

The following material is a supplement to the *Abnormal Interests* blog post "[Scribal Training - Part II: The Use of Literature and Myth Along with Specialized Akkadian Scribal Training in Late Bronze Age](#) " and is best understood in the context of the discussion there.

I. Possible Grading of Akkadian Literature at Ugarit

The tables below list the ideograms, not including divine names, that occur in RS 22.219+, RS 22.421 and RS 25.460. All three of these texts appear to have a rather low density of ideograms when compared with other Akkadian texts from Ugarit. In each case the first column contains the line number in which the ideogram first appears. The second column contains the Akkadian reading, the third column the ideogram that is written on the tablet and the fourth the earliest occurrence of that ideogram in the formal scribal curriculum. In a few case I have included additional notes in the column the fourth column.

Key

A = Series A

Ea = Series Ea

H = Harra=hubullu (canonical)

Izi = Series Izi

CLS = Canonical lú=ša

RS 25.460

Ugaritica V, text # 162, p. 263, (*Just*) *Souffrant*

(162) line#	Akkadian word	Ideogram	List Reference
3' (<i>passem</i>)	^{amil} bârû	LÚ.ḪAL	Perhaps in a lost portion of CLS
9'	kîmti	IM.RA.A	<u>H</u> ,t19, 139
11'	aššatu	DAM	<u>H</u> ,t1, 177
13' (<i>passim</i>)	bêlu	EN	<u>H</u> ,t19, 139
20'	mûši	GI ₆	While GI ₆ equaling <i>mûši</i> is known from a variety of sources (See CAD M2, 291). This exact equation is not known from any of the early standard school texts. But MUŠ. GI ₆ .A equaling ge-er mu-ši is known from H,t14,34
21'	libbi ^{bi}	ŠÀ	<u>H</u> ,t2,148

Four of the six ideograms on this tablet were introduced in Harra=hubullu. And a fifth may also be known from Harra=hubullu. There is a strong possibility that LÚ.ḪAL was in Canonical lú=ša. But pending definitive evidence, it is hard to be certain.

RS 22.219+

Ugaritica V, text # 168, p. 304, "En Marge" de Gigameš

line#	Akkadian word	Ideogram	List Reference
5' (<i>passim</i>)	šiba	ŠI	H,t1,136f
	mâru ^{ru}	DUMA	H,t3, 331 ? not sure of this one
11'	reši	SAG	H, t1, 127
13'	kal]lâti (wife)	É.G]A.A	H,t1,78
13'	^{is} paššûri	BANŠUR	H,t4,186-188
34'	qaqqadi	SAG.DU	H,t7A,89
39'	amîli	LÚ	CLS 7; OBL, 492
45	kaspa ^M	KÙ.UD	H,t2,363
47'	libbi ^{bi}	ŠÀ	H,t2,148
48'	mithariš	TÉŠ.BI	A Vii:28
	eliš	AN.TA	H, t2,228f
	šapliš	KI.TA	H, t2,228f
54'	šibti	UL ?	A I iv 78
64'	kîma ^{ma}	GIM	Local spelling
64'	gamîrûta ?	BE.LA	read ba'ala rather than gamîrûta "taking (away) the Lord" rather than "prends (alors) tout le pouvoir. UG V, 310" [ŠU.KAL= gamîrûta , Diri V:107-122]

While the majority of the ideograms on this tablet are from Harra=hubullu the ones from the A series are problematic. The problem is we do not know where, how or even if series A was used at Ugarit. However, if its use followed the Mesopotamian practice, in all likelihood it was used earlier than Harra=hubullu rather than later. GIM in line 64' reflects a local spelling of kîma. It is not clear when it was introduced into the curriculum at Ugarit. As opposed to Nougayrol, I take BE.LA in line 64' as a *plene* spelling of *ba'ala* where one might expect IM or perhaps EN rather than an ideogram for *gamîrûta*. The spelling on this tablet could well reflect a grading that did not go beyond Harra=hubullu.

RS 22.421*Ugaritica V*, text # 167, p. 300, *Récit du Déluge*

line#	Akkadian word	Ideogram	List Reference
1 (<i>passem</i>)	ilânu ^M	AN	Izi V, 176
2	mâtâti ^{M ti}	KUR.KUR	Izi at Bog. A, 181
5 (<i>passem</i>)	bîti ^{ti}	É	Ea III, 298f
	libbi	ŠÀ	<u>H</u> ,t2,148
7	bêli	EN	<u>H</u> ,t19, 139

Here in RS 22.421 signs not introduced in the formal curriculum until Izi are seen. And we see an ideogram from Ea but this ideogram, É, is extremely common and it is hard to believe that it wasn't actually introduced into the curriculum very early. In the case of this tablet it is hard to see any real signs of grading except that it does seem to have a low density of ideograms.

II. Special Considerations Concerning the Amarna Scholarly Tablets

Were the Amarna masters or students Egyptians? The evidence seems ambiguous. First, one would think that the Pharaoh would want native Egyptian scribes. And failing that, he would want scribes who could translate the Akkadian letters into Egyptian. But, second, one piece of evidence for this, the Egyptian/Akkadian bilingual word list (EA 368), is structured as if it were notes for an Akkadian specialist learning a few elementary words of Egyptian. Whatever the case, we can be sure that there was a translation factory in the "House of Records" as well as a writing factory (Moran, xvii-xviii).

One of the most interesting features of Amarna is the fact that it was peacefully abandoned. For this reason, one is safe in assuming that many items of value were taken from the city when the capital was moved to Memphis. Among these were at least some of the formal training texts of the master scribes. The scholarly tablets left behind may have been the tablets used and copied by the student scribes. It is for this reason that many of the formal tablets are missing from the extant collection and so many of the extant tablets show signs of being intentionally broken or defaced.

The fact that EA 356 and EA 357 along with EA 358 have a dictus that is very similar to the letters sent from Babylonian to Amarna and that all three reflect Babylonian traditions suggests to Izre'el, 11, that they show direct or indirect contact with Mesopotamia. I would suggest that it also increases the probability, but does not prove that one or more of the master scribes at Amarna was from Mesopotamia. If one looks at EA 368, the Egyptian/Akkadian bilingual word list one could reasonably assume that its author was a foreigner who was trying to get an elementary grasp of the Egyptian language. However, based on this tablet, it would be hard to argue that he was an accomplished scribe. So he may well have been a foreign student. See Izre'el, 12-13, for more on the question of the national origin of the masters and students at Amarna. In the end, there is just too little to go on.