This article explores some of the implications of a relatively small but significant group of texts, the Old Babylonian copies of Early Dynastic (ED) lexical texts. Many of the texts discussed below may now be found on the pages of the Digital Corpus of Cuneiform Lexical Texts (DCCLT), a web project in many ways inspired by Jeremy Black’s Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature (ETCSL). This is a modest tribute to the memory of a scholar and friend who changed the face of cuneiform research by his pioneering efforts on the web.

Much of the Early Dynastic lexical corpus originated in the late Uruk period around the time when writing was invented (approximately 3200 BCE). These lexical compositions were faithfully copied for about one and a half millennia—the latest exemplars may be dated around 1700. In the early Old Babylonian period, during the reign of the Isin dynasty (around 1900), a sweeping reform of scribal education created a lexical corpus that differed fundamentally from its earlier counterparts. In one sense, therefore, the ED lexical texts were an anomaly in the Old Babylonian context, because the lexical tradition had reached a watershed. In another sense, however, these relics of another era exemplify, more than any true Old Babylonian lexical composition could do, the nature of the cuneiform lexical corpus at the time as the guardian of ancient tradition.

A WATERSHED IN LEXICAL HISTORY
The history of the lexical tradition in Mesopotamia is divided into two halves by the early Old Babylonian period. The third-millennium lexical corpus is conservative, one-dimensional, and unstructured. The Old Babylonian corpus, by contrast, is flexible, two-dimensional, and has a curricular structure. The Old Babylonian word and sign lists eventually developed into the first-millennium lexical series that were transmitted all the way down to end of cuneiform civilization.

 Conservative
The list of professions Lu A, the most frequently attested ED list in the Old Babylonian record, offers some of the strongest examples of the extreme conservatism of the early lexical tradition. One may compare the fragments N 5566 + (Old Babylonian Nippur), published here, with the text as preserved on the Fara tablet SF 33:

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1 I would like to acknowledge the help I received from Terri Tanaka, who corrected my English and pointed out several weaknesses in an earlier version of this paper. I had a long and very inspiring discussion with Chris Woods about issues of third millennium writing. Jeremie Peterson (Philadelphia) collated several passages for me. To all of these I wish to express my sincere thanks.

2 DCCLT (http://cdl.museum.upenn.edu/dcclt) cooperates closely with the Cuneiform Digital Library Initiative (CDLI: http://cdli.ucla.edu/) and the electronic Pennsylvania Sumerian Dictionary (ePSD http://psd.museum.upenn.edu/epsd/). Texts that are available in photograph and/or transliteration will be referred to by their six-digit P-number, assigned by the CDLI project. Such texts may be found by entering the P number in the DCCLT search box and clicking on the ‘Select Texts’ button.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Entry</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>gal-bad-la[gar]</td>
<td>gal-BAD×DIŠ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[en]-ib</td>
<td>en-ib</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[gal]-šīta</td>
<td>gal-šīta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gal-ga</td>
<td>gal-ga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tug-gara₂</td>
<td>tug-gara₂</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>šandana</td>
<td>šandana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gal-kisal</td>
<td>gal-kisal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gal-sīla</td>
<td>gal-sīla</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gal-šab</td>
<td>gal-šab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bu-šab</td>
<td>bu-šab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gal-nisāg</td>
<td>gal-nisāg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gal-sīlam₃(TU[R₃×SAL])⁸</td>
<td>gal-sīlam₃(TU[R₃])</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sa[gga]-GA₂×SAL-me</td>
<td>sa[gga]-GA₂×SAL-me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sa[gga]-GA₂×UD³-me</td>
<td>sa[gga]-GA₂×UD³-me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gal-sahar</td>
<td>gal-sahar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gal-tag</td>
<td>gal-tag</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ub-sağ</td>
<td>ub-sağ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dub₂</td>
<td>dub₂</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bar-lagab-me</td>
<td>bar-lagab-me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nun-me-KA×GANA₃tenū</td>
<td>nun-me-KA×GANA₃tenū</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kar₃(SE(rotated))-me</td>
<td>kar₃(SE(rotated))-me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GA₂×GAR₄-me-nun-me</td>
<td>GA₂×GAR₄-me-nun-me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>arkab-ib</td>
<td>arkab-ib</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>arkab-ġar</td>
<td>arkab-ġar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mar-apin</td>
<td>mar-apin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bu-nun</td>
<td>bu-nun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bu-nun-sağga</td>
<td>bu-nun-sağga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nun-sağ[ga]</td>
<td>nun-sağ[ga]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gal-tuku</td>
<td>gal-tuku</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gal-ezen</td>
<td>gal-ezen</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

³ N 5566 + N 5583 + N 5651 + N 7441 + N 7454 (+) N 5655 (+) N 7444 [P218304].
⁴ In the majority of cases the reading of entries in ED Lu A remains uncertain so that almost everything should be presented in upper case. I have avoided excessive use of upper case for aesthetic reasons but want to emphasize that I do not claim my readings to be correct. The most recent edition is by Arcari (1982).
⁵ The tablet was collated from a photograph [P010613].
⁶ The inscribed SAL is broken away in N 5566+, but is present in other Old Babylonian copies (BM 30041, unpublished, courtesy Jon Taylor; and CBS 6142+ [P218303], see Veldhuis 2002: 73 with n. 43).
⁷ The end of the ME in 2´–3´ is preserved in N 5655 col. i´.
⁸ For lines 55–6 see Krebernik 1998: 279, with further literature.
Given the fragmentary state of N 5566+ (Figs. 1 and 2), the very fact that almost all traces may be restored and read testifies to the conservative nature of the text. Several interesting observations may be made about the orthography of the Old Babylonian copies of Lu A. Line 80, the last entry preserved in N 5566+, is known from a glossed version of the same text. That Old Babylonian exemplar represents lines 80–3, as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Entry</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GAL.ZAG</td>
<td>en-ku₂ gal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NISAG.ZAG</td>
<td>en-ku₂ nisāq-ğa₂</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PA.DAG.ZAG</td>
<td>en-ku₂ da kalam-ma</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The grapheme ZAG represents the word enkud ‘tax collector’, otherwise spelled ZAG.KU₆. The glosses indicate that GAL.ZAG represents enkud gal ‘chief tax collector’, with the adjective following the main word, as is the rule in Sumerian. Not only do all exemplars of the list preserve the writing ZAG rather than ZAG.KU₆, they also preserve the archaic inverted sign order.²

² The actual entries are broken, but may be reconstructed from parallels. The text is CBS 13493 = SLT 24, edited by Green 1984a. She treats the text as an Ur III exemplar, but the sign forms are consistent with an Old Babylonian dating.

²⁰ Among the Old Babylonian sources line 80 is fully preserved in CBS 7845 = SLT 113; traces in BM 58680 confirm the reading as well as the gloss (see Taylor 2008: 208).
Table 1: The changing orthography of the grapheme KAR₂

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Archaic, Fara, AbS</th>
<th>ED IIIb</th>
<th>Sargonic</th>
<th>Gudea</th>
<th>Ur III/OB</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SE₀</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>~</td>
<td>~</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ŠE₀temū</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>~</td>
<td>~</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GANA₂</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>in kar₂-har¹⁶</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GANA₂temū</td>
<td>~</td>
<td>~</td>
<td>ligatures/compounds</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

~ = sign does not exist in this period
blank = sign exists, but is not used for the value kar₂ in this period

Each of these sources represents kar₂-me. In the early third millennium there was no separate sign KAR₂; the value was represented by the sign ŠE₀, as in the well-known expression aga₂-kar₂(SE₀)—sign₁⁰ (to defeat), attested several times in Pre-Sargonic royal inscriptions from Lagaš.¹³ In some cases ŠE₀ was turned 90° (ŠE₀temū) to distinguish it from other values of the same sign, such as ŠE₀, hu₃, and zidᵢ.¹⁴ This rotated ŠE₀ sign was re-interpreted as a GANA₂ in the Sargonic period, so that the standard writing for ŧšu-kar₂ ‘tool’ (written ŧšu-ŠE₀temū in pre-Sargonic Lagaš) became ŧšu-kar₂(GANA₂).¹⁵ In the Gudea period and in Ur III the value kar₂ was distinguished from GANA₂, again by rotation (GANA₂temū = kar₂);¹⁶ this became the standard grapheme for KAR₂, only to coincide again with GANA₂ in Assyrian orthography (Table 1). In writing GANA₂-me for kar₂-me the Old Babylonian copy thus preserves a long-obsolete use of the sign GANA₂.¹⁷

Other variants in ED Lu A are found in the order of the signs, such as line 115 gal-gana²-sagga (Abu Salabikh, Fara, Ebla) versus gal-sagaš-gana₂ (Tell Brak; Ur III and Old Babylonian sources).¹⁸ More surprising than such minor variants, however, is the incredibly obstinate conservatism that kept many aspects of ancient orthography intact, even where this did not correspond to contemporary practice.

In terms of conservatism, ED Lu A is an extreme case. Other members of the ED lexical corpus are a little more flexible and adapt more easily to the (orthographic) standards of the time. One

¹¹ Other OB sources: GAL.LAGAR.BAD in Ni 1600 (Veldhuis and Hilprecht 2003–4: 46); GAL.BAD.
¹² LAGAR² in CBS 6142 (SLT 112) + [P218303].
¹³ YOS I 12.
¹⁴ See Klein 1991: 310; and the collection of references and writings from various periods in PSD A/3 49–50.
¹⁵ In Fara the value zidᵢ (written ŧšu-ŠE₀temū in pre-Sargonic Lagaš) became ŧšu-kar₂(GANA₂). In the Gudea period and in Ur III the value kar₂ was distinguished from GANA₂, again by rotation (GANA₂temū = kar₂);¹⁶ this became the standard grapheme for KAR₂, only to coincide again with GANA₂ in Assyrian orthography (Table 1). In writing GANA₂-me for kar₂-me the Old Babylonian copy thus preserves a long-obsolete use of the sign GANA₂.¹⁷
¹⁶ Other OB sources: GAL.LAGAR.BAD in Ni 1600 (Veldhuis and Hilprecht 2003–4: 46); GAL.BAD.
¹⁷ See, for instance, VAS I 162 rev. ii 1 (pre-Sargonic Lagaš ), and MAD 4 41 (Sargonic).
¹⁸ The GANA₂temū version of KAR₂ was used earlier only in ligatures and compound signs, for instance in GIG₂-KAR₂ (RTC 278 and 286, Sargonic) GI₃₁₆ (KI₅-GANA₂temū; see Mittermayer 2005: 35–40), and PU₃ (KA₅-GANA₂temū).
reason may be that ED Lu A lists words for professions and titles that had their context in late fourth-millennium Uruk society. Early in the third millennium many of these titles were no longer in use and therefore did not evolve.

An example of a more flexible list is Geography X, which is attested in a few duplicates from Abu Salabikh, one from Fara and one from Old Babylonian Nippur (Figs. 3 and 4). Several archaic fragments are related to this list but do not actually duplicate it. Much is very unclear about this composition, in particular with respect to the many variants in the Old Babylonian duplicate. The following is only a taste of what is in store for a more exhaustive treatment of this very interesting composition.

The text as a whole seems to deal primarily with geographical names and terms, listing types of fields in the section under discussion. The word šuš(miṭ ru) is known only from lexical lists and denotes a type of field with a characteristic kind of irrigation canal. The word ga-raš ‘leek’ (or field where leeks are grown?) is followed by the ‘place of leek’ (see Izi C ii 31’), which may well be a storage place. The entry ki-LAGAR is presumably for ki-su(GLAGAR×ŠE) ‘threshing floor’. The orthography in the Old Babylonian text and in the ED copies differs often rather drastically, yet the Old Babylonian text can be demonstrated to follow its predecessor line by line.

In conclusion, while not all ED lexical texts adhere to the same rigid mode of standardization as ED Lu A, the examples above illustrate the basic rule that such compositions were transmitted verbatim. One may argue that the whole point of transmitting these lists was to preserve an ancient tradition, so that updating them by omitting the useless entries or adding new words would effectively defeat their very purpose.

Regular Old Babylonian lists, by contrast, were in a constant state of flux. Standard texts existed locally, so that there are standard lexical texts from Nippur, Sippar and other places. These local versions differed considerably from each other. Whether local traditions developed and changed over time is a question that for the moment cannot be answered. The great mass of lexical texts from Nippur cannot be differentiated chronologically; for other sites we do not have sufficient

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N 5174 rev. i

| 1 | traces |
| 2 | a-na-[ | AbS/Fara |
| 3 | MES-bi-[ | NIM.DU' |
| 4 | sa(over erasure)-za- [...] | si-za-l₂ |
| 5 | a-na-mu-na | na₃g-mun²² |
| 6 | ušuš(U₂.GA₂×NUN) | Šu₂₃(ŠE+AM₂)[²³] |
| 7 | ušuš(U₂.GA₂×NUN)-NUN | Šu₂₃(ŠE+AM₂)-NUN²⁴ |
| 8 | ga-raš | garaš₂(KASKAL) |
| 9 | ki-ga-raš | ki-garaš₂(KASKAL) |
| 10 | ki-LAGAR | ki[- [...] |
| 11 | ki-ŠITA₃? | ki₃x'³ |
| 12 | am- [...] | a₂-NE²⁵ |

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²² This label was introduced by Englund and Nissen in ATU 3 150. While the later exemplars do not duplicate the archaic sources, there is enough overlap to warrant using the same name in order to emphasize the continuity of the tradition.

²³ The sources are OIP 99 39–43, 405, 416 (Abu Salabikh); OSP 1 9 (Fara); N 5174 (OB Nippur).

²⁴ The archaic sources are published in ATU 3 pl₃s. 78–9, with editions on pp. 160–2.

²⁵ Variants EME-mun and KA-mun.

²⁶ For the reading Šu₃, see Krebernik 1998: 276 with further literature. The present parallel supplies yet another confirmation of this reading.

²⁷ This entry is also attested in the archaic source MSVO 1 243 obv. ii 3 (ATU 3 162) [P000714].

²⁸ The Fara text has 'GI x²-NE; see Alster (1991–2: 23) for the reading a₂ = GI.

²⁹ MSL 14 114 22 (Old Babylonian version of Ea); Ea IV 247 (MSL 14 365); Diri 4 15 (MSL 15 150).
evidence to even start thinking about the question. Since the matter is so well known, a brief example demonstrating local differences may suffice here: the section \textit{dug} bur-zi ‘cult vessel’ in versions of Old Babylonian Ur-\textit{ra} from Nippur, Isin, and, perhaps, Sippar. The Nippur and Isin texts are approximately contemporary (second half of the eighteenth century), the Sippar text may be a little later.

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure3.png}
\caption{N 5174 obverse}
\end{figure}

\begin{verbatim}
Nippur 293–9 \footnote{See the edition of OB Nippur Ura 2 in DCCLT.}
[\textit{dug}] bur-zi
[\textit{dug}] bur-zi gal
[\textit{dug}] bur-zi tur
\textit{dug} bur-zi sila\textsubscript{3} ban\textsubscript{3}-da
\textit{dug} bur-zi mud
\textit{dug} bur-zi utu\textsubscript{2}
\textit{dug} bur-zi ni\textgreek{\textgreek{i}}\textsubscript{3}-na
\textit{dug} bur-zi ninda i\textsubscript{3} de\textsubscript{3}-a

Isin iii 9–15 \footnote{IB 1622a + 1546 [P332826], courtesy Claus Wilcke; see Sallaberger 1996: 44–5.}
[\textit{dug}] bur-zi
[\textit{dug}] bur-zi gal
[\textit{dug}] bur-zi tur
\textit{dug} bur-zi sakar
\textit{dug} bur-zi ninda i\textsubscript{3} de\textsubscript{3}-a(GAR)
\textit{dug} bur-zi ni\textgreek{\textgreek{i}}\textsubscript{3}-na
\textit{dug} bur-zi ni\textgreek{\textgreek{i}}\textsubscript{3}-na

Sippar? rii 5–16 \footnote{CBS 1864 [P247858]. The text belongs to the Khabaza collection (University of Pennsylvania Museum), which was acquired on the antiquities market. Most of these tablets come from Sippar (see BE 6/1: pp. 3–5 and Van Lerberghe 1986). A further unprovenanced parallel is RT 56 [P247855] obv. iv 20–8.}
[\textit{dug}] bur-zi
[\textit{dug}] bur-zi gal
[\textit{dug}] bur-zi tur
\textit{dug} bur-zi sila\textsubscript{3} ban\textsubscript{3}(IG)-da\textgreek{\textgreek{a}}
\textit{dug} bur-zi sila\textsubscript{3} gaz-zu
\textit{dug} bur-zi ni\textgreek{\textgreek{i}}\textsubscript{3}-na
\textit{dug} bur-zi [m]ud
\textit{dug} bur-zi [...] \textgreek{\textgreek{a}}\textgreek{\textgreek{a}}
\textit{dug} bur-zi \textit{lu} ur\textsubscript{3}-ra
\textit{dug} bur-zi gun\textsubscript{3}-a
\textit{dug} bur-zi ninda i\textsubscript{3} de\textsubscript{3}-a
\textit{dug} bur-zi s[al-l]a
\end{verbatim}
The passage clearly demonstrates the type of variance that may be expected between Old Babylonian versions of the same lexical composition. Some lines broken in the Isin source may be reconstructed because we expect the text to parallel the two other versions here and because antonyms (gal – tur) are widely employed throughout Ur₃-ra. The traditions from Isin and Nippur are close, but not identical. The ‘Sippar’ source has a longer list of bur-zi vessels; still it may be understood as an elaboration of the Nippur/Isin text, not as an entirely independent treatment. The Nippur text as presented here is based on more than one exemplar; interestingly, the duplicates have variants among themselves with the line 𒈨𒆠bur-zi 𒈵 diarrhea appearing in only one source.₃₀ Robson (2001) has demonstrated that within the city of Nippur there were small but appreciable differences between schools or teachers.

The Old Babylonian lists were school texts designed to teach the Sumerian language and writing system and did not carry the weight of a centuries-long tradition. They were adapted and updated as needed in order to represent the Sumerian vocabulary and writing system as completely as possible.

Syllable Alphabet A (or SA A)₃¹ is the exception that proves the rule. SA A is a very elementary exercise designed to teach the proper execution of a number of frequent signs. It is the only such Old Babylonian exercise that was thoroughly standardized all over Babylonia and it is also the only exercise that is ever attested in an Ur III source. This Ur III exemplar was published as MVN 6 4 (ITT IV 7004); unfortunately, the tablet is known in transliteration only:

₃₀ UM 29-16-537 + UM 29-16-538 [P228763].
Obverse

1’ traces
2’ [...] sukkal
3’ [...] x an-ka
4’ x [...]-ta
5’ [...] x-ta
6’ kisal?-ta

Syllable Alphabet A

1 2 traces
2 sukkal
3 nin-sukkal
4 nin-sukkal-an-ka
5 pu-ta
6 nin-sukkal-an-ka
7 pu-ta
8 nin-sukkal
9 \[-\]
x an-ka
10 nin-sukkal-an-ka
11 pu-ta
12 nin-sukkal-an-ka
13 sulta-ta
14 kisal-ta
15 e-ta

Reverse

1 [kis]al?-gud
2 an-dul
3 an-an-dul
4 an-ga
5 lam
6 tam-ma
7 tam-tam-ma
8 e-ta
9 an-dul
10 an-an-dul
11 an-ga
12 lam
13 tam-ma
14 tam-tam-ma
15 e-ta

The variants in obverse 6’ and reverse 1 (kisal instead of e₂) may well be more apparent than real—in both lines KISAL is damaged and upon collation may turn out to be E₂. The only variant remaining, then, is in reverse line 3 (an-an-dul vs. an-dul₁-dul₁), a variant that is attested in other sources of SA A as well.

There would not be much reason to go into the details of an intrinsically rather uninteresting exercise if this were not such a rare occurrence. The exceptional rigidity of SA A (exceptional, that is, in the Old Babylonian context) may well be caused by its history and by its origin at a time when lexical lists were supposed to be standardized.

One dimensional vs. two-dimensional

The Early Dynastic lexical tradition preserves lists of words in Sumerian with no further explanation. In origin, in the archaic period, lists were created in order to standardize and transmit the inventory of symbols that were necessary—or might ever be necessary—for recording administrative transactions. The semantic range of the words and terms in this earliest lexical corpus approximately coincides with the kinds of things recorded in the contemporary accounts: commodities (wood, metals, fish, birds, vessels and their contents, clothing, food), professional titles, numbers, etc. The archaic lexical lists are inventories of symbols and symbol combinations and are one-dimensional in nature (see Veldhuis 2006).

Throughout the third millennium one-dimensional lists remained the norm. The main set of exceptions to this rule is found in Ebla. The Ebla corpus includes a long bilingual lexical compilation (Ebla Vocabulary), a sign list with glosses (Ebla Sign List) and a number of traditional ED lists in syllabic orthography. While these syllabic lists are strictly speaking one-dimensional, we may surmise that they were used alongside their orthographic counterparts (which are attested at Ebla as well) and thus attest to a tradition of explanation.

Since it is located on the outskirts of cuneiform civilization, the position of Ebla is both interesting and inconsequential. On the one hand, Ebla did not feel the heavy hand of a tradition that precluded significant changes to the lexical compositions. On the other hand, the innovations of the Ebla scribes found no following in the Mesopotamian heartland and their efforts left no trace in subsequent lexical history. In third-millennium Babylonia the lexical tradition continued on its well-trodden path of one-dimensional word lists.

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32 Published by Pettinato in MEE 4.
33 Archi 1987c. An exceptional case, not from Ebla, is the sign list with explanatory glosses from Pre-
Sargonic Lagaš, BiMes 3 29 (Civil 1983a).
By contrast, most Old Babylonian lists are designed in two dimensions, providing an explanatory column for the words and signs listed. The clearest examples that come to mind are the sign lists Proto-Ea (simple signs) and Proto-Diri (complex signs).

UM 29-16-31 (Figs. 5 and 6) is a well-preserved school tablet from Old Babylonian Nippur with on the obverse an extract from Proto-Ea in a teacher’s hand as a model text to be copied by a pupil:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Sign</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>¶</td>
<td>ir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>¶</td>
<td>ti-in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>¶</td>
<td>[mi]-ir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>¶</td>
<td>ib₂</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>¶</td>
<td>da-la</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>¶</td>
<td>ut-ra-aš</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>¶</td>
<td>un</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>¶</td>
<td>[k]a-[lam]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>¶</td>
<td>ru-u₁</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>¶</td>
<td>šu-u[b]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>¶</td>
<td>i-la-[a]r</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>¶</td>
<td>ḫeš-pa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>¶</td>
<td>wi-i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>¶</td>
<td>we-e</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>¶</td>
<td>wa-a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>¶</td>
<td>ta-al</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>¶</td>
<td>ḫeš-tu-nu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>¶</td>
<td>gu-um</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>¶</td>
<td>na-ğa₂</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>¶</td>
<td>ga-az</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>¶</td>
<td>in-da</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>¶</td>
<td>aği₂</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Lines 4–6 explain the three main uses of the sign IB: as the syllable -ib- (primarily used in verbal morphology), in the word ṭu₂dara₂(IB) ‘belt’, and in the name of the goddess of the earth, ʻuraš(IB). The list does not explain the meaning and proper uses of each of these values; such knowledge may have belonged to the oral commentary by the teacher or may have been known already, at least in part, by the pupil who, by this stage, had worked through long lists of Sumerian names and Sumerian vocabulary.

Numerous exemplars of Proto-Ea do not even include the glosses. The exercises of the Old Babylonian scribal school were primarily writing exercises, designed to drill the correct writing of Sumerian signs and words. The glosses, therefore, might as well be memorized rather than copied—copying them did not add to the student’s skill in writing proper Sumerian.

A similar explanation may be advanced for the fact that virtually all Old Babylonian copies of the thematic list Ur₅-ra are in Sumerian only. There is plenty of evidence that these lists were bilingual (Sumerian–Akkadian) in design—a few exemplars in fact preserve an Akkadian column or some Akkadian glosses. The existence of such a non-written column of Akkadian translations may be argued, among other things, from the rather frequent appearance of duplicate entries, such as:

35 The tablet is published as P228700. The extract corresponds to Proto-Ea 589–610 (MSL 14, 55). UM 29-16-31 is source Iq in MSL 14. The reverse has an extract from the list of domestic and wild animals.
36 The common gloss is da-ra; this is the only exemplar that has the variant /l/.
37 Akkadian glosses are attested in the Nippur tablet CBS 2178+ [P227892], a large tablet which contains the full list of domestic animals, wild animals and meat cuts. The unprovenanced exemplar BM 85983 [P247857] is largely bilingual, with terms for leather objects, metals and metal objects.
38 See Veldhuis 2004: 88 for this passage.
The Sumerian word has two known translations in Akkadian (surdû and kassûsu), which is why all available Old Babylonian and later sources of the bird list repeat the entry. While in modern editions lexical lists may look like reference works, in the Old Babylonian context they were exercises—writing exercises. The main reason for a schoolboy to copy Ur₇-ra was to learn how to write proper Sumerian. The Akkadian translations must have been memorized but there was little reason, within the context of this exercise, to write them down.

The only one-dimensional lists in the Old Babylonian curriculum are the very elementary exercises that teach the design and the most basic uses of an initial set of signs: Syllable Alphabet A and B, TU-TA-TI, and perhaps the name lists.
There are no indications that in the Old Babylonian period the Early Dynastic lists were provided with translations. We do have, though, a number of such texts with glosses that explain aspects of the ancient writing system (see Taylor 2008). In this way the ED texts became two-dimensional, were provided with explanations, and were thus adapted to the Old Babylonian concept of a proper lexical list.

At this juncture of the argument one may recall the history of the tabular format in Mesopotamian accounting, recently described by Robson (2003; 2004a). Two-dimensional tables are exceedingly rare in administrative texts before the Old Babylonian period. While many types of Ur III records would be suitable for tabular formatting, the very few actual tables from this period that have been identified so far mainly serve to emphasize that the concept was known but simply not used. The widespread introduction of tabular texts in the course of the Old Babylonian period more or less coincides with the introduction of two-dimensional lists in the lexical corpus. Robson has suggested that the paucity of tables in the Ur III record may be related to a relatively strong

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39 AUCT I 56; YOS 4 242; the dating of Ashmolean 1910.759 (AAICAB I/1 Plate 17) remains uncertain.
central bureaucracy that left little room for experiment to the individual scribe. The gradual appearance of tabular texts in the Old Babylonian record, rather erratic at first, points to individual initiative, rather than to a centralized reform (Robson 2004a). Weakening and fragmentation of the state may have left more wiggle room for the individual, opening opportunities for scribal innovation (see Robson 2003: 24). While the innovations in the lexical corpus and those in accounting may not be directly related, they may well share a common general historical background.

Curriculum

Probably the most important difference between the ED corpus and the Old Babylonian lists is the idea of a curriculum: a structured set of exercises which together aim at a particular educational purpose. The Early Dynastic lexical texts hardly scratch the surface of the complexities of contemporary writing. The Old Babylonian set, by contrast, is structured in such a way that the pupil is being introduced step by step into more and more complicated aspects of the writing system.

The traditional set of Early Dynastic lexical texts derives from the period of the invention of writing and at the time of its conception this set did, indeed, represent the essentials of what a scribe needed to know. Over the centuries the writing system underwent important changes while the lexical corpus remained more or less the same and was thus rendered into a haphazard collection of abstruse lists.

The developments in the writing system were many, but by far the most fundamental was the move towards representing language early in the third millennium. Archaic administrative records primarily contain commodities, numbers, and names or titles. The placement of the entries on the tablet was used to indicate the (administrative) relations between them; in other words: syntax was primarily expressed by layout (Green 1981). This syntax was an administrative rather than a linguistic syntax capable of expressing relations between objects relevant to the bureaucracy of the time. While this system borrowed words, primarily nouns, from a contemporary language (presumably Sumerian; see Wilcke 2005) its relation to language did not go beyond that level; it had no use for verbal or nominal morphology and it had no means to express linguistic syntax—nor did it need to. The lexical corpus reflects the kinds of words that one may need in writing administrative records. Thus there are lists of foodstuffs, vessels, trees, metal products, animals, numbers, and professions, but the corpus does not cover wild animals or stars, because they are of no relevance to the administrative system of the time. Similarly, the archaic system had little or no use for verbs and so verbs are entirely absent from the lexical corpus.

The move towards representing language in the first part of the third millennium meant that writing could now be used for entirely new purposes such as royal propaganda and letter writing. These changes implied that the system had to allow for a much wider vocabulary and had to accommodate for writing at least some rudimentary form of verbal and nominal morphology. Natural developments in the language itself contributed still another element of change. By this time the traditional lexical corpus was frozen and was no longer updated to reflect all these novelties. Therefore, the changes in the uses of writing, the writing system, and the language implied that early in the third millennium the lexical lists were already hopelessly outdated and inadequate from the point of view of scribal education.

Throughout the third millennium many new lists were developed that answered at least some of those needs. Among the texts from Fara and Abu Salabikh are two long lexical compilations that treat a broad variety of words (nouns) in a thematic organization; at least one of these is also present at Ebla. These Practical Vocabularies are much broader in their scope than the standard ED lexical compositions, listing words for stones, metals, garments, wooden tools, weapons, wool,

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40 See above, and in more detail Veldhuis 2006.
41 For an overview of the archaic lexical and administrative corpus see Englund 1998.
etc. and represent the current vocabulary of the time. They are poorly standardized and had a short lifespan. ED Lu E\(^43\) was apparently created to replace ED Lu A with a modernized list of professions. The text is known from Abu Salabikh, Fara, Nuzi, Kiš, Urkēš, and Ebla and includes such commonly occurring words as dub-sar ‘scribe’, ensi ‘ruler’, and muhaldim ‘cook’, not found in ED Lu A. The word enkud ‘tax collector’, written ZAG in ED Lu A, is found in its common third-millennium spelling ZAG.KU\(_6\) in ED Lu E (see above). Other omissions from the lexical corpus were addressed by developing lists of gods,\(^44\) geographical terms,\(^45\) personal names,\(^46\) wild animals,\(^47\) and signs.\(^48\)

Most of the new lists developed after the archaic period had a poor transmission history or no transmission at all; they never became part of the cultural canon. One of the more successful compositions, ED Lu E, had a longevity of about three centuries, from Abu Salabikh to the Sargonic period. While this modernized list of professions was apparently abandoned, the ancient version it was supposed to replace, ED Lu A, enjoyed another half-millennium of transmission. The very novelty of the lists developed in the Early Dynastic period weakened their chances of survival. While they were more relevant for contemporary writing than their archaic counterparts, they had less traditional weight and no value at all once their vocabulary started to fall out of use.

While this history of third-millennium lexical creations is necessarily incomplete and abbreviated, it intends to show that the Early Dynastic lexical corpus was accidental and unstructured and therefore not explicitly designed with the needs of students in mind. The most important and most authoritative group of texts was desperately outdated from an educational point of view; the majority of the third-millennium lexical tablets give the impression of being the products of well-trained scribes, not of pupils. The various new lexical texts that were developed usually had a short life span and little geographical spread. Ebla is perhaps the place where the lexical corpus most closely resembles a school curriculum, but even there the Eblian Sign List closely follows the order of graphemes in ED Lu A; in other words, it is geared towards the needs of understanding tradition, rather than catering to the practical needs of writing (see Archi 1987c with earlier literature).

Since writing is a craft, it may be learned in practice in a master–apprentice relationship, rather than in the context of formal education. Evidence for scribal education in the third millennium is scant, so that this reconstruction is necessarily speculative, but for the ordinary needs of administrative writing apprenticeship seems to be a plausible model. The lexical corpus, therefore, should not be judged against what it did not intend to be. It was not meant as an introduction to writing and it was not intended for schoolboys. In the third millennium the lexical corpus is primarily a corpus of ancient, venerable tradition and we may only admire the precision with which the scribes succeeded in preserving this knowledge.

In stark contrast to this, the Old Babylonian lexical corpus is a curriculum that took the pupil by the hand and led him (rarely her) step by step through all the intricacies of cuneiform and Sumerian. The individual lists each introduced a different aspect, gradually adding complexity and depth to the pupil’s knowledge. The curriculum started with a sign list that included much repetition of the same signs and was often executed in very large writing. This list introduced the student to the correct design of a number of often-used cuneiform signs.\(^49\) A second sign list, TU-TA-TI, treats a restricted number of signs solely from the perspective of syllabic values. The list is

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\(^{43}\) See the edition of ED Lu E in DCCLT.

\(^{44}\) See Mander 1986; Krebernik 1986.

\(^{45}\) In particular the ‘Atlante Geografico’ known from Abu Salabikh and Ebla; see Pettinato, MEE 3 217–241 and Krebernik 1998: 362, IAS 91–11 with further literature.

\(^{46}\) See, for instance, Lambert 1988; Cohen 1993b.


\(^{48}\) For instance ITT 1 1267 [P213705] (Sargonic or Ur III Girsu) and SF 32 (ED Fara).

\(^{49}\) The list is Syllable Alphabet A, which was used in a standardized fashion all over Babylonia. In Nippur a related but much longer list with the modern title Syllable Alphabet B was used; see Tanret 2002: 31–50.
organized in triads with alternating vowels (TU-TA-TI; NU-NA-NI; etc.); in most exemplars the signs are first written out one by one, followed by the triad—so that, again, there is a proper amount of repetition:50

This was followed by name lists (the first meaningful items a student was to encounter), followed in turn by the long thematic list Ur₅-ra. Ur₅-ra dealt with Sumerian vocabulary, in particular realia, from the very common to the very obscure. Ur₅-ra was followed by a series of more advanced lists. One of these is Proto-Ea, a sign list that neatly organized sign values used in Sumerian (see the example above). By this stage the students had already copied numerous Sumerian exercises so that the sign values in Proto-Ea were not all new to them. Proto-Ea added a level of systematization and reflection to the learning process; sign values new and old were presented in an orderly fashion. Proto-Diri did the same, but concentrated on compound signs. Several other word lists emphasized other aspects and peculiarities of Sumerian and Sumerian writing, whereas metrological and mathematical lists (in particular multiplication tables) drilled the correct handling of numbers in various contexts.

All these lists were followed in the curriculum by proverbs and model contracts, which introduced the first full sentences in Sumerian and provided the pupil with the opportunity to practise all that he had learned about cuneiform writing. Now the student was ready to embark on the serious work: literary texts in Sumerian.

This curriculum was something entirely new. While the idea of a lexical list was hardly novel, the Old Babylonian curricular innovation was a revolutionary one. These lexical lists were not the venerated relics of a time past, nor the accidental collections of words and signs of the mid-third millennium lists—they form a well-structured, systematic course. The standard format of the lexical list became two-dimensional and this two-dimensional format allowed for a variety of contents to be transmitted in a classroom situation. The flexible nature of the new lexical lists permitted for enough updating that the compositions did not easily become obsolete—thus avoiding the fate of the archaic lexical creations. In fact, the history of Mesopotamian lexicography in the second and first millennium largely coincides with the developments of such texts as Ur₅-ra, Ea, and Diri—creations of the Old Babylonian reform.

GUARDIANS OF TRADITION

The availability of the new curricular set of lexical texts did not prevent the traditional Early Dynastic corpus from being copied. The Old Babylonian copies of Early Dynastic texts placed the owner or copyist of the text in an age-old tradition, going back all the way to the beginning of writing. While from a curricular point of view these texts had been replaced and rendered obsolete, they still had a function to fulfil as symbols of Babylonian history and unity, enshrined in Sumerian tradition.

The creation of the new lexical corpus in the early Old Babylonian period may be understood, paradoxically, as an attempt to preserve and guard traditional knowledge of Sumerian. Sumerian, which was a dead language by this time, was of prime importance for political ideology; it was the language of royal inscriptions and royal praise songs. The Sumerian King List, backed by a variety of Sumerian legendary texts and songs, explains how, since antediluvian times, there had always been one king and one royal city reigning over all of Babylonia. This view implied that there were no separate local histories; all city-states were Babylonian, or, more properly of ‘Sumer and Akkad’, so that Enmerkar and Gilgameš of Uruk, Sargon of Akkad, and Šulgi of Ur could all be celebrated as great predecessors. The Old Babylonian literary corpus revolves around heroes who were kings of their respective cities, and gods who were city-gods of these same cities. In trying to understand Old Babylonian Sumerian literature as a corpus, as a consciously collected set of texts important enough to teach, we may recognize that almost without exception the kings and heroes mentioned are those commemorated in the Sumerian King List. Whatever the ‘historicity’ of this literature, accurate, skewed, legendary, mythical, or otherwise, this literature is Babylonian history as perceived and created by Old Babylonian scribes, it is the Sumerian King List fleshed out. This literature is an example of what Hobsbawm has called ‘invented tradition’: it is the creation of a history of ‘Sumer and Akkad’ and of a Sumerian cultural heritage. As Hobsbawm points out, invented traditions usually recycle as well as invent; the stories, festivals, and customs that are aligned to express a national identity projected far back into the past are based in part on pre-existing elements that are re-contextualized in order to serve their new purpose. In the case of Sumerian literature we often do not know in detail what is new, what has been reworked and what was faithfully reproduced from earlier examples – nor does it matter a whole lot. The invented tradition of Sumer and Akkad, of a Sumerian heritage, is what we encounter in a single Old Babylonian institutional context, irrespective of the original Sitz im Leben or date of composition of the individual literary pieces.

This Sumerian heritage not only consisted of the myths and narratives of Sumerian gods and heroes; it was also embodied in the Sumerian language and writing system itself. The knowledge of Sumerian required from the students of the Old Babylonian scribal school went well beyond what was practically needed, even beyond what was needed for understanding Sumerian literature. Many words and signs in lexical texts such as Ur-š-ra and Proto-Ea never appear outside of the lexical corpus. What the schools taught was all there was to know about Sumerian, the common and the current as well as the abstruse and archaic. The invented tradition of a unified Sumer and Akkad was embedded in the knowledge of Sumerian and Sumerian writing. Language, identity, and politics form a potent mix, as may well be illustrated by many modern examples. Knowledge of Sumerian was knowledge of a unifying symbol, an aspect of the past that, in this imagination, was shared by all the city-states of Southern Mesopotamia. In this sense the lexical corpus and the literary corpus form a unity, creating and transmitting a single message.

The new lexical tradition was most probably created not long after the destruction of the Ur III empire, an event that made a big impression. Three small groups of school texts may be dated with some confidence to the period before Hammurabi’s conquest of Larsa (1763 BCE, according to the middle chronology). These lots, which derive from Uruk, Kisurra, and Larsa, include several of the typical Old Babylonian exercises, including sign lists, thematic lists, other types of word lists, model contracts, extracts from Lipit-Eštar B (the first hymn of the Tetrad, see below), and even some fragments of ED lexical texts. The absence of proverbs may or may not be an accident of discovery; the sample is too small to conclude. Each of the three text groups includes some

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51 This is particularly striking for the hymnic literature; see Hallo 1963.
52 See Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983. I have developed these ideas in more detail (Veldhuis 2004: 31–80).
53 The so-called ‘Scherbenloch’ lot; see Cavigneaux 1996, also Veldhuis 1997–8.
54 Published by Kienast in FAOS 2/1 213–5, as well as some of the fragments. The ED Lu A piece is F20.
55 Published by Arnaud in BBVOT 3. School texts are scattered throughout the volume.
examples of standard Sumerian literature. As it appears, the curriculum that we find several
decades later in Nippur is already there in its basic outlines.

Other evidence points more specifically to the kings of the Isin dynasty as the ones who were
responsible for this curricular innovation. Vanstiphout (1979) showed that the hymn Lipit-Eštar B
is one of very few literary texts that is found with some regularity on tablet types otherwise
reserved for lexical exercises, in particular lentils and so-called type II tablets (tablets that include a
model text in the teacher’s hand and one or more student copies on the same side).\footnote{UM 29-16-31 and N 5566+, Figures 1–2 and 5–6 above, are good examples of type II tablets.} Moreover, he
demonstrated that the hymn gradually introduces a number of different syntactic constructions, so
that it may well have been composed with scribal education in mind.

Tinney (1999) argued that Lipit-Eštar B is the first in a series of four hymns (christened by him
the ‘Tetrad’) which have several features in common. They are all unusually short, they are found
on lentils, and they are occasionally attested in sequence on a single tablet. Four prisms, each
containing one of these hymns, are so strikingly similar in writing and execution that they must
have formed a set. Tinney has shown convincingly that these four hymns form an intermediate
stage in education between the lexical compositions and proverbs on the one hand and the fully-
fledged literary texts on the other hand.\footnote{It is unlikely that each of these hymns was always part of the educational experience of every schoolboy. There are numerous sources of Lipit-Eštar B, many of them on lentil-shaped tablets. The other three hymns, however, are more rare and are only occasionally found on tablet types typical for the early phases of education. It is likely that the four hymns occupied this curricular slot in theory, but that most teachers decided to use only the first one (Lipit-Eštar B).}

Three of these hymns praise successive kings of the Isin dynasty: Iddin-Dagan, Išme-Dagan and
Lipit-Eštar. The fourth hymn is in honor of the goddess of writing, Nisaba. Each of the three royal
hymns has the Eduba, the scribal school, as one of its topics. The Eduba, the place where students
learned the art of writing, is the place where the praise of the kings will be heard forever (Iddin-
Dagan B 64–70):\footnote{Translation adapted from ETCSL 2.5.3.2.}

\begin{verbatim}
May your exceeding wisdom, given by the tablets of Nisaba,
ever cease on the clay in the tablet house.
In this tablet house, like a shrine fashioning everything, may it never come to an end.
To the junior scribe who puts his hand to the clay and writes on it,
may Nisaba, the shining …… lady, give wisdom.
May she open his hand.
In the place of writing may she come forth like the sun for him.
\end{verbatim}

The hymns demonstrate the Isin kings’ involvement in scribal education. The theme of the tablets
of Nisaba and the eduba praising the king is a traditional one that is equally found in hymns to
Šulgi and therefore hardly proves an innovative effort on the part of the Isin dynasty. The
composition of hymns, however, that are tailor-made for a particular curricular slot, betrays a
mastermind not unlike the one that created the intricate set of lexical exercises.

It may be useful in this connection to point to the orthographic changes that took place in this
same period (see Powell 1974). The Isin dynasty was involved in matters of writing and education,
and with good reason. The survival of Sumerian was an ideological issue, one that was well worth
addressing by creating a thorough scribal curriculum.

After a brief distancing from earlier ideological traditions during the time of Išbi-Erra, later Isin
kings explicitly portrayed themselves as the legitimate inheritors of the Ur III legacy, emulating Ur
III royal hymns, royal inscriptions and administrative practices (Michalowski 2005). As the
Sumerian King List explains, kingship circulated among the cities, so that there was nothing
irregular about this succession. From a historical perspective, the idea of a Sumerian unity was
peculiarly at odds with the political reality of the time. While for most of its existence the Ur III
The kingdom could rightly claim dominance over Sumer and Akkad, the early Old Babylonian period was characterized by political fragmentation and intercity wars. This very discrepancy may have provided an added urgency to preserving and transmitting the Sumerian language and tradition.

The watershed in the cuneiform lexical tradition may thus find its most plausible context during the reign of the Isin kings. Their innovative efforts were intended to preserve the ancient tradition as they perceived it.

The Old Babylonian copies of Early Dynastic texts
It is likely that all traditional ED lexical texts (those that go back to the archaic period) were known in small elite scribal circles in the Old Babylonian period. While they were occasionally used in class, they were not textbooks in the way the curricular lexical texts were. They were the most specialized of texts, suitable for an expert, representing knowledge of early orthography and connecting its owner to the dawn of writing. In the literary tradition the invention of writing was traced back to king Enmerkar and his lengthy exchanges with the Lord of Aratta (Vanstiphout 1989). Whether they were aware of the more mundane origins of cuneiform in every-day accounting is immaterial. Writing was a source of pride (quite reasonably so from our perspective) and its origin in Sumer was part of the invented tradition of the time. Copying a text of hoary antiquity was not an exercise in futility but a statement of identity.

Table 2: Old Babylonian exemplars of Early Dynastic lexical texts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>List</th>
<th>Glosses</th>
<th>Provenance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lu A</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Nippur, Ur, Kisurra, Sippar’, unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birds</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Nippur, unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fish</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Nippur, Sippar’, unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pots and Garments</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Nippur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Tribute’ (Word List C)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Nippur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Officials</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Nippur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plants</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Nippur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cities/Gods</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geography X (see note 19)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Nippur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wood60</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Kisurra, unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food (Word List D)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Susa, unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metals</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animals</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At the present moment I know of 32 Old Babylonian examples of Early Dynastic lexical lists. This number breaks down as in Table 2. To this overview, a few important observations may be added. First, in recent years a remarkable number of new exemplars has been identified and published. In some cases this may be due to the unfortunate recent events in Iraq; in other cases, however, the objects had been known for long, without being properly studied or identified. Second, Metals and Animals are the only two traditional ED lexical compositions not represented.

59 See the Appendix for fuller bibliographic details. Each of these compositions is described by Englund 1998: 82–110.

60 Although archaic wood lists are relatively common, ED versions are few and far between and cannot be connected directly with the archaic version (SF 68; SF 74; OIP 99 18; 19; 20; OSP 1 8). Both OB exemplars are inscribed on small six or seven sided prisms with one column of text per side. Both are associated with a bona fide ED lexical text of a very similar or identical format (unprovenanced: Food, also known as Word List D; Kisurra: Lu A). The two Old Babylonian Wood prisms may duplicate in column 1, though the text is too damaged to be certain. Kisurra (FAOS 2/1 F19): [\[\[sennu\]\]r?; [\[\[ge\]štin; [\[\[pe\]š]; [\[\[hashu]\]\]r?]. Unprovenanced [P272608]: [\[\[gi\][-par\]]]; [\[\[sim-gig; [\[\[sennu; [\[\[ge\]štin; [\[\[pe\]š]; [\[\[hashu]; [\[\[x-gam; [\[\[a-lil (writing for [\[\[a-lu-nu-um?]. See the archaic version (ATU 3 105) ll. 19–21.
The recent discoveries, however, demonstrate that this may be merely a matter of chance. Until recently no copies of Geography X, Officials, Fish, or Wood were known, while two copies of Birds went unrecognized. Several compositions are attested only in one single exemplar—the possibility that additional manuscripts have also been overlooked is very real.

The ED compositions that are attested in OB exemplars all go back in one form or another to the archaic period, with the single exception of the god list, found with Cities on a tablet from Ur. The differences between these fossilized, most ancient lists on the one hand and the lexical creations of third-millennium scribes on the other hand were apparently still perceived and appreciated. Only the most ancient tradition was deemed worth transmitting.

The great majority of provenanced copies of ED texts come from Nippur (11 exemplars) and Ur (3). This is not unlike the distribution of Old Babylonian school texts in general and supports the idea that these texts belong to an Old Babylonian school context. In fact N 5566+, published above, is a good example of a typical Old Babylonian school tablet (type II) with different exercises on obverse (Nigga) and reverse (ED Lu A). In addition, CBS 6142+ combines ED Lu A with an exercise in personal names (names beginning with ur-). This last tablet does not look like an exercise; it is a very carefully produced and neatly inscribed tablet that is similar in format and handwriting to a number of other non-curricular lexical texts from Nippur, including non-standard versions of chapters of Ur5-ra (Veldhuis 2004: 91). The ED lexical texts are hardly suitable for basic scribal education—a school context may rather imply that these texts were owned by accomplished students or teachers.

In several cases it appears that exemplars of different ED texts belong together and form sets. There are several such sets of prisms: a pair from Nippur (ED Lu A and Word List C), one from Kisurra (Lu A and Wood), and an unprovenanced one (Word List D and Wood). The Nippur exemplars of Fish and Birds are very similar in format and writing, and the glossed copies of Pots and Garments and Plants may belong together as well. Such sets of prisms or tablets suggest that some scribes were interested in owning well-executed, beautiful copies of texts that represent the ancient history of writing and that were capable of symbolizing a glorious Sumerian past. The use of glosses in some exemplars indicates that the scribes were interested not only in uncritical copying, but also in understanding the ancient tradition (Veldhuis 2004: 92).

The radical qualitative differences between the ED lexical corpus and the curricular texts of the Old Babylonian school make the Old Babylonian copies of ED lexical texts look redundant and outdated. In fact, the two sets of texts work in different ways towards the same goal: the creation and transmission of a Sumerian history and heritage.

CONCLUSION
The curricular reform that was responsible for the creation of the new Old Babylonian text books was not driven by a desire to hasten a brilliant future dawning on the horizon. This reform was rather looking backwards, trying to preserve the knowledge of the Sumerian history and heritage that was one of the cornerstones of royal ideology. In this context, the preservation of those very compositions rendered obsolete by the new curricular lexical corpus made perfect sense.
APPENDIX: OLD BABYLONIAN COPIES OF EARLY DYNASTIC LEXICAL TEXTS

In 1998 I published a catalogue of Old Babylonian copies of ED lexical lists known to me at that time (Veldhuis 1998: 125). For several reasons the inclusion there of YOS 1 12 I now consider incorrect; the piece is more likely Ur III in date. The sign BAHAR₂ = U.BAHAR₁ (‘col I’ = col. 7 line 16) is known only from Ur III Umma (see PSD B: bahar₂ and Sallaberger 1996: 3 with further literature). YOS 1 12 is a cylinder; its format and colophon (on the top) may be compared to the Ur III copy of the Names and Professions list published by Fales and Krispijn (1979-80) and several unpublished pieces, all of unknown provenance.

Quite a number of relevant tablets have come to light in recent years. For that reason a new catalogue is provided here.

ED Lu A from Nippur
- SLT 112 (CBS 6142) + SLT 11/3 75 (CBS 7989) + UM 29-16-252 (+) UM 29-16-221 (+) UM 29-16-224 [P218303]. ED Lu A is preceded by a name list (names beginning with ur-). The photographs published here (Figures 7–8) were made before CBS 7989 had been joined. CBS 7989 may be consulted in PBS 11/3; it does not add to the text of ED Lu A.
- SLT 24 (CBS 13493) [P218303] with glosses; see Green (1984). Green dated this text to the Ur III period but an Old Babylonian dating seems more plausible.

ED Lu A from other places
- Sippar?: BM 58680 [P218305]; with glosses (see Taylor 2008).
- Kisurra: FAOS 2/1 pl. 92 F20 [P218309].
- Ur: UET 7 86 [P218310]; with glosses (see Civil 1983b: 1 n. 2).
- Ur: UET 6/3 682 (U.30497) [P346719]; with glosses (see Civil 1983b: 1 n. 1).
- Unprovenanced: BM 30041 + BM 90906 [P373751]; cylinder fragment (see Taylor 2008).
- Unprovenanced: private collection (private communication by Mark Cohen); prism.
- Unprovenanced: MS 2319/6 [P251557].
- Unprovenanced: MS 2268/24 [P251498].

Birds
- Unprovenanced: MS 2645 (personal communication Miguel Civil).

Fish
- Unprovenanced: MS 2722 [P251735].

Plants

⁶¹ Nigga 278–9; N 5566+ is not included in the edition in MSL 13 103.
Figure 7: CBS 6142+ obverse

Officials
- Nippur: N 3093 [P231387]; published here (Figure 9; also published by Cavigneaux 2007: 172).
- Nippur: Ni 2141 (ISET 3, 19); may join the preceding; known to me in transliteration only.

Cities
- Ur: UET 7 80 [P347043] (combined with a god list).

Geography X (for this designation, see note 19)

Vessels and Garments
- Nippur: SLT 11 (CBS 14130) + CBS 13922 [P228400]; with glosses (see Civil and Biggs 1966: 8).
Sumerian Word List C ('Tribute')

- Nippur: SLT 42 (CBS 8237) + Ni 1597 [P228051] (see MEE 3 158ff; ATU 3 25 n. 49).
- Unprovenanced: MS 3373 [P252314].
- Unprovenanced: Wilson 2008 no. 60 [P388293].

Wood

- Kisurra: FAOS 2/1 Plate 92 F19; prism fragment.
- Unprovenanced: CMAA loan 4 [P272608]; prism.
Figure 9: N 3093

Food (Sumerian Word List D)

- Susa: MDP 18 21 [P215653] (see Civil 1982).
- Susa: MDP 27 196 [P215659] (see Civil 1982).
- Unprovenanced: CMAA loan 3 [P272607]; prism.
## ABBREVIATIONS

Bibliographical abbreviations follow those listed in the *Chicago Assyrian Dictionary* and the *Chicago Hittite Dictionary*, with the following additions and exceptions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AAICAB</td>
<td>see Grégoire 1996–2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adab</td>
<td>see Yang 1989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AMD</td>
<td>Ancient Magic and Divination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CST</td>
<td>see Fish 1932</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GARES</td>
<td>Archivi Reali di Ebla: Studi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARI</td>
<td>see Grayson 1972–6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASJ</td>
<td>Acta Sumerologica (Japan)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATU</td>
<td>see Englund and Nissen 1993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUWE</td>
<td>Ausgrabungen aus Uruk-Warka, Endberichte</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BaF</td>
<td>Baghdader Forschungen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BAM</td>
<td>see Köcher 1964; 1980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BBVO</td>
<td>Berliner Beiträge zum Vorderen Orient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BSA</td>
<td><em>Bulletin on Sumerian Agriculture</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CM</td>
<td>Cuneiform Monographs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DB</td>
<td>see Kent 1953 (edition of DB, pp. 116–A35)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DP</td>
<td>see Allotte de la Fuée 1908–20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECTJ</td>
<td>see Westenholz 1975b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emar</td>
<td>see Arnaud 1985–7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ETCSL</td>
<td>see Black et al. 1998–2006</td>
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<tr>
<td>FAOS</td>
<td>Freiburger Altorientalische Studien</td>
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<td>Fö</td>
<td>see Förtsch 1916</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GAG</td>
<td>see Von Soden 1969</td>
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<tr>
<td>HDÖ</td>
<td>Handbuch der Orientalistik</td>
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<tr>
<td>HSAO</td>
<td>Heidelberger Studien zum Alten Orient</td>
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<tr>
<td>ISET</td>
<td>see Çığ et al. 1969 (ISET 1); Çığ, Kızilyay and Kramer 1976 (ISET 2)</td>
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<td>KAR</td>
<td>see Ebeling 1919–20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LKA</td>
<td>see Ebeling 1953</td>
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<tr>
<td>MC</td>
<td>Mesopotamian Civilizations</td>
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<td>MSVO</td>
<td>see Englund and Grégoire 1991</td>
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<td>Münchner Vorderasiatische Studien</td>
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<td>Nik</td>
<td>see Nikol’skij 1908</td>
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<tr>
<td>NYPL</td>
<td>New York Public Library</td>
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<tr>
<td>OBC</td>
<td>Orientalia Biblica et Christiana</td>
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<td>OBO</td>
<td>Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis</td>
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<td>OPSNKF</td>
<td>Occasional Publications of the Samuel Noah Kramer Fund</td>
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<td>OSP 1</td>
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<td>see Çığ et al. 1956</td>
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<td>Publications de l’Institut historique-archéologique néerlandais de Stamboul</td>
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<td>PNA 2/I</td>
<td>see Baker 2000</td>
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<td>RCU</td>
<td>P. Michalowski, <em>The Royal Correspondence of Ur</em> (diss., Yale Univ.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RGTC</td>
<td>Répertoire Géographique des Textes Cunéiformes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RIA</td>
<td>Reallexikon der Assyriologie und Vorderasiatischen Archäologie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAAB</td>
<td><em>State Archives of Assyria Bulletin</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAAC</td>
<td><em>State Archives of Assyria Cuneiform Texts</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAALT</td>
<td><em>State Archives of Assyria Literary Texts</em></td>
</tr>
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<td>SANE</td>
<td>Sources from the Ancient Near East</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAOC</td>
<td>Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization</td>
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<tr>
<td>SCIAMVS</td>
<td>Sources and Commentaries in Exact Sciences, Kyoto, Japan</td>
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<td>SEL</td>
<td>Studi Epigrafici e Linguistici sul Vicino Oriente antico</td>
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<td>SF</td>
<td>see Deimel 1923</td>
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<tr>
<td>SpTU 3</td>
<td>see Von Weiher 1988</td>
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<tr>
<td>StAT</td>
<td>Studien zu den Assur-Texten; see Radner 1999 (StAT 1), Donbaz and Parpola 2001 (StAT 2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>STH</td>
<td>see Hussey 1912</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TCTI 2</td>
<td>see Lafont and Yıldız 1996</td>
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