

## A propos de figure fondamentale : Christine Proust



Colloque en l'honneur de Christine Proust, à l'occasion de son départ à la retraite  
organisé par K. Chemla, A. Keller, C. Mousset et A. Reynaud

Lundi 9 décembre 2019

Université de Paris, campus Paris Diderot, bâtiment Condorcet, salle 366 A

### 1. explications et Lectures mail

**9h30-9h50**      **Accueil, introduction**

6.      **9h50-10h25**      **Camille Lecompte** (CNRS, ArScAn-VEPMO, Nanterre, France)  
***On numeracy and use of numerals in the archaic texts: some considerations***

The archaic tablets from the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> and the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium give a clear evidence of the numeracy skills of the earliest scribes and literate administrators. The following paper will focus on a collection of unpublished Uruk III/Jemdet Nasr texts (around 3200-2950 B.C.) and on some concrete and simple applications of numeracy in the background of administrative practices. At first, the equivalence offered by a few tablets between a number of male kids or sheep and an area will be examined and interpreted as an evidence for a tax. Other examples will also show that the use of definite numerical system, namely the numerals labelled as  $N_2$ , so far only scarcely known from the textual evidence from Uruk but recently enriched through unpublished tablets without provenance, has still to be better understood. The paper will consider the role of numeracy in the education of scribes, in their daily written practices and in the backdrop of the emergency of literacy.

2.      **10h25-11h**      **Antoine Cavigneaux** (Université de Genève, Genève, Suisse)  
***L'éternelle dichotomie - lettres ou maths ? L'enseignement mathématique à l'école babylonienne***

Grâce en partie aux travaux de Chr. Proust nous comprenons mieux aujourd'hui comment s'organisait l'enseignement des maths à l'école dans l'ancienne Mésopotamie. L'analyse de certains textes scolaires nous permet d'entrevoir comment s'imbriquaient concrètement dans la réalité quotidienne l'enseignement des lettres et celui des maths.

**11h-11h15**      **Pause**      [imprimer texte Lecompte](#)

4. **11h15-11h50 Robert Middeke-Conlin** (Max-Planck-Institut für Wissenschaftsgeschichte, Berlin, Allemagne)  
***Education and professional practice in the Old Babylonian city of Lagaba***

A group of texts housed primarily in the University of Leiden presents an image of economic activities in the Old Babylonian city of Lagaba during the reigns of *Hammurabi* and *Samsuiluna*. First edited by Leemans in 1960, then published by him in 1964, and supplemented especially by Tammuz in 1996 and Dalley in 2005, this group of texts offers details into land tenure, date cultivation, barley production, brick construction, trade and transport, and much more. Sixteen texts from this city give the impression that they are economic documents – the administration of agricultural production, lists of works, silver and grain expenditures, etc. However, the appearance of these texts on round type IV tablets shows that they are part of a professional education. This paper will present a renewed look into these texts. It will examine both the lenticular, educational texts, as well as related texts of professional practice when available. Through this presentation, an image of numeracy and document literacy within the Old Babylonian city of Lagaba will become apparent.

5. **11h50-12h25 Adeline Reynaud** (Université de Paris, SPHère & ArScAn-HAROC, Paris, France)  
***An air of professional education, but in what sense ? Some reflections on a small group of lenticular "educational field plans" from Old-Babylonian Sippar***

Cuneiform sources from Babylonia contain both geometrical drawings belonging to well identified mathematical exercises and geometrical drawings consisting in field plans probably used for administrative purposes. But at the border between both genres can be found other geometrical drawings whose status is more ambiguous, and which have occasionally been designated by modern scholars as "educational field plans". A few lenticular tablets from Old-Babylonian Sippar, which are kept in the museum of Istanbul and on whose edition I am currently working in the framework of a common project with Christine, seem to belong to this specific genre of texts and to shed a new light on some practices linked to them. In this talk, I would like to seize the opportunity of presenting this small corpus to question the nature of such "educational field plans", the clues potentially enabling us to recognize them among other documents containing geometrical drawings, and the difficulty of identifying the extent to which these productions actually pertain to a professional education.

3. **12h25-13h Carlos Gonçalves** (Universidade de São Paulo, São Paulo, Brésil)  
***"And now we can solve this simpler problem": a note on a problem solving strategy in Old Babylonian mathematics***

Several Old Babylonian mathematical word problems have been described by historians of mathematics as equivalent to our second-degree problems, with scribes eventually solving them by the application of a standard procedure. However, the statements of these problems frequently present the data in a configuration that defies immediate application of the standard procedure, which may be a sign that Old Babylonian mathematics was sometimes concerned not only with solving problems but also with the ways problems can be solved. In such situations, scribes resorted to the problem-solving strategy of restating the problem as a simpler one. In this paper, I will analyze this strategy in a complex case, that of mathematical tablet IM 52301 from Tell Harmal, and I will mention a few others where such strategy was put into action.

**13h-14h20 Buffet**

- 14h20-14h55 Mathieu Ossendrijver** (Einstein Center Chronoi, Berlin, Allemagne)  
***He wrote it for his learning. On a group of colophons from Seleucid Uruk***

Several scholarly tablets from Seleucid Uruk include elaborate colophons in which the scribe reports that he wrote the tablet for his education and deposited it in the Reš temple. The colophons reveal that the production and deposition of scholarly tablets was viewed as essential for maintaining the cult. This is supported by new evidence for a scholarly interest in the pursuits of Kidin-Anu, a legendary scholar credited with restoring the cult of Uruk.

**14h55-15h30** **John Steele** (Brown University, Providence, USA)  
***Three score years and ten? A mathematical scheme for the length of life in Babylonian astrology***

An important consideration in ancient Greek astrology was what is the maximum length of life for an individual, there being no point in predicting events in someone's life for dates after they will have died. Several schemes are known from Greek and Latin astrological texts for determining the length of life of individuals. Some of these texts attribute these schemes to the Chaldeans. Up till now, however, no evidence of Babylonian interest in the calculation of the length of life of an individual had been found. In this paper I will present a new discovery of a cuneiform tablet from Babylon containing just such a scheme: a mathematical scheme linking the sign of the zodiac to the maximum number of years a person will live. After explaining the (very simple) mathematics underlying the scheme, I will discuss its connection with other aspects of Babylonian astrology and astronomy, and with the schemes known from later Greek and Latin sources.

**15h30-16h05** **Baptiste Méléès** (CNRS, Archives Henri Poincaré, Nancy, France)  
***Christine Proust et le projet MesoCalc***

Christine Proust, qui est à l'origine du projet de calculatrice mésopotamienne MesoCalc, a dirigé attentivement chaque étape de son développement. En revenant sur la genèse de ce projet, je relaterai certains échanges relatifs aux choix algorithmiques de cette calculatrice et décrirai notamment en détail l'algorithme choisi pour le calcul des inverses.

**16h05-16h20** **Pause**

**16h20-16h55** **René Cori** (Institut de Recherche sur l'Enseignement des Mathématiques, Paris, France)  
***Longtemps, elle s'est levée de bonne heure***

Quelques souvenirs des premières années de ce XXI<sup>e</sup> siècle : une zone d'éducation prioritaire près de la Porte de Bagnolet, les comptes des commerçants de Babylone, un groupe de travail de l'IREM de Paris, des narrations de recherche, une chanson d'Henri Salvador...

**16h55-17h30** **Luc Trouche** (ENS de Lyon, Institut Français de l'éducation, Lyon, France)  
***Ressources des enseignants, ressources de la recherche***

L'étude des ressources des enseignants, d'aujourd'hui et d'hier (ou d'avant-avant... hier), c'est un bon point de rencontre pour des didacticiens et des historiens. C'est ce que je voudrais mettre en évidence, à partir de ce que j'ai appris des discussions avec Christine (Trouche, 2016), et de ce que Christine a apporté à la communauté des chercheurs qui travaillent ces questions (Proust 2019). Bien sûr, il sera aussi question des aspects plus généraux, ou plus concrets, de la trajectoire de Christine : avoir enseigné les mathématiques dans de nombreux contextes donne des ressources puissantes pour penser les choses sur le temps long...

**17h30-18h** **Mot de fin**

**18h15** **Cocktail**

Texte du sous-titre en akkadien (sur le modèle des en-têtes de lettres mésopotamiennes) :

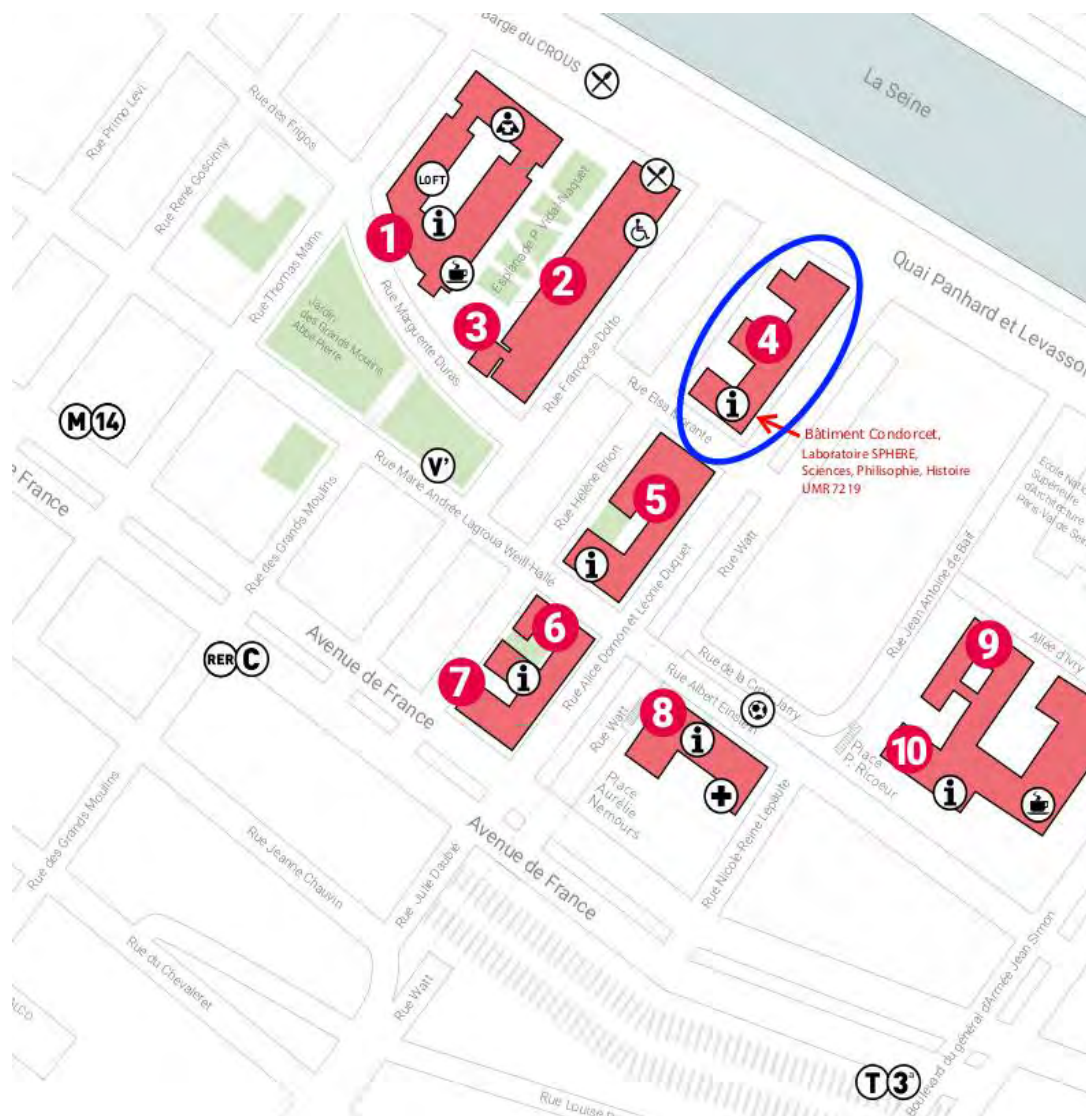
*a-na ki-ri-is-ti-in qí-bí-ma // um-ma ib-ru-tu-ki-ma ù ša-ma-al-lu-ki-ma*

À Christine, dis : Ainsi (parlent) tes amis/collègues et tes apprentis : « ... »

## Informations pratiques

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Tram T3, arrêt *Avenue de France*



Salle : Salle Klimt 366 A  
*Monter au troisième étage, puis prendre le petit couloir qui se trouve presque en face des machines à café. La salle est située au début de ce couloir, sur la droite.*

Contact : En cas de problème pour trouver la salle, vous pouvez nous appeler :  
06.85.76.67.44 (Karine Chemla)  
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