Ancient Families, Modern Tools:

Berkeley Prosopography Services

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Project Context: Hellenistic Uruk

More than 3,000 cuneiform clay tablets document the intellectual, religious, scientific, legal and economic activities in Hellenistic Mesopotamia. Originating primarily from Uruk and Babylon, these texts show that although Alexander the Great and his successors transformed much of the cultural landscape of western and central Asia, they left many native practices and institutions intact. Hellenistic Babylonia: Texts, Images and Names presents to Assyriologists, Classicists, ancient historians and others the evidence necessary for study of Mesopotamia at the time when traditional culture came under the powers of the Hellenistic world.

Three primary areas of this website include up-to-date and readable publication of the materials necessary for an integrated study of Hellenistic Mesopotamia:

- **Texts**: transliterations and translations into English of texts from the major sites of Uruk and Babylon.
- **Images**: drawings and photographs of seal impressions on Hellenistic cuneiform texts.

- 530 legal texts
- 8-20 name citations/text
- 3 individuals/citation
- 10,000 name instances
Boilerplate text

- object sold: ina hu-ud lib3-bi#-szu2 [prebend description]
- price: n MA.NA KU3.BABBAR is-ta-tir-ra-nu sza2 [royal name]
- name of buyer: a-na [PN buyer] DUMU sza2 [FN buyer]
- clear future claims: u4-mu pa-qa-ri ana muh-hi [prebend] it-tab-szu-u2 [PN clearer] na-din-na ... u2-mar-raq-ma
Onomastic data:

Standard Neo-/Late-Babylonian naming pattern:

$$\text{PN}_1 / \text{son of } \text{PN}_2 / \text{son of } \text{PN}_3 \quad // \quad \text{descendant of clan name}$$

Anu-belšunu / Ina-qibit-Anu / Anu-zer-ukin // Hunzu
Anu-belšunu / Ina-qibit-Anu / Anu-zer-ukin // Hunzu
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Anu-belšunu / Ina-qibit-Anu / Anu-zer-ukin // Hunzu

Papponymy: naming child for (male) ancestor
Cuneiform Prosopography: Ancient Texts, Ancient Tools
What new tools may provide:

- value-added research
- increase scope of questions/constraints
- framing of new questions
From bamboo to BPS

• Continuous conversation about exploiting technology for the Humanities
  – Time-consuming process

• Opportunity and cost of reusable tools

• Not off-the-shelf
  – Custom built
(Social) Networks

- What is a network?
- What does it look like?
- Why is it interesting?
- How does one study it?
  - Formal methods
  - Visual methods
Family tree

1. Ab'-Anu
   └── Tanitru-Anu
     ├── Nindā-iddin
     │   ├── Anu-żī hüküm
     │   ├── Anu-žī hüküm
     │   └── Tanitru-Anu
     └── Anu-żī-ḥār
   └── Anu-žī-ḥār
     └── Anu-žī-ḥār

2. Nindā-iddin
   ├── Anu-žī-ḥār
   │   └── Anu-žī-ḥār
   └── Anu-žī-ḥār

3. Anu-žī-ḥār
   ├── Anu-žī-ḥār
   │   └── Anu-žī-ḥār
   └── Anu-žī-ḥār

4. Nindā-iddin
   ├── Anu-žī-ḥār
   │   └── Anu-žī-ḥār
   └── Anu-žī-ḥār

5. Anu-žī-ḥār
   ├── Anu-žī-ḥār
   │   └── Anu-žī-ḥār
   └── Anu-žī-ḥār

6. Anu-žī-ḥār
   ├── Anu-žī-ḥār
   │   └── Anu-žī-ḥār
   └── Anu-žī-ḥār

(1) Nindā-iddin Family
(2) Tanitru-Anu
(3) Anu-žī-ḥār
(4) Anu-žī-ḥār
(5) Anu-žī-ḥār
(6) Anu-žī-ḥār
Networks
Principles of User Centered Design

• Technical requirements
  • Reusable
  • Generalizable
  • Scalable

• Humanities requirements
  • Hide the math
  • Allow for a high-level view
  • Have a tool that serves the user
    • Toolset must be tailored to specific needs
BPS innovations

• Assertions
• Network analysis
Assertions

• Probabilistic model
  • Support uncertainty

• Workspaces
  • Support hypotheses
  • Build community
  • Track authority
Social network analysis

• Services
  • SNA engine
  • Visualization kit

• Features
  • Support probabilistic network
  • Support any incoming data, regardless of semantics
Questions, discussion

http://www.berkeleyprosopography.org

Links below available from About page of site.

- HBTIN project home:  
  - http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/hbtin/
- Project wiki  
  - https://wikihub.berkeley.edu/display/istds/Berkeley+Prosopography+Services+Wiki+Home
- Code:  
  - http://code.google.com/p/berkeley-prosopography-services
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