

**SARGONIC CUNEIFORM TABLETS
IN THE REAL ACADEMIA DE LA HISTORIA**



Investigación realizada por el Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas en colaboración con la Real Academia de la Historia, en el marco del proyecto FFI-2011-23981, financiado por el Ministerio de Economía y Competitividad.

MOLINA, Manuel

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I. Milone, Maria Elena

II. Markina, Ekaterina

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IN THE
REAL ACADEMIA DE LA HISTORIA
THE CARL L. LIPPMANN COLLECTION**

by

Manuel Molina

with the collaboration of

Maria Elena Milone and Ekaterina Markina



REAL ACADEMIA DE LA HISTORIA
MINISTERIO DE CULTURA DE LA REPÚBLICA DE IRAQ
MADRID 2014



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CATÁLOGO DEL GABINETE DE ANTIGÜEDADES

I. ANTIGÜEDADES

I.1. EPIGRAFÍA

I.1.6. SARGONIC CUNEIFORM TABLETS IN THE REAL ACADEMIA DE LA HISTORIA. THE CARL L. LIPPMANN COLLECTION

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FOREWORD BY THE SERIES EDITOR

Since its inception in the 18th century, the Real Academia de la Historia has been concerned with epigraphy. Inscriptions are in fact objective documents that, together with other historical texts, allow a well-founded reconstruction of the history of Spain, in accordance with the critical spirit of the Enlightenment. In 1999, the Gabinete de Antigüedades of the Real Academia de la Historia launched the publication of its collections – principally comprising epigraphic documents – through the so-called *Catálogo de las Inscripciones de la Real Academia de la Historia*. So far, *Catálogo de Epigrafía Hispánica* (Madrid 2000), *Catálogo de Epigrafía Prerromana* (Madrid 2003), *Catálogo de Epigrafía Hebrea* (Madrid 2005) and *Catálogo de Epigrafía Árabe* (Madrid 2007) have been published. The latest addition is the publication of *Sargonic Cuneiform Tablets in the Real Academia de la Historia*, devoted to the Carl L. Lippmann Collection.

The acquisition and conservation of this collection of cuneiform tablets by the Real Academia de la Historia were based on scientific grounds, a principal concern being to keep them all together. Prof. Manuel Molina had had access to the tablets, which belonged to a private collection that was about to be dispersed. He also recognised an archival relationship among most of the documents and their dating to the scarcely documented Middle Sargonic period (ca. 2250 BC). The historical interest of the tablets and the tradition of epigraphic studies at the Real Academia de la Historia made that institution aware of the threat of the archive being broken up and the need to protect it as a whole, despite the fact that cuneiform documents had never been part of its holdings. The support of its Director, Excmo. Sr. Don Gonzalo Anes y Álvarez de Castrillón, and of its Treasurer, Excmo. Sr. Don José Ángel Sánchez Asiaín, made possible the acquisition of the collection. This was achieved thanks to the Carl L. Lippmann legacy, which is why it has been named the “Carl L. Lippmann Collection”, as a tribute to his memory and as an appreciation of his bequest, which made it possible to recover the documents.

The Carl L. Lippmann Collection is made up of 337 cuneiform tablets, all administrative documents. With one exception, they are dated to the Sargonic period, named after Sargon of Akkad (ca. 2350-2295 BC), founder of the first empire in the history of Mesopotamia. All these texts use the cuneiform script and are written in Sumerian, except for two tablets which are in Akkadian. Most of the documents come from the governor’s archive, located in the palace of the Sumerian city of Adab (Tell Bismaya). They recorded the management of personnel and products received, manufactured and expended at the workshops and the storehouse of the palace. Therefore they are particularly relevant for knowledge of Sumerian material culture, the organization of work, the political and administrative structure of the Sargonic empire, the Sumerian language and the cuneiform script.

When the tablets arrived at the Real Academia de la Historia, the work of cleaning, restoration, documentation and studying them began, under the supervision of Manuel Molina, in collaboration with Maria Elena Milone and Ekaterina Markina. The work carried out in these years, successfully completed with this volume, has thus achieved the main objective set with the acquisition of the tablets. It is also part of the revitalization of the Gabinete de Antigüedades, under the auspices of the Real Academia de la Historia, in accordance with its policy of making its collections open to study, research and publication.

* * *

We would not wish to conclude this foreword without thanking, on my own behalf and on behalf of the Real Academia de la Historia, those who have been involved in the recovery, study and publication of the Carl L. Lippmann Collection of cuneiform tablets.

First of all, we acknowledge the generosity of the Carl L. Lippmann Legacy, which has enabled the acquisition of these tablets, saving them from certain dispersion and avoiding the resultant loss of important historical information. It is also appropriate to acknowledge the efficient and selfless handling of the acquisition and publication of the collection by the Real Academia de la Historia through its Gabinete de Antigüedades. Special thanks go to its Director, Excmo. Sr. Don Gonzalo Anes y Álvarez de Castrillón, and to its Treasurer, Excmo. Sr. Don José Ángel Sánchez Asiaín, without whose support the acquisition of the tablets would not have been possible.

Thanks are also due to Prof. Manuel Molina and to the Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas for the effort they have put into studying these documents, and to Maria Elena Milone and Ekaterina Markina for their spirit of collaboration and service in respect of this archaeological heritage.

Last but not least, we would like to acknowledge and show our gratitude for the deep interest with which the Iraqi Embassy in Madrid has followed the study and publication of these cuneiform tablets. This volume, conceived as a joint publication of the Real Academia de la Historia and the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Iraq, is also the result of their concern. Certainly, this collaboration is a symbol of friendship and a commitment to the cultural heritage of Iraq, which hopefully will strengthen the long-lasting cultural relationships and mutual understanding between Iraq and Spain.

Our thanks go to all concerned, both individuals and institutions, for a collaboration that has made it possible to recover and make known this collection of cuneiform tablets, documents that are essential for research on the emergence of complex human societies and so should be considered part of the cultural heritage of humanity.

MARTÍN ALMAGRO-GORBEA
Académico Anticuario de la
Real Academia de la Historia

FOREWORD BY THE MINISTRY OF CULTURE OF THE REPUBLIC OF IRAQ

The Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Iraq is very pleased to present the book *Sargonic Cuneiform Tablets in the Real Academia de la Historia: The Carl L. Lippmann Collection*, by Prof. Manuel Molina. This volume is the result of a work carried out for more than ten years, a proof of scientific perseverance in the study of cuneiform tablets.

Because of the paramount importance of this collection for researchers in antiquity and in cultural heritage, the *Real Academia de la Historia* in Madrid has assumed this joint edition together with the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Iraq. The latter wishes to express its acknowledgment and appreciation to the *Real Academia de la Historia* for the great scientific effort made to place this work at the disposal of all researchers in ancient Mesopotamia. Thanks to this study, it has been possible to document one of the most important periods in the history of the ancient Sumerian city of Adab (modern Tell Bismaya), located in southern Mesopotamia, which played a highly significant role during the Sargonic (or Akkadian) period (ca. 2324-2142 BC). The cultural legacy of Adab, like that of other Sumerian cities of ancient Iraq, has been extraordinary.

For decades, archaeological remains of this and other cities of Iraq have been subjected to illegal excavations, being probably the most brutal those undertaken after the First Gulf War (1991) and the Second Gulf War (2003). As a consequence, numerous cylinder-seals, reliefs and cuneiform tablets have ended up in art galleries, auction houses and private collections all over the world. The tablets from Adab edited in this volume, which come from one of these collections, were acquired by the Real Academia de la Historia with the aim of avoiding their dispersal and of ensuring that they were made available for academic study.

The importance of these tablets lies in the fact that they belong to an archive found in a

El Ministerio de Cultura de la República de Iraq tiene la enorme satisfacción de presentar la obra del profesor D. Manuel Molina titulada *Sargonic Cuneiform Tablets in the Real Academia de la Historia: The Carl L. Lippmann Collection*, fruto de un esfuerzo de más de diez años y muestra de su gran perseverancia científica en el estudio de las tablillas cuneiformes.

Dada la suma importancia de esta colección para los investigadores de la antigüedad y el patrimonio cultural, la Real Academia de la Historia en Madrid se ha hecho cargo de esta publicación junto con el Ministerio de Cultura de la República de Iraq. Esta desea manifestar su agradecimiento y aprecio hacia la Real Academia de la Historia por el gran esfuerzo científico realizado para poner esta obra a disposición de todos los investigadores de la antigua Mesopotamia. Gracias a este estudio se ha podido documentar una de las etapas más importantes de la historia de la antigua ciudad sumeria de Adab (hoy Tell Bismaya), situada en el sur de Mesopotamia y que desempeñó un brillante y destacado papel durante el periodo sargónico, también denominado acadio (ca. 2324-2142 a.C.). El legado cultural de Adab, al igual que el de otras ciudades sumerias del antiguo Iraq, ha sido extraordinario.

Desde hace décadas, los restos de esta y otras ciudades de Iraq han sido objeto de excavaciones ilegales, siendo quizás las más crueles las que tuvieron lugar después de la I Guerra del Golfo (1991) y la II Guerra del Golfo (2003). Como consecuencia de ello, numerosos sellos cilíndricos, relieves y tablillas cuneiformes terminaron en galerías de arte, subastas y colecciones de todo el mundo. Las tablillas de Adab que se editan en esta obra, procedentes de alguna de estas colecciones, fueron adquiridas por la Real Academia de la Historia con el fin de evitar su dispersión y asegurar su difusión científica.

La importancia de estas tablillas radica en

single spot, documenting the economic and social life of the city of Adab during the reigns of Sargon (2324-2285 BC), Naram-Suen (2261-2206 BC) and Šarkališarri (2205-2181 BC), all kings of Akkad. Specifically, research is focused on the study of the professional activities of artisans, merchants and diplomats in service at the governor's palace of Adab.

In this period, the main languages spoken in southern Mesopotamia were Sumerian and Akkadian (*lišan akkadi*). The latter was the language spoken by population groups who founded the Akkadian Empire in the second half of the third millennium BC, and was used until the first century BC. Such a long life led to the writing of thousands of tablets all over the territory of ancient Iraq, so that even today specialists in these languages continue to provide new studies and translations of what is considered to be a true linguistic, cultural and historical treasure. In this respect, the present book, the result of a long working process, is part of a scientific tradition that desires to make such a valuable legacy more widely known.

Finally, we wish to reiterate our appreciation to the *Real Academia de la Historia* for the effort made in the acquisition of these cuneiform tablets, which has made possible the present research. We also wish to express our gratitude to Prof. Manuel Molina for his scientific work, which has provided researchers and readers interested in the history of ancient Iraq with a book that deserves academic recognition.

que constituyen un archivo integral que fue localizado en un único lugar, y documentan la vida social y económica de la ciudad de Adab durante la época de los reyes Sargón de Akkad (2324-2285 a.C.), Naram-Suen (2261-2206 a.C.) y Šarkališarri (2205-2181 a.C.). Concretamente, la investigación se centra en el estudio de las actividades profesionales de grupos de artesanos, comerciantes y diplomáticos que prestaban sus servicios en el ámbito del palacio del gobernador de Adab.

En esta época, las lenguas que se hablaban en el sur de Mesopotamia eran fundamentalmente el sumerio y el acadio (*lišan akkadi*). Esta última era la lengua hablada por los grupos humanos que fundaron el Imperio Acadio en la segunda mitad del tercer milenio a.C., utilizada hasta el siglo I a.C. Tan larga vida dio lugar a la redacción de millares de tablillas en toda la geografía del antiguo Iraq, de modo que aun hoy día los especialistas en estas lenguas siguen ofreciéndonos periódicamente nuevos estudios y traducciones de lo que constituye un auténtico tesoro lingüístico, cultural e histórico. En este sentido, la presente obra, fruto de un largo trabajo, se enmarca en una tradición científica que quiere dar a conocer tan valioso legado.

Por último, deseamos reiterar nuestro aprecio hacia la Real Academia de la Historia en Madrid por el esfuerzo realizado en la adquisición de estas tablillas cuneiformes, que ha posibilitado el presente trabajo de investigación. También nuestro agradecimiento al profesor Manuel Molina por su labor científica, que ha permitido ofrecer a investigadores y lectores interesados en la historia del antiguo Iraq una obra merecedora de todo el reconocimiento académico.

Traducción árabe-español: Kasim Abdulkarim

Dr. Alaa Abo-Al-Hassan Al-Alaak
Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Iraq/
Ministerio de Cultura de la República de Irak
Baghdad/Bagdad, July/julio 2014

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This book is the long delayed edition of an important collection of cuneiform tablets kept in the Real Academia de la Historia (Madrid). Martín Almagro-Gorbea, head of its Gabinete de Antigüedades, entrusted me with the task of studying and editing them in 1999. I am extremely grateful to him for his confidence, as well as for the patience, helpfulness and friendship shown during these years.

In this too long process several friends and colleagues have also collaborated with the project, provided unpublished materials and made valuable suggestions.

Between 1999 and 2000 Maria Elena Milone, at that time doctoral student at the Università degli Studi La Sapienza (Rome), spent some months at the Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas. During her stay in Madrid, Milone cleaned and inventoried the tablets, and with my assistance made a preliminary draft of the transliterations. She also documented the collection with a number of digital images, a task that was completed in 2002 by Barbara Böck with the financial support of the Comunidad Autónoma de Madrid (Ref. 06/0057/2001); all the photographs finally published in this volume were taken and edited by me. Ekaterina Markina (Russian State University for the Humanities) collaborated in the text edition process between 2011 and 2012.

I am deeply grateful to Francesco Pomponio, Giuseppe Visicato, Aage Westenholz and Massimo Maiocchi for sharing with me their unpublished studies on the collections of the Banca d'Italia (now *TCCBI* I-II) and Cornell University (now *CUSAS* 11, 13, 19 and 20, the latter still unpublished). Aage Westenholz kindly provided me with his transliterations of the Early Dynastic and Old Akkadian tablets kept in the Schøyen Collection, which have been exceedingly useful in the present research; he also read an early draft of the transliterations of the RAH tablets and made important suggestions. With his customary generosity, David I. Owen gave me permission to cite unpublished texts from Cornell University and sent pictures of the tablets whenever I needed them; Laura W. Johnson-Kelly, Rosen Foundation conservator and photographer, also sent me some digital photos. I am also very grateful to Vitali Bartash, Steven J. Garfinkle, Ingo Schrakamp and Piotr Steinkeller for their comments and suggestions.

My work at the Real Academia de la Historia has been greatly facilitated by both Martín Almagro-Gorbea and Jorge Maier Allende. They always gave me free access to the tablets and made my stays at the Gabinete de Antigüedades very pleasant. Thanks are also due to the late Gonzalo Anes, director of the Real Academia de la Historia, who died unexpectedly in March 2014.

I am aware of how controversial is the publication of unprovenanced cuneiform tablets, but I am convinced that they also deserve to be studied and published by Assyriologists. This is the way we may contribute to the knowledge and dissemination of the culture and history of Iraq. The publication of the Carl L. Lippmann Collection has been made with the consent and collaboration of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Iraq and the Iraqi Embassy in Madrid, in the common hope that this will be a right step in the preservation of the cultural heritage of the Iraqi people.

Manuel Molina
CSIC, Madrid