



A Bibliography of Cuneiform Tablet Editions in United States Colleges and Universities through 2020

SARA MOHR 

DATA PAPER

]u[ubiquity press

ABSTRACT

This dataset contains bibliographic data of publications containing scholarly editions in any language of cuneiform tablets in small collections of cuneiform objects (typically 5–20 objects) in United States colleges and universities, current through 2020. These collections include a variety of ancient text forms, including but not limited to economic documents, letters, cylinder seals, and large reliefs. The dataset is stored on the JOHD Dataverse Repository. The data was compiled as part of a larger project to map the collections of cuneiform in the United States for the purposes of increasing access. Reuse potential includes its use as a reference tool for the history of Assyriology, for producing scholarship around the objects in these collections, for historical bibliometric data, and for the reconstruction of ancient cuneiform corpora throughout the United States.

CORRESPONDING AUTHOR:

Sara Mohr

Department of Egyptology and
Assyriology, Brown University,
Providence, United States

sara_mohr@brown.edu

KEYWORDS:

cuneiform; bibliography;
special collections; United
States; universities; colleges

TO CITE THIS ARTICLE:

Mohr, S. (2021). A Bibliography
of Cuneiform Tablet Editions
in United States Colleges and
Universities through 2020.
*Journal of Open Humanities
Data*, 7: 3, pp. 1–6. DOI: [https://
doi.org/10.5334/johd.27](https://doi.org/10.5334/johd.27)

(1) OVERVIEW

REPOSITORY LOCATION

<https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/IU1XFO>

CONTEXT

This data was produced as part of a larger project attempting to better understand the distribution of cuneiform objects in colleges and universities around the United States (US) and its territories. It serves as a complement to the ArcGIS web map, “Where is the Cuneiform?”¹ (Mohr, 2020) which displays the specific locations on college and university campuses where one may find these objects held or on display. The dataset used for “Where is the Cuneiform?” overlaps with, but is ultimately separate from, this dataset. Cuneiform objects from early excavations of ancient Iraqi sites were widely distributed among collectors through both legal and illegal means, leading to varying levels of information regarding these objects and their original context. Providing the locations of these collections and the accompanying bibliography represents a crucial first step in a clearer understanding of their provenance.

(2) METHOD

STEPS

The dataset was produced from data gathered via the process of creating the accompanying ArcGIS map and via the bibliographic information provided by the Cuneiform Digital Library Initiative (CDLI)². In the process of running Google searches with targeted key terms to identify cuneiform collections at US colleges and universities, I was able to find scholarly editions of the objects in some of these collections published on the institution’s website. The vast majority of the data came from the CDLI. Each entry in the CDLI has an optional field for publication information, where one might find a unique publication dedicated to that specific collection, or a publication in which the object appears as a duplicate of a well-known text. However, the CDLI bibliographic data is incomplete and required much restructuring in order to create the full citation. For example, the CDLI offers “D.I. Owen in Fs Lipinski” as the citation for the collection at Oregon State University. Using Brown University and University of Chicago library catalogues, I was able to construct the full citation: “Owen, D. I. (1995). Amorites and the location of BAD. In K. Van Lerberghe & A. Schoors (Eds.), *Immigration and emigration within the ancient Near East: Festschrift E. Lipinski* (pp. 213–219). Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters en Departement Orientalistik.” Each bibliographic entry in the dataset is presented in the APA citation style. Further information such as author, title, and publication year are separated into separate columns for ease of organizing the data based on that information. All information was then organized into a CSV file organized by the name of the college or university holding the collection.

SAMPLING STRATEGY

Because the focus of the wider project is meant to be on those collections that are less well-known or smaller in size (typically 5–20 objects), there are several collections that are included in the ArcGIS map that do not appear in the bibliography for two primary reasons. First, while many cuneiform collections are known around the US, not all of them have had their contents published. Second, some of these collections are both incredibly large and very well-known among Assyriologists and those outside the field. In particular, the following collections were not included in this dataset: Yale University, The University of Chicago, Harvard University Museum of the Ancient Near East, and the University of Pennsylvania. Not only would the inclusion of these collections be unfeasible for the project’s scale, they are large enough and well-known enough that their publication records are much more easily accessed. Readers can expect to find the following institutions cited in the bibliography in [Table 1](#).

1 <https://www.arcgis.com/home/item.html?id=caaebd20b99a4685895b98ee8cae0a2a>.

2 <https://cdli.ucla.edu/>.

Table 1 United States colleges and universities featured in the bibliography of cuneiform collections in US colleges and universities. The US state is indicated in brackets.

Amherst College (Massachusetts)
Andrews University (Michigan)
Arizona State University (Arizona)
Baker University (Iowa)
Baylor University (Texas)
Beloit College (Wisconsin)
Bowdoin College (Maine)
Brigham Young University (Utah)
Brigham Young University-Idaho (Idaho)
Brown University (Rhode Island)
Bryn Mawr College (Pennsylvania)
Catholic University of America (Washington D.C.)
Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School (New York)
Colgate University (New York)
College of Idaho (Idaho)
Colorado State University (Colorado)
Columbia University (New York)
Concordia Seminary (Missouri)
Cornell University (New York)
Creighton University (Nebraska)
Dartmouth College (New Hampshire)
Davidson College (North Carolina)
DePaul University (Illinois)
Drew University (New Jersey)
Duke University (North Carolina)
Emory University (Georgia)
Florida State University (Florida)
Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary (Illinois)
Goucher College (Maryland)
Gratz College (Oregon)
Harvard University Art Museums (Massachusetts)
Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion (Ohio)
Iliff School of Theology (Colorado)
Indiana University, Bloomington (Indiana)
Johns Hopkins University (Maryland)
Kalamazoo Valley Community College (Michigan)
Knox College (Illinois)
Lawrence University (Wisconsin)
Middlebury College (Vermont)
Millikin University (Illinois)
Mount Holyoke College (Massachusetts)
Northwestern University (Illinois)
Oregon State University (Oregon)
Pacific School of Religion (California)

(Contd.)

Pittsburgh Theological Seminary (Pennsylvania)

Princeton Theological Seminary (New Jersey)

Princeton University (New Jersey)

Ripon College (Wisconsin)

Rochester Institute of Technology (New York)

Smith College (Massachusetts)

Southern Methodist University (Texas)

Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (Texas)

Southwestern University (Texas)

St. Catherine University (Minnesota)

Stanford University (California)

Syracuse University (New York)

Truman State University (Missouri)

Tufts University (Massachusetts)

Union College (New York)

University of California, Berkeley (California)

University of California, Davis (California)

University of California, Los Angeles (California)

University of California, Santa Cruz (California)

University of Houston (Texas)

University of Illinois (Illinois)

University of Iowa (Iowa)

University of Kansas (Kansas)

University of Michigan (Michigan)

University of Minnesota (Minnesota)

University of Mississippi (Mississippi)

University of Missouri (Missouri)

University of Nebraska, Lincoln (Nebraska)

University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill (North Carolina)

University of Notre Dame (Indiana)

University of Oklahoma (Oklahoma)

University of Rochester (New York)

University of South Carolina, Columbia (South Carolina)

University of South Dakota (South Dakota)

University of Southern California (California)

University of Texas, Austin (Texas)

University of Utah (Utah)

University of Vermont (Vermont)

University of Virginia (Virginia)

University of Wyoming (Wyoming)

Utah State University (Utah)

Valdosta State University (Georgia)

Vassar College (New York)

Wabash College (Indiana)

Wellesley College (Massachusetts)

Wells College (New York)

Wesleyan University (Connecticut)

Whitman College (Washington)

Wheaton College (Illinois)

Williams College (Massachusetts)

Winthrop University (South Carolina)

QUALITY CONTROL

The decision was made to cite each source using APA-style citation practices in order to keep the dataset consistent. Once the dataset had been created, it was cleaned via OpenRefine. As each publication was identified, it was entered into a spreadsheet according to the institution where each collection is housed. Cleaning via OpenRefine was necessary in order to ensure that each bibliographic entry was paired to the correct author and the correct collection. Using the clustering function in OpenRefine, I was able to see which entries the computer considered to be the same. Inconsistencies in this organization were then corrected to ensure that any user could reliably sort the dataset by institution, author, year, and publication title.

(3) DATASET DESCRIPTION

Object name – Bibliography of cuneiform collections in US colleges and universities

Format names and versions – CSV

Creation dates – Start date: 2020-07-05; End date: 2021-01-24

DATASET CREATORS

Sara Mohr (Brown University)

Roles: conceptualization, data curation, investigation, methodology, writing (original draft & review and editing)

Language – English

License – CC0

Repository name – JOHD Dataverse Repository

Publication date – 2021-01-24

(4) REUSE POTENTIAL

The reuse potential for this dataset is high for the general history of the field of Assyriology and for teaching and collaboration. This dataset provides the historical context of cuneiform objects, highlighting how they have moved between institutions. In addition, the deep chronological span of the editions cited in the dataset can show the changing scholarly publication methods via mining and clustering of the data. Researchers will be able to identify macroscopic trends in publication history.

As a complement to the ArcGIS map accompanying this project, researchers and educators will be able to use this dataset in their teaching and collaborative projects. Using the map, teachers at all levels will be able to identify cuneiform collections as examples for their classes, and then use this dataset to find the accompanying translation of each object. This access will allow for more use of these collections by educators outside of the field of Assyriology. Further, knowledge of where these collections are and what portion have been published will better direct researchers and educators in future research projects. Future research projects include provenance research, which would allow for a better understanding of how these collections came to be and from where in ancient Iraq they originated. Often the first step in this research is identifying the collections and the previous research that has already been undertaken.

This dataset also has the potential to be augmented and expanded. Librarians and archivists working with these collections may be able to add further publications to the data that do not appear in traditional academic publications. These publications include transcriptions and translations published on institution websites or projects undertaken by students at said institutions (see Winthrop University, Johnston, 2010). In addition, the dataset can serve as a source for researchers and libraries beyond the general digitization project of the CDLI. In turn, cuneiform digitization projects like the CDLI may be able to use this dataset to augment their own bibliographic information.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would like to thank Dr. Sarah Buchanan (University of Missouri) for her guidance and suggestions throughout the course of forming this dataset, and for her help in ensuring the longevity of the data involved in the multiple strands of this project. Thanks are also due to the library staff at both Brown University and the University of Chicago for their help in finding sources that are no longer in regular print.

COMPETING INTERESTS

The author has no competing interests to declare.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION

Sara Mohr, Brown University (conceptualization, data curation, investigation, methodology, writing – original draft & review and editing).

AUTHOR AFFILIATION

Sara Mohr  orcid.org/0000-0002-4637-4118

Department of Egyptology and Assyriology, Brown University, Providence, US

REFERENCES

- Johnston, A. (2010). Cuneiform tablet collection - Accession 1382. *Winthrop University Louise Pettus Archives & Special Collections. Manuscript Collection Finding Aid*. https://digitalcommons.winthrop.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2213&context=manuscriptcollection_findingaids.
- Mohr, S. (2020, December 15). Where is the Cuneiform? [Web Map]. *Scale Note Given*. <https://www.arcgis.com/home/webmap/viewer.html?webmap=b86b34408acb4ec28a2034d286c85948>.
- Owen, D. I. (1995). Amorites and the location of BAD. In K. Van Lerberghe & A. Schoors (Eds.), *Immigration and emigration within the ancient Near East: Festschrift E. Lipinski* (pp. 213–219). Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters en Departement Orientalistik.

TO CITE THIS ARTICLE:

Mohr, S. (2021). A Bibliography of Cuneiform Tablet Editions in United States Colleges and Universities through 2020. *Journal of Open Humanities Data*, 7: 3, pp. 1–6. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5334/johd.27>

Published: 29 March 2021

COPYRIGHT:

© 2021 The Author(s). This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC-BY 4.0), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited. See <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>.

Journal of Open Humanities Data is a peer-reviewed open access journal published by Ubiquity Press.