Umma and Puzrish-Dagan. The three Akkadian tab-

lets include one from Dilbat, dated to the Old Babylonian period, one from the Achaemenid period of Babylon showing contracts of sale (land and slave), and the third of unknown provenance, dated to the Middle Babylonian period, showing records of grain rations distributed to palace officials. Unfortunately, the Hittite tablet is very fragmentary and thus yields hardly any content.

The publication of this volume will surely offer scholars new materials to study and review in the future, enhancing our knowledge of the long-gone cultures of the Ancient Near East.